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Message from the President-Elect

by Matthew Tifford

This summer's addition of newborn twin girls to President Daniel Levitov's household has presented the perfect opportunity for me to introduce myself to you, our *Stringendo* readers. I am a former teacher at both the Levine School and the D.C. Youth Orchestra, and have run a cello studio out of my home in North Bethesda since 1998. In this issue you will find an article detailing how I run my studio business. I hope you find it interesting. Though no longer a freelancer, I spent fifteen years as a freelance cellist in the Baltimore-Washington area. I'm local to the region, having grown up in College Park, and have never really left—attending college at both Catholic University and Peabody.

Since becoming MD/DC Chapter President-Elect, I have been looking for new ways to improve our existing services and bring even more member benefits to our chapter. As a result of this effort, we have found two interesting and useful websites (*see the ad below*) that have agreed to offer our members exclusive discounts for their services. We have just begun working on obtaining these discounts. Look for more in the future.

Exclusive Coupon Discount Codes for ASTA MD/DC Chapter Members

www.toodledo.com

10% discount off Pro membership.

Enter promo code: **asta2013**

www.sidengo.com

20% discount off Pro membership.

Enter promo code: **astamddc**

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For easy viewing on iPads, tablets, smartphones, and computers! Digital delivery saves our chapter \$\$\$ and helps the environment at the same time. If you are interested in switching to the new e-edition, please contact ASTA MD/DC Chapter at astahotline@gmail.com

We are also going to be offering those of you who are interested the ability to opt for digital delivery of future issues of *Stringendo* instead of the print version (*see the ad below*). Please bear in mind that choosing this option will mean that you will no longer be mailed a print *Stringendo*, so only choose this option if you would prefer reading it on your computer, tablet, or other electronic device. By choosing digital delivery, you help us save money and be more ecologically friendly at the same time.

I am also very motivated to establish regular Studio Teachers Meetings as a permanent fixture. This past May, I hosted a teacher meeting on the topic of building affordable studio websites. I will also be hosting our next teachers meeting, which will be a round-table discussion on teaching sight-reading skills (*see the ad below*). This event is free for members, but RSVP is required. Attendees will also get lunch out of the deal, so don't miss out!

I will finish with one last thought for those of you who have considered getting more involved with the chapter. After just one year in my post I can enthusiastically say that volunteering my time with this organization has been one of the best things I have ever done for my teaching. We are always in need of more active members, so please feel free to contact us if you would like to get more involved.

Happy teaching!

ASTA MD/DC Chapter Studio Teachers Meeting

Friday, October 18, 2013

11:30 AM to 1:30 PM

Topic: "Teaching Sight-reading Skills."

Where: The home of Matthew Tifford, 11235 Ashley Drive, North Bethesda, MD 20852

Food and Drink: Lunch will be provided.

RSVP to: matt.tifford@asta.net

or phone 301-770-4377

If you would like to make a presentation at one of these meetings, or if you have an idea of what you would like to discuss or hear about, please contact Matthew so he can schedule it. We are delighted to hear from you!

World On A String Day

A Cross-Cultural Celebration Exploring How Music Works!
Workshops, Concerts, and More

Saturday, November 2, 2013, 9:00 AM – 9:00 PM

Redeemer Lutheran Church
3799 East-West Highway
Hyattsville, MD 20782

Easy walk from Prince Georges Plaza Metro station. Ample parking lot.

It's back, and better than ever with larger classrooms, a community dinner (with musical games and entertainment for the young and young at heart), and another tremendous faculty! If you missed last year's *World on a String*, you've probably been hearing about all the fun and the jaw-dropping inspiration of this day of learning from, performing with, and listening to an amazing array of string and other artists.

World on a String is for students and teachers of string instruments and even non-string instruments. Violin, viola, and cello students should be at least 7 years old and playing Minuets in Suzuki Book One to participate in the string workshops. Bass, guitar, and other instrumental students should be playing at an equivalent level. Elementary and advanced workshops will be held simultaneously, focusing on topics such as rhythms, tonalities, and improvisation.

There's a new part-day option for students ages 12 and under. And this year there will be some exciting options for novices: harmonica, drum and Afro-Peruvian dance, human beat-box, and singing. Participants will have opportunities to perform for, and jam with, each other. The day culminates with a public concert by the faculty, sure to bring some surprises along with plenty of stunning musicianship!

ASTA teachers who bring six students will receive a free registration (for themselves or another student), and there is a scholarship fund for young string players/musicians.

The faculty and workshop lists are on page 4.

Meals: Bring a sack lunch. Dinner will be provided. Drinks and snacks will be provided free at the breaks, and will be for sale at the evening concert.

Fees: Listed on the Application Form on page 5.

Here are a couple of quotes from attendees at last year's *World On A String Day*:

"What musical moments of sheer joy of hearing World music coming together in awesome harmony and rocking rhythm!"

"My daughter said that she wanted to definitely go to this again next year, and the next year, until she was a grandma."

Questions? Contact andrea@andreaHoag.com.



World On A String is presented by ASTA MD/DC Chapter and Freyda's Hands (a non-profit organization)

World On A String faculty includes:

Christylez Bacon, human beat-box, guitar, ukulele, djembe. – A Grammy-nominated Progressive Hip-Hop Artist, and recipient of a Montgomery County Executive Award for Excellence in the Arts, his “mouth percussion” delights audiences and students of all ages.

Fernando Cabrejo, Afro-Peruvian violin. – Born in Perú, Fernando performs improvisation, traditional Peruvian and Andean music, and Latin fusion on violin and other string and percussion instruments.

Tina Chancey, viola da gamba, medieval fiddles, and violin. – Director of *Hesperus* and recipient of a Lifetime Achievement Award from Early Music America, Tina plays roots music from Sephardic and blues to early music and jazz standards.

Amy Domingues, cello and viola da gamba. – As well as performing early music with several prominent ensembles, Amy has released three cello-oriented rock albums and appears on over fifty rock, pop, and classical albums.

Jorge Luis and Joseph Galvan, cajón, djembe, and percussive dance. – These brothers wowed everyone at the last *World on a String* with their dynamic rhythms and friendly energy. They can be heard around the D.C. area with their 13-piece band *Rumba y Sabor de los Hermanos Galvan*.

Andrea Hoag, fiddle. – A Grammy-nominated Swedish fiddler and originator of the *Dovetail* Ensemble, she has presented on cross-cultural musicianship at ASTA National Conference, and has taught at many music camps across the U.S.

Spyros Koliavasilis, oud and Greek violin. – A native Greek virtuoso on numerous instruments, including oud, bouzouki, and bowed strings, Spyros plays music of Greece and the greater Mediterranean region.

Paul Oorts, guitar, harp guitar, mandolin, and musette accordion. – In demand as a soloist and accompanist across the U.S., this Belgian native also loves to research Belgian, French, and Italian (American) traditional music.

Nistha Raj, classical Indian and classical Western violin. – A Strathmore Artist-in-Residence for 2013–2014, she has brought her rare and evocative sound to the U.N., the Kennedy Center, and several U.S. embassies.

Philippe Varlet, Irish fiddle, bouzouki, mandolin, tenor banjo, and guitar. – A star of the D.C. Irish music scene, Philippe is also an ethnomusicologist with a deep knowledge of the Irish tradition.

Phil Wiggins, harmonica and song. – A world-renowned virtuoso on blues harmonica, Phil now performs with numerous blues masters including Rick Franklin and Corey Harris, with his band *The Chesapeake Sheiks*, and in a wide range of collaborations including the *Dovetail Ensemble*.

Cathy Yang, erhu and guzheng. – One of the world’s leading soloists on these instruments and part of the acclaimed duo *sixwire*, Cathy was a great hit at the last *World on a String* with her glowing performance and friendly teaching.

Workshops:

A la mode: Maqams, Ragas, and Vallâtstoner (int/adv)

A World in Five Tones: Playing and Improvising with Pentatonics (beg/int)

Rhythms!: With Hands, Voice, Feet, and Other Instruments (all levels)

Vocal Worlds: Sing with Your Instrument, Call and Response, Vocal beat-box (all levels)

6/8, 9/8, Music We Appreciate: A Tour of Musical Cultures (beg/int)

Soundcatching: Learn to Play By Ear (beg/int)

Ways to Improvise: (int/adv)

Composing Across Cultures: (int/adv)

Tunes from Ireland and the Mediterranean: (int/adv)

Layers of Rhythm: Polyrhythm and Complex Meters (intermediate)

Harmonica for Novices: (beginning)

For full workshop descriptions and complete schedule, visit: www.asta.net/eventdetails

World On A String is presented by ASTA MD/DC Chapter and Freyda’s Hands (a non-profit organization)



World On A String Day

November 2, 2013, 9:00 AM – 9:00 PM

Application deadline: October 25, 2013

LOCATION: Redeemer Lutheran Church, 3799 East-West Hwy., Hyattsville, MD 20782

Name _____ ASTA member? Yes No

Address _____ City _____ State _____ Zip _____

Phone _____ Email _____

What instruments do you play and/or teach? _____

Are you a student? Yes No If yes, who is your teacher? _____

Students only: What is your level of study?

Beginning Intermediate Advanced

Students only: Name a piece that you can play well.

Composer and title _____

(In order to participate, students must be at least age 7 and must be able to play the Minuets in Suzuki Book One.)

We need volunteers! Can you help with set-up, snacks, and/or clean-up? Yes No

If you have a family member or friend who would like to help, please fill out:

Name _____ Phone _____ Email _____

WORKSHOP FEES (All fees are non-refundable)

Entire day (including concert and dinner):

Half-Day Option for students under 12: **\$50**

Adult: **\$95** (Early bird postmark by October 1: **\$80**)

(noon–9 PM, incl. concert & dinner)

Full-time student (age 7–23): **\$80** (Early bird postmark by October 1: **\$65**)

Tickets for concert only:

Adult: **\$20** each How many? _____

Student: **\$15** each How many? _____

T-shirts: \$12 each, advance price. (**\$15** on the day of the event.) Light blue, 100% cotton.

Please enter the number of T-shirts you want in the following sizes: Youth small: _____ Youth medium: _____

Women small: _____ Women medium: _____ Women large: _____ Men medium: _____ Men large: _____ Men extra-large: _____

Total for T-shirts: \$ _____

Optional contribution to Youth Scholarship Fund: \$ _____ (Tax-deductible)

TOTAL FEES: \$ _____ (You may itemize your fees on a separate sheet, if you like.)

Make your check payable to **Freyda's Hands**. Send your completed form and your check to:

Paul Runci, 10910 Jolly Way, Kensington, MD 20895

ASTA members who send six students to this event for the entire day will receive one free registration (for themselves or another student). Be sure to send all application forms in the same envelope.

Please check up to five workshops that particularly interest you. (See the list on page 4.)

A la mode (int/adv)

Sing With Your Instrument, Call-and-Response Singing (all levels)

Improvising for All (beg/int)

A la mode (beg/int)

Composing Across Cultures (int/adv)

Percussion (all levels)

6/8, 9/8, Music We Appreciate (all levels)

Layers of Rhythm (int/adv)

Sing It! (all levels)

Soundcatching (beg/int)

Ornamentation Across Cultures (int/adv)

World On A String is presented by ASTA MD/DC Chapter and Freyda's Hands (a non-profit organization)

A Few of My Favorite Things

by Julianna Chitwood

Recently, on a trip, I had a nightmare that my house caught on fire and that I had lost all of the contents of my studio. After checking in with neighbors and determining that all was well at my home, I began thinking about the items I, as a violin teacher, could truly not do without. Some things are obvious—my violin, a studio bathroom, and *Introducing the Positions* by Harvey Whistler (I have yet to find a better shifting book); but some things listed below may not commonly be in use in many studios. As I found myself humming the Rogers and Hammerstein tune, “My Favorite Things” (I was in Salzburg at the time, with *The Sound of Music* tours everywhere), I thought about the things that I reach for, when nothing else will assist quite as much in getting a point across, establishing a new practice habit, sparking the imagination, or exploring a particular technique.

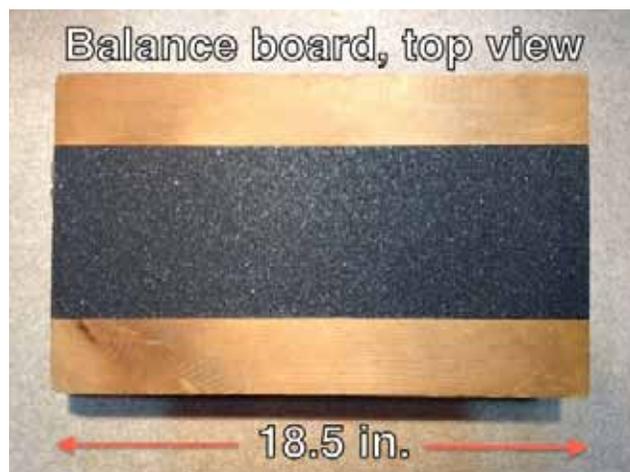
Violin-Specific Items and Music

Balance board. This simple construction of wood and a strip of anti-slip tread has been such an aid with my students’ posture. It is always a bit tricky to talk to students, especially teenagers, about their hips and torso position so this balance board is useful for exploring body position. Students seem to automatically arrange their hips on top of the feet, and the head on top of the torso when on this platform. Additionally, there is a mild “resonance chamber” created between the balance board top and the floor so there is a small increase in sound production. After obtaining a desirable body position on the board, students can transfer the position and sound to the floor.

The dimensions are as follows:

Top piece. Width 18.5 inches, depth 11 inches. Strip of anti-slip tread is 6 inches of the depth and the same width as the top piece.

Bottom post. 3.5 square, affixed to the center of the top piece, with the same depth of 11 inches. This balance board works on the similar principle as a BOSU Balance Trainer, or BOSU Ball, but with more limits in the body movement. Often students can work on a BOSU after spending time on the balance board.



Transcriptions of the Bach Cello Suites for Violin Solo, arranged by Enrico Polo, Ricordi Press. The Bach cello suites are beloved and more musically accessible for many students than the violin sonatas and partitas. I find that I can have students begin work on the first suite much earlier than the second partita (minus the Chaconne), which used to be the first unaccompanied Bach for my students (with the exception of instances found in the Suzuki books). Students just fall in love with the first suite in particular and I find that after studying some of the cello suites we have a stronger musical foundation when we do get into the second partita.

The not-so-boring Book of Bowing, arranged by Warren van Bronkhorst, Pernambuco Press. In this book there are wisely chosen selections from the string quartet literature of Beethoven, Brahms, Haydn, Mozart and Schubert that are modified for two players. The upper line is the first violin part and the lower line is skillfully arranged from the other three instrumental parts of the quartet. The bowing techniques used—*détaché*, *martelé*, *collé*, *spiccato*, *sautillé*, *portato* and *bariolage*—are listed in the table of contents; some with several examples or more. This is such a helpful and enjoyable book for an in-depth study of bowing styles as well as the string quartet literature. The descriptions of the bow strokes are very clear and there are sometimes specific notes for a selection, as to the bow strokes to be used and/or how the bow strokes are notated.

Exercises for the Violin in Various Combinations of Double-Stops, by Roland Vamos. Published in 2012, these exercises have are now finally available for purchase. I have used one page of this exercise book for many years. I forgot exactly from whom I first obtained it but I do remember it was shared to me as if someone was slipping me contraband, with an apologetic “I only have the one page.” The included DVD carefully illustrates how to first prepare the left hand for these exercises and then how to perform the exercises and then explaining the daunting chart of many pages at the back of the book. The goal of the exercise book is to provide a practice routine where each exercise, in each of the seven positions, on the three sets of strings, in all of the major keys is covered systematically.

Basics, by Simon Fischer, and Practice, by Simon Fischer, Peters Edition Limited.

Both of these books are incredible resources! What keeps each volume from being overwhelming (*Basics* is 230 and *Practice* is 335 densely-written pages) is that both are eminently useful for addressing a specific issue, since the extensive material is so well organized.

The table of contents of *Practice* lists the main eight sections: Fast passages, Tone, Key strokes, Left hand, Shifting, Intonation, Freedom and ease and Further essentials—with a variety of specific practice exercises and many musical examples from the standard literature for each section. There is lots of unaccompanied Bach, major concerti, sonatas repertoire and showpieces (especially Paganini) but also included are some easier pieces like Bartok’s “Roumanian Dances” and Massenet’s “Meditation.” The index of musical examples at the back makes this book much more useable.

Basics has a similar table of contents: Right arm and hand, Tone production, Key strokes, Left hand, Shifting, Intonation, Vibrato, and similar explanations regarding the technique, but differs from *Practice* in that the examples are more basic and not pulled from the standard literature. For this reason, I use *Basics* more often and more frequently assign the specific exercises to students, for remediation or further comprehension of a specific technique. Some exercises are designed to take a few seconds; others take five minutes at a time. Accompanying each exercise are detailed descriptions of how to perform the exercise, with useful photos.

Music, and Items That Are not Violin-Specific

Play-dough. Moving the fingers from the base joint can be tricky for young hands and I have found that play-dough can really help. First, the student does finger dents: I place a large cigar-shaped wad of play-dough in the palm of a student’s left hand and ask him to make a depression with each finger but leave no indent with the thumb. Sometimes we have to place a ruler or support of some kind underneath when dropping the ring finger and pinky into the play-dough. Another great activity is making pinch pots, which entails forming the play-dough into a ball and then pressing into the center, making a dent until walls are formed on all sides and a pot shape is created; this activity is especially useful if a student only uses their ring and pinky fingers to form the pot

shape. But the most favorite exercise by far is tearing apart the play-dough to find hidden treasure that can be buried within! These activities also seem to help students with double-jointed thumbs.

Here is a recipe for homemade play-dough:

- 2 cups all purpose flour
- 1 cup salt (table salt)
- 2 tablespoons cooking oil
- 2 cups water
- 4 teaspoons cream of tartar
- a few drops of food coloring

Cook over medium heat, stirring until there are no sticky parts.

Turn onto a cool surface and knead every couple of minutes to stop it from drying out.

Then cool and store in a container or plastic bag.



Felt food. For discussing the form of various pieces, two products by the company *Melissa & Doug* (available on Amazon) really do the trick; one product is called “Sandwich Stacking Games” and the other is called “Sandwich Set”. Useful in both group and private lessons, it is necessary to have two sets of the materials, regardless of which style felt food is used, in order to have enough of any one item to correctly illustrate the form of most pieces. Items in the “Sandwich Stacking Games” are big; almost too big and are more basic whereas “Sandwich Set” items are smaller and more varied (more meats and condiments)—far too many for some younger students. The food is more engaging for my students than other methods I have used for form analysis and they always want to take a picture of their creations.

Paint/color swatches and art books. Paint chips of one color with graduated intensity are great for working on dynamics; however, these seem to be

harder to find now at places like Lowes and Home Depot, which are more apt to feature paint palettes with multiple colors choices and featuring the palette in a room or set of rooms. The paint palettes are wonderful tools for exploring moods and style. I love the interesting conversations and musical expression that will result from using these materials! For instance, a student might play a review piece in a sad manner while viewing a palette of warm colors and afterwards explain that the dining room looked lonely with no one sitting at the table. The art books I find most helpful, and use in a similar way to the paint palettes, feature multiple artworks on the same subject, like Cezanne’s still lives or Monet’s series on haystacks.

Time to Practice: A Companion for Parents, by Carrie Reuning-Hummel, Sound Carries Press. The parents in my studio find this book of tremendous help and, at times, a great comfort. The workbook format briefly touches upon learning styles, motivation, discipline and organizing practice. Reuning-Hummel provides a strong foundation in the first half of the book, outlining principles of learning and philosophies. In the second half, she encourages parents to explore how these principles pertain to their particular child. Sprinkled throughout are wonderful lists of recommended reading.

Rhythm playing cards from *Music Mind Games.* These cards can be used like typical playing cards. A single note or rest value is on each card and the cards are color coded as blue for the notes and yellow for the rests. *Music Mind Games* is a collection of games and materials that introduce and internalize musical concepts; the system is being used all over the world in private studios and in private and public schools.



These playing cards are frequently the items most in use and most requested (next to my multi-sided sparkly dice!) in my studio. Useful with all ages of students, we play matching games like “Go Fish” and then more advanced games like “War,” “Solitaire,” “Spit,” and some specific to the *MMG* method. Most families in my studio have their own set of these cards and several use these cards on family game nights.

***Folk Strings and More Folk Strings*, by Joanne Martin, Summy-Birchard Music.** With the melody repeating on the top, there are three other changing accompanying parts on the staves, each complimenting the melody so that these mostly catchy tunes can be played in two, three or four parts. For maximum flexibility, cello ensemble, viola ensemble, and violin ensemble versions are available with piano accompaniments as well as the solo part for each instrument written singularly on one staff. Using various combinations of books and parts as the situation merits, students experience reading music with multiple parts and can focus on intonation and basic ensemble skills since there are few rhythmic challenges (but the parts are not always parallel) and the arrangements are in simple keys. Additionally, there are versions for string quartet where the melody is passed around to all members of the ensemble.

***Time Out*, by Dave Brubeck.** This album is tremendous for many reasons but I use it in the studio primarily as a great way to demonstrate rhythmic meters. The most famous selection, “Take Five”, has that fabulous (and now iconic) accent pattern: One-Two-Three-Four-Five, which is a waltz pattern, followed by the two-step pattern. “Blue Rondo A La Turk” is 9/8 but not the typical pattern of groups of threes but instead—One-two, One-two, One-two, One-two-three, and this atypical pattern is often juxtaposed by the more usual pattern of groups of three. The track “Three to Get Ready” alternates between duple and triple meter, very palpably in many places and at other times more subtly. All of the asymmetrical meters are so accessible, at least in part, because of the many repetitions of the main themes. My students really enjoy this journey into jazz and are curious about it, possibly because a constant studio fixture is my beloved Border Terrier named Brubeck.

***Eat that Frog*, by Brian Tracey.** Tracey’s book is not nearly as comprehensive as Daniel Pink’s wonderful

book *Drive* but it is easier to pick up and gather a quick idea for immediate use. For that reason, I really recommend this book for teenage students and I sometimes gift it to a graduating senior. Made up of short chapters with a “to do” list at the end, Tracey gradually works the reader through some core elements of time management: decision-making, discipline and determination. There is not too much depth in this book; it is short and uses big text; but students have found the title intriguing, the contents not too overwhelming, and particular sections to be inspiring.

And last, a recently acquired, soon-to-be-favorite thing: **Fujitsu Scansnap S1500M.** In past two months this device has made my fax machine obsolete and the accompanying software aids tremendously with the organization of my studio. I can email so many things now: copies of students’ bills, comments from ASTA exams for parents to file electronically, music to pianists and copies of my music with my fingerings to students. But the greatest use I think is to come, as I slowly gather all the valuable tips from past workshops, institutes and master classes. Handouts and musical tips will be organized electronically so that I can more quickly find and revisit all of the great materials and advice that I have gathered so gratefully from various master teachers.



Julianna Chitwood is the Associate Principal Second Violinist for the Maryland Symphony Orchestra and has performed with many other groups, including The Fairfax Symphony, The Concert Artists of Baltimore, The Orchestra of the 17th Century, Stylus Luxurians, La Menestrandise, The Washington Bach Consort, and The Bach Sinfonia, of which she is a founding member and former concertmaster.

In addition to orchestra instruction at the Washington Waldorf School and the DC Youth Orchestra, Ms. Chitwood has been a violin and/or Music Mind Games clinician at many workshops and Suzuki institutes, including the Greater Washington Suzuki Institute, and on the faculty of the Levine School of Music. She founded the Frederick (Maryland) Community College’s Suzuki Violin program. She has served on the Board of Directors of the Suzuki Association of the Greater Washington Area, and is a current board member of ASTA MD/DC Chapter. Her main gig is teaching the almost 50 students in her Rockville studio.

The Continuation Project: First Year Anniversary

by Dorée Huneven

Last year at this time, I wrote an article detailing a plan to create a teaching environment that will encourage and teach children to form their *own* musical communities, and to continue music making through high school, college, career, parenthood, and middle and old age. I called it “The Continuation Project.” Here is an update describing how the project did in its first year. (*Ed. note: The original article appeared in the Winter 2012–2013 issue of Stringendo. You can read it online: www.asta.net/stringendo*)

“Continuation” Means Continuing to Study Without Quitting!

The first thing I realized was that I had to internalize the core principle of helping students to continue: relating to each student so that whatever I teach, whatever I utter, I must hold the thought: “I must help you to want to always keep playing!” The importance of this principle became apparent when Katie (not her real name) and her mother came to her lesson in tears. Katie liked the violin, but she was crumbling under all of the pressures related to learning that she felt overwhelming her. I gave her the name of another teacher, but that just made the two of them sob harder. After all, she had been with me already for six years! So, in the spirit of the Continuation Project, I told her to make a wish list of what she wanted to have in her lessons, and what she wanted eliminated. She *wanted* to learn pieces, to study scales and etudes, and above all, to play duets with me. She wanted to *eliminate* group lessons, concerts, competitions, exams, and auditions for youth orchestras. I told her I would do everything she wanted, as long as she continued to practice regularly and be in her school orchestra, and she agreed.

We spent the ten months of the school year going forward in an easygoing fashion until June, when she announced that she wanted to re-audition for her youth orchestra! I realized that “continuation” starts with *continuing to study without quitting*. During the year, not a single one of my students who had been studying one year or longer quit!

Changing an attitude is not easy. During my 46-year career, I believed that my teaching was valuable,

and students could take whatever I taught and use it in their musical lives. Wrong! *What musical lives?* So much is missing from their knowledge. Once I suggested to a great pianist/piano teacher that he teach his Liszt- and Chopin-performing students how to accompany, and also how to play chamber music, because that would serve them well in their pianistic lives after high school. He thought that wasn’t a good idea, because “there wasn’t time” to teach them. Three months after leaving for college and taking a break from lessons, how much technique is left? How much pro-activity is there to re-start playing, and to “create a musical life?” What *is* a musical life? I still believe that my teaching is valuable, but will only be truly useful in the future if I guide my students and their parents to the answers to these questions. Thus began the first year of my project.

Results for the First School Year 2012–2013

First, in September 2012, I formed my students into four groups according to their abilities. Many teachers do this. However, with the Continuation Project in mind, I supported friendships, socializing, and fun in each group, giving them time before and after the group lessons (every two weeks) to chat. I explained to the parents that this was the most important part of the class! Some great friendships started; more than one student said that the group lessons were his/her favorite part of violin lessons. They also chose and voted on names for their groups: Sweet Melody, Rainbow Magic, Awesome Thunder, Fiddlers Five. (OK, not my choices, but hey! These groups have their own lives!)

One of the most important parts of the group lessons was playing duets. Each student capable of note reading (I start teaching note reading after about five to six months—at Minuet No. 1 level) was given a duet book at their level for the following purposes:

- To have in their “collection.”
- To use in bonding with the teacher and with other students.
- To learn how to play together, with accurate rhythm and intonation.

- To learn how to work out an interpretation.
- To use as sight reading material when audition/ASTACAP exam time came around.

At the private lesson, I helped students work through their duet books, checking off each duet when they could play both parts fluently with me, with accurate rhythm, intonation and dynamics. Aside from the mechanics of playing together, I taught them (thanks to a great workshop with the Miro String Quartet at the 2013 ASTA National Conference) a great way to work out an interpretation, and perform it. At the group lesson, the different duos went to different rooms, chose a duet to perform, decided how to interpret it, and returned to perform it for all the others. Not only did all of them get three-quarters to all the way through one volume of a book of duets, but also they have the book in their “chamber music collection” for their musical lives.

We also did unison pieces, for performing Suzuki-style, and for jamming. Alas, after three months, I stopped having the jamming in the groups in order to prepare for the autumn recital and the ASTACAP exams, and didn’t resume for the rest of the school year. The children loved learning how to improvise, how to chop, comp, etc., so that will definitely be revived in the coming school year. But playing in unison is always great fun for students. They break into spontaneous song before and after class; they learn to lead their groups. I have always used two or three unison pieces per group to get warmed up before individual solos in recitals, and encourage students to learn different ways of warming up in this way.

Educating the parents is an ongoing process in encouraging lifelong playing. Just like teachers, parents also have a narrowly focused view of music studies, concentrating on daily practice and weekly accomplishments, rather than keeping the big picture in mind. I help them to:

- Encourage their children to practice on their own with good habits.
- Help their children find performance opportunities.
- Exercise their power of choice to choose pieces and situations in which *they* would like to play.
- Use YouTube to see a variety of performances, as this expands everyone’s concept of what playing an instrument can be and can lead to.
- Most importantly, to *praise* all accomplishments

and pro-active initiatives their children may have regarding their instruments, so they can continue to propel themselves into owning their playing futures.

Plans for the Coming Year

1. The theme for 2013–2014 is going to be “Let’s Go Out.” I intend to present the students with three different kinds of public playing, so they can be aware of the possibilities:

- A concert in a retirement facility.
- Busking in the street jam/unison/duet performance.
- A “posh” event sort of performance—at a charity gala, embassy “do,” etc. Also, play dates will be encouraged and rewarded.

2. I plan to continue to cultivate my attitude of “we’re in this for a lifetime” when I communicate with the parents and students.

3. I will continue to always involve each student in choosing repertoire, an orchestra, chamber music to perform, what kind of performances to do, etc., making the private lesson a place for fermenting their ideas, not just mine.

4. The group lessons will take camaraderie to a higher level, with a naming competition for the studio, T-shirts and various types of concert dress for going out to play, group projects—I’m thinking of each group choosing a piece to learn on their own, starting small, and then getting bigger.

In Conclusion

As I said at the end of my first article, because I would like The Continuation Project to succeed, I need to enlist the help of interested colleagues, as well as people who have continued to play past high school for any ideas. I will also continue to do my own research into the myriad musical communities that exist. Therefore, I invite anyone who is interested to join an informal email group to receive periodic progress reports called “The Continuation Project News.”



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Teaching How To...

by Daniel Levitov, President, ASTA MD/DC Chapter

I recently moved into a new house (...still moving in, if truth be told). Boxes crowd the foyer, and pictures recline lazily against walls. As I unpack each box, I assign allegiances to my things, piling them according to where they will go. Items that sat in one place for many years in my old house now have question marks over them. There is no set location for anything, and that creates a freedom that is both overwhelming and freeing. I look across my new home, and I see choices waiting to be made.

I have especially noticed this in my music room. My wife (also a musician and music teacher) and I are thinking about where we want to practice, which window we want to face, where students will be situated when we are teaching, and where parents could sit and take notes. If I angle my cello chair by 10 or 15 degrees, the sound changes, the practice experience changes. Possibilities and choices abound.

The shake-up that comes with a move like this has gotten me thinking about the teaching experience, and how easy it is to fall into patterns of instruction—to put the furniture in the same place. As an experienced teacher, I feel very comfortable with the way that I teach certain technical ideas, certain repertoire, and even the way that I choose to finger or bow a certain passage. But the moving experience has opened me up to the value of re-imagining the same space in a different way. In this case, the “space” is not my music room but the act of teaching.

There is a phrase I often use with my students: I am not teaching you how to play the Elgar Cello Concerto (insert any repertoire, etude, scale, or technical idea here); I am teaching you how to play the cello. In saying this, I am attempting to help my students understand that everything we learn applies to everything else, that technical and musical progress are not isolated within a specific musical work, but are universally transferrable. Perhaps this is just another way of helping my students apply their newly developing skills to ever-changing repertoire and studies.

But recently I have put the couch on the other side of the room, metaphorically. Perhaps I am not teaching at all; perhaps I am not even the teacher. What if the cello is the teacher? What if the music is the teacher? Recently, I have been asking my students, “What is your cello telling you?” “What is the music saying?”

If the cello squeaks, or the sound is thin, what does that mean? What is your cello trying to get you to do? If a composer writes an F-sharp instead of an F-natural, what is the message? How does that change the sound of the piece, the direction of the phrase? What do you hear when you listen?

These questions open doors for students. They are questions that are beginnings and not endings, and I am finding that these types of questions steer my students towards curious practice, engaged practice, and experimental practice. When the instrument and

the music are the teachers, the lesson doesn't end after an hour but continues through the week, and, hopefully, through a lifetime of music-making.

What is my role then, if I am not the teacher? I don't see myself as a translator for my students because no instrument or music speaks a language that can be so definitely translated as a language can. But perhaps over the

course of my study, I developed a sensitivity, a clairvoyance that, when focused, can magnify the sensations of my students; I can help them to hear what I am hearing, and help them to articulate and understand what they are hearing. If I can do that, I think I have not taught my student how to play the concerto, not taught them how to play the cello, but perhaps helped them to listen more deeply and fully, helped sensitize them to the experience of making music. I see that as a worthy goal.

And while I don't plan on moving to another new house anytime soon, I do hope that I will continue to experiment in my teaching, rearranging and refreshing my well-worn musical furniture, and perhaps adding something new from time to time.



Studio Nuts & Bolts: Practical Advice in Running Your Studio

by Matthew Tifford, President-Elect, ASTA MD/DC Chapter

The topic of this article is modeled on the many “This is how I work” articles written by various professionals on internet blogs. Rather than write about teaching techniques, with this article I hope to inspire a series of similar articles to help new teachers develop their studios, as well as share ideas with other experienced teachers. In this series, experienced teachers can share the nuts and bolts of running their studio businesses. I know that when I was just getting started teaching I would have found this kind of article invaluable. I hope this proves useful and informative.

Studio Layout

I have a home studio built on the back of my house with its own entrance. When I first started teaching, I taught both in students’ homes and also had some pupils coming to my house, but I lacked a dedicated studio space. I had students coming in and out the front door all afternoon and evening—a situation that both my wife and I tired of quickly. Having a dedicated space with its own entrance both improved our quality of life and made it possible for me to create a far superior learning environment for my students.

My studio entrance opens to a waiting room, with doors to the studio and to a restroom. With this layout, parents, students, and siblings can enter and exit as they please without interrupting a lesson in progress. In addition to preventing unwanted distractions, this also allows me to schedule students back to back. All of the time consuming packing and unpacking of instruments occurs in the waiting room.

I am a firm believer in making the studio as pleasant as possible for both students and their families. I provide books, magazines, and wireless internet access for parents and siblings to use while they wait. Wireless internet is particularly popular with parents; even the ones who sit in during lessons will often quietly make use of their internet-connected devices while they listen to the class.

I designed my studio so that, while there is a physical wall visually separating the studio from the waiting

room, parents in the waiting room can still hear everything. I have found that many students are able to relax and focus better if they don’t have a parent in the room. However, many parents do want to be aware of how the lesson is going, so this arrangement usually satisfies the needs of both student and parent.

In the studio, I place my student so that he or she is not facing the window but is able to easily view my computer screen and the whiteboard. I have chairs situated around the room so I can park myself with different angles of my student. However, I try to stand as much as possible to encourage myself to seek different views.

Desktop Computer

While my cello is certainly my most important tool for teaching, I just could not run my studio effectively without my computer. It is truly the hub of my studio business. I have a Mac computer, connected to two large monitors for maximum desktop space. This abundance of space allows me to have multiple windows open from different applications. When I teach, I always have the following applications open on the screen:

- **Chrome web browser.** I prefer this one because it is fast and can be synchronized across my other computers and devices. It also has a plug-in that blocks website advertisements. I consider this a must, as my computer screens are visible to both students and parents, and some web advertisements can be inappropriate for children. In the browser, I keep www.onlinetuner.com, www.metronomeonline.com, www.waveapps.com, www.trello.com, and often youth orchestra audition lists, all open in tabs that I can quickly click across. (More on those websites below.)
- **iCal Calendar.** This is an application built into my Mac for lesson scheduling. I used to use Google Calendar, but since I use a Mac and an iPad, the ease of use for iCal made it more attractive. I always have this open, so at the beginning or end of each lesson, I can quickly input any schedule changes requested by a parent or student.

- **Mac Mail.** This is the e-mail application included with Macs. It's pretty much the same as Microsoft Outlook and other e-mail programs. I frequently find it useful to be able to shoot off e-mails to students during their actual lessons. Sometimes they will request an e-mail reminder for a schedule change; other times I will send them YouTube links to performances I would like them to listen to.
- **Evernote.** This is my go-to application for note organization. It's also free, which is nice! I keep a digital folder for each student with lesson notes from each lesson. I also keep notebooks for just about anything you can imagine. The great thing about Evernote is that it synchronizes with an online server and with other devices like tablets and smartphones. So as long as I have an internet connection, I always have access to my notes.
- **www.onlinetuner.com.** This website does one simple thing, you click the picture of the tuning fork, and it plays a recording of a tuning fork. Why do I do this instead of using a real tuning fork? For one thing, since I have my computer hooked up to big speakers, it plays nice and loud. Also, it is convenient for me to be able to look over my notes from the last lesson while clicking the tuning fork and telling the student to adjust the string up or down. After we tune the "A" string, I have them do all the other strings in 5ths the old-fashioned way. I do not use a tuner in the studio for tuning strings, though I do teach my less experienced students how to do so for home tuning.
- **www.metronomeonline.com.** Once again, this is a website with a simple and obvious purpose that could be easily accomplished with your basic Seiko metronome; however, I find that having a really loud metronome has its advantages, and I can really crank it up through the computer.
- **www.waveapps.com.** This is an online application similar to Quickbooks. Unlike Quickbooks, Waveapps is free. The company makes its money by providing easy credit card payment processing, so when clients receive invoices via e-mail, they can pay with just a couple mouse clicks. However, you don't have to use this feature, and I don't.
- **www.trello.com.** This is yet another free service! (Isn't the internet great?) Trello is an online productivity application that helps you keep track of all the tasks that need to get done. Basically, it is a

sophisticated To-do list. Running a studio business is complicated. Over the years I have taught, I have gradually learned to be more organized about all the different tasks associated with running my studio. The more organized I have become, the better my studio has functioned. For me, Trello has proved to be the best tool yet. Also, like Evernote, Trello will synchronize with tablets and smartphones, so you always have your To-do lists with you.

Other Equipment

- **Whiteboard.** One thing that really helped my teaching was the addition of a large white board in a location that is easily accessible and viewable by the student. I quickly found myself using it for all kinds of things, including writing out and breaking down complicated rhythms, writing out lesson notes for students to take down, and demonstrating the spelling of difficult words that students would otherwise never see in print like "enharmonic equivalent." A whiteboard is also great for teaching and testing students on the circle of fifths and explaining the physics of a vibrating string. I believe writing information on a whiteboard while the student watches to be far more effective than having something permanent like a poster with the same information. Watching the process of information being presented is active: it more fully engages the attention of the student.
- **Giant mirror.** I have this huge but very light mirror made out of reflective mylar (that stuff they make those fancy balloons out of at the party store). I saw them in use at the dance studio at Strathmore Hall a few years back and had to have one. This got quite a bit of use until I got my iPad. I still use the mirror some, but I find that being able to watch a video recording of yourself when you can devote 100% of your attention to watching is often more useful than trying to focus on playing and watching yourself in a mirror simultaneously.
- **Video camera.** This is what I usually use the iPad for. I love the fact that I can make a video recording of a student's bow grip/left hand/etc. and then immediately show it back to him or her on that nice big screen. I also use the iPad to make instructional YouTube videos. This is something I have started doing fairly recently. Sometimes I will have a student e-mail me a day or two after a lesson for help with a specific problem. I hate to have a student lose a

week of practice because of confusion about an assignment. Sometimes a quick e-mail or phone call will solve the problem; however if a more thorough explanation is needed, I record a short lesson and upload it to YouTube. I make the video “unlisted” so it’s not accessible to the general public and then send the student a link to it. It only takes a few minutes, and can really help a student in distress.

Policies

I have a very liberal billing, canceling, and rescheduling policy—much more so than most of the other studio teachers I know. There are lots of perfectly good reasons not to do this, but my relaxed system suits my personality and I feel creates a friendly studio atmosphere, which I enjoy. To put it another way, it feels right for me.

I balance this liberal policy by making sure to explain to all my students and parents that I have reserved a lesson slot for them and that if they cancel or don’t show up, then I am not able to earn a living during that time. I ask them to avoid canceling lessons as much as possible, and if a conflict arises, to be flexible in rescheduling the lesson. For lessons cancelled with less than twenty-four hours notice, I

ask them to pay for the lesson, but I will still offer them a make-up slot if there is one available in the same week. As a rule, I do not like to have students pay for lessons they don’t receive, however justifiable it may be to deny them a make-up lesson. For lots of different reasons, there really is no upside to having a student go more than a week without a lesson.

I bill students for the coming month with an invoice the week before the first lesson of the month. I ask them to pre-pay for the month, but I don’t penalize or give them a hard time if they pay me a week or two late. I figure if I ever come across a family I don’t trust to pay me, I just won’t do business with them. In eighteen years of teaching, that has never happened.

After the teaching itself, these are what I consider to be the primary elements of my cello studio—basically, all the stuff I was never taught in school and had to figure out on my own. Perhaps someday business and accounting classes for music majors will become the norm, but in the meantime, we string teachers can fill the gap. My hope is that other teachers will share their own business models and workflows to help advance our craft.



Report and Highlights from the Starling-DeLay Symposium on Violin Studies 2013

by Jeffrey Howard, Sachi Murasugi, and Catherine Stewart

From May 28 to June 1, 2013, ASTA Board members Jeffrey Howard, Sachi Murasugi and Catherine Stewart attended the 7th Biennial Starling-DeLay Symposium on Violin Studies held at the Juilliard School in New York City. This extraordinary five-day event is coordinated by Brian Lewis of the University of Texas at Austin and this year included master classes by Jorja Fleezanis, Sylvia Rosenberg, Ani Kavafian, William Preucil, and the incomparable Itzhak Perlman. Pedagogy classes were given by Odin Rathnam, Michael McLean, Katie Lansdale, and Brian Lewis, and Artist-Faculty recitals were presented by Giora Schmidt and William Preucil. Bach was definitely on the agenda, with thoughtful analyses and performance considerations given by Katie Lansdale and Michael McLean. Brian Lewis gave a performer's overview of the wonderful *Four Pieces for Violin and Piano* by Josef Suk. Odin Rathnam discussed the range and influence of Ivan Galamian's teaching methods through his own experience with Galamian, and additionally from his studies with Sally Thomas. Over 180 people attended the Symposium, representing thirty-two states and fourteen countries.

Ten exceptional Student Artists, ranging in age from eleven to twenty-four, performed in the master classes and on two evening recitals. From the very first note to the last, there was no doubt that this was a remarkable group of extraordinary talents. These young musicians were already seasoned professionals, having earned numerous awards, scholarships and concert experiences of the highest order. They were inspiring to listen to! Yet the master classes and discussions with these students proved particularly illuminating because of the wonderful teaching and pedagogical skills of the Artist-Faculty. There is always a lot to learn! As Juilliard President Joseph W. Polisi said in his opening remarks, "The Symposium's world-class faculty will strengthen your own teaching and I trust, re-energize your

passion for music education." (For reference, repertoire in these classes included concertos by Tchaikovsky, Barber, Mozart, Mendelssohn, Prokofiev, and Sibelius; concert pieces by Ysaÿe, Sarasate, Paganini, Milstein, Ravel and Wieniawski; and sonatas by Poulenc, Beethoven, and Fauré.)

While it is difficult to recreate the atmosphere and the spirit in which this music was discussed, the following remarks and observations were imparted at the Symposium from one part of its "highlights and insights." We hope that these exultations can spark your own interests and lead to lively discussion on how we all create and re-create music.

On Performing:

- You don't stop being nervous; you just get familiar with nerves. *Itzhak Perlman*
- When we play music, we have a choice every time we play it. *Itzhak Perlman*
- There are two dynamics you can play with orchestra—forte and fortissimo! *Brian Lewis, from DeLay*
- *p* (piano dynamic) really stands for project! *Brian Lewis from DeLay*

In the Studio:

- Beware the messages we transmit to students. Don't tell them pieces are difficult or scary but encourage exploration. *Katie Lansdale*
- The more talent the student has, the more I say, "Practice slowly!" *Itzhak Perlman*
- Fingerings are like clothing—what looks good on you might not look good on me. Encourage students to find fingerings that suit their creative ideas. *Ani Kavafian*
- Students should get to know *all* the works that the composer wrote, not just the piece that they are playing. *William Preucil*
- The lesson begins when the piece is memorized. *Brian Lewis*
- If a cell phone rings during a lesson, the student is dismissed from the lesson. *Brian Lewis*

On Technique:

- Keep your (right) elbow down and please tell your students to do the same! *Ani Kavafian*
- Regarding the bow arm: the position of the elbow and the position of the fingertips should basically be on a flat horizontal plane. *Odin Rathnam*
- **Ring of Power:** How Isaac Stern referred to the tentative circle from the thumb to the middle finger on the bow grip. *Brian Lewis*
- One click is articulation, two clicks is scratch. *Odin Rathnam, referring to bow pressure*
- Sound is the release of bow weight. *Odin Rathnam*

On Bach:

- When breaking chords in Bach, avoid obvious rhythms and keep to the mood of the piece. *Katie Lansdale*
- Observe the geography of the line. *Jorja Fleezanis, about the Bach E Major Prelude*
- Any man with twenty-two children *must have* had a bit of vibrato...

Some Practical Tips to Use with Students:

- Pinky Can-Can. Use both pinkies at the same time and do the Can-Can with them! *Brian Lewis*
- To help balance the bow hold toward the back of the hand, put your fingers down on the bow in order, 1-2-3-pinky. Then lift 1-2-3. Keep the pinky on the bow and hold the bow horizontal

to the floor with just the thumb and pinky. Then very gently add back 3-2-1. *Brian Lewis*

- Move your hand up and down on a wall to simulate the amount of pressure/contact you need to have the bow contact the string. *Odin Rathnam*
- Mark bow distribution points on the bow with chalk. *Brian Lewis*

Overall, the Starling-DeLay Violin Symposium was indeed impressive. The student performers were exceptional and the master class Artist-Faculty were insightful and very encouraging to all. Especially impressive was the time the Faculty spent to foster true musicianship. Artistry was alive at this seminar and all in attendance were seeking out lofty goals.

Yet this was not an elitist endeavor. There were literally hundreds of practical ideas that students and teachers of all levels could benefit from. Indeed, some of the most helpful ideas can easily be utilized with beginning students! If you are looking for a great way to recharge your violin batteries, by all means plan to attend the next Symposium, which will be held in May 2015. In the meantime, remember that artistry is humble. We all approach it in different ways, and this seminar helped yet again illuminate the many paths we can all take to achieve greatness.



Jeffrey Howard, University Representative, ASTA MD/DC Chapter; Sachi Murasugi, Eastern Shore Co-Representative, ASTA MD/DC Chapter; Catherine Stewart, Past President, ASTA MD/DC Chapter.



Photo credit: Nan Melville

My Experience at a Scor! Camp

by Wendy Cheng

Bel Air, Maryland, June 6–8, 2013

Back in 1996, I was about to attend my first chamber music workshop when I lost the remainder of my hearing. After slowly regaining my ability play music with one implant in the right ear in 1997, switching from violin to viola in 1999, obtaining a second implant in the left ear in 2008, and getting a new implant in 2010 (when the original right implant failed), I couldn't help but wonder if I could survive a weekend filled with daily lectures on musical topics and opportunities to play in large and small groups. This past weekend, at the Chesapeake Scor! String Camp for adult string students, was my opportunity to put both implants and my assistive listening system through the paces of a typical three-day camp for adult string players.

I use assistive listening devices (ALDs) to hear people at a distance and to hear over music. Hearing aids and cochlear implant have limitations in the sense they work best only if the speaker or musician is sitting or standing almost next to you. In an ensemble situation where the coach maybe be sitting farther away, or the other players are sitting far away, it's not possible to keep up without having to lip-read the instructor. I was adamant about not having to lip-read the instructor because I wanted to be able to focus on the content of the presentations and the coaches' instructions. My assistive listening system is called the Companion Mic system and it comes with three transmitter units (for instructor and the players) and one receiver unit (for me to use). I also have a little neckloop that connects with the Companion Mic receiver to the implants.

Scor! originally began in Rochester, NY where the husband and wife team of Kyle and Beth Bultman started their first summer music camp for the adult students in their New Horizons string orchestra class. Kyle and Beth are both violin teachers and graduated with master's degrees in violin performance from the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York. But! Scor! also has the double meaning of a musical "score." The exclamation point is reflective of the excitement, energy and approach to life and learning that is encouraged at Scor! camps. Scor! camps are now held in a dozen cities in the United States. You can find a list at www.stringcamp.com/Camps.html

Back in February I wrote to Beth and explained that I would be bringing my Companion Mic system with me to the Scor! camp. She was very receptive and encouraging, and put my mind at ease about attending and said they were a patient and fun loving group.

With the exception of the large four-day Scor! camp in Rochester, most Scor! camps run from Thursday to Saturday. However, in addition to the full camp, there are one- and two-day options available. When I arrived on Thursday morning, I received a green binder with the schedule for the weekend and a directory listing of other participants. (I chose to be included in the directory when I registered; a registrant can choose not be listed in the directory listing). There were about 11 participants; about half of them were retired and the other half were still working in a variety of occupations.

On Thursday the schedule usually has more lecture-demonstrations, sessions, and lessons on topics of interest to adult string students who are learning to play in an ensemble for the very first time. The very first topic was on sight-reading, with the entertaining question: "Do I Have to Play All Those Notes Right Now?" Beth covered sight reading basics and assured the six participants that no, they did not have to play every note. It was more important to focus on the pulse and the rhythm of the piece being played. They also had handouts for each lecture-demonstration and that helped immensely in being able to follow what was being said. The writing style in the handouts was easy to understand and incorporated bits of humor at times.

I had Beth and Kyle wear the transmitters for the Companion Mic system when they were presenting. It was so nice to be able to focus on what the instructors said without having to worry about lip-reading them.

After that first lecture the camp participants split into two groups for our first round of ensemble playing. The Basic group consisted of individuals who had studied their string instruments for less than a year, and the General group was for the more experienced players. I was in the General group. Besides me, there was one other violist, named Ann, who was

participating only on Thursday; the rest were violin players. For our first ensemble playing session, we used a book titled “Progressive Trios,” which contained 26 trio works that could be played by string players at any level. You might wonder, how is this possible? Each piece in the book is scored for three parts. The bottom part (containing the accompaniment) would be the easiest, the middle part (the harmony) and the top part (the melody) might be a little harder. I had Ann wear the Companion Mic transmitter during this ensemble session and that helped to reassure me that I was playing the viola part correctly along with her.

For me, the highlight of that first morning was playing a prelude written by the English composer Henry Purcell. I was so excited to play the prelude because the middle part had double stops, and I had never played double stops in an ensemble before. It felt really good to be able to put the double-stop skills I was learning in my private viola lessons to good use.

Next, we had lunch downstairs. Because the room was rather quiet, I was able to follow conversations without the Companion Mic. But I did have to lip-read a bit without the Companion Mic system.

Thursday afternoon followed a similar format. In one lecture-demonstration I learned about fiddling techniques. One thing that really appealed to me was, unlike playing in a classical style, the use of open strings is more acceptable in fiddling. Although I can use my fingers to play a note, sometimes they aren’t in tune immediately if I have to use my very short, left pinky finger to play the note. So anything that makes the playing experience a little easier always interests me. However, I see myself as a more classical/lyrical player than a fiddler who can play fast runs. I’m not terribly fond of playing measure after measure of fast 8th or 16th note passages.

My roommate Mimi, a cellist from New York, arrived at our hotel around 6:30 that evening. We had dinner at a restaurant overlooking the water, where the Susquehanna River merged into the Chesapeake Bay. Looking back upon that first encounter, I wished I had been a little more assertive about explaining my hearing loss in more detail and my need for Mimi to use Companion Mic transmitter, especially in restaurants. Besides, I had forgotten to bring the system to the restaurant and had left it in the hotel.

I had been upfront to Kyle and Beth about my hearing loss and explained to the other participants what the Companion Mic did for me at the beginning of the camp—that the transmitters allowed me to focus on the instructions instead of having to rely on lip-reading so much. Throughout the weekend, I found myself answering questions about hearing loss and assistive listening system. For example, Mimi inquired about the Companion Mic system after seeing me use it all weekend. As it turned out her husband has difficulty hearing her and she was wondering if the system I was using would help her husband hear her better. Another participant asked if her mother, who wore a hearing aid with telecoil capabilities, would benefit from an assistive listening system. This type of encounter was so different from my last experience participating in an ensemble—the high school student violist assigned as my stand partner was not interested in sharing a stand with me when we both played in a festival orchestra.

Friday turned out to be a really interesting day of making music. Friday morning, I was assigned to play chamber music with two other violinists. I had Christina and Liz use the Companion Mic transmitters and I played well with them. The sheet music we were using was the Trio book we used the day before. We tried different music in the book and switched parts. Sometimes I’d play the bottom part, the next time I’d play the middle part and once in a while I’d play the top part. We played Prelude again and also tried an arrangement of the French Christmas Carol “Pat-a-Pan.”

This is not to say all the provided music was written in score form, where you could see everyone’s part. We also had music that wasn’t written in score form and you only had your part to look at. Then it was up to me to ask for clarification, like what melody the violins had when the viola part showed six measures of dotted half notes.

After lunch, Kyle and Beth presented a faculty concert. They played violin duets in both classical and fiddling styles. Again, they both had the Companion Mic transmitters when they performed and it sounds really good. There were times when I could definitely separate out the melody from the accompaniment parts as they played.

Friday afternoon, Kyle talked about improvisation. Improvisation, he said, is like having a musical

conversation with other players. So we practiced doing improvisation. He would play a few bars of music and then have one participant play something back. Then he would play a different melody and the second participant would then answer him back. All went well, until Kyle had us listen to each other and improvise. Liz would play something, then Katherine would respond with a different phrase, then Martha and Lisa, and then finally me. This exercise obviously was more than the Companion Mic transmitters could handle. If I could have a re-do for this exercise it would be to leave my right implant in the normal microphone position so I could at least hear some people more comfortably.

Friday evening, we all went out to Applebee's for dinner. Applebee's is one of those restaurants where the noise level can be really loud. All ten of us sat along an oval table in a corner. I remembered to bring my Companion Mic system and used one transmitter. I put the transmitter on the top of the sugar packets as an attempt to try to hear everyone, but it didn't always work. I'm still a little reluctant to ask anyone to wear the transmitter...

My Companion Mic system held up well all day on Friday and well into the evening, when I played two hours of chamber music with the other participants. Near the end of the evening, the rechargeable batteries on my neckloop started fading out. I'm sure we would have played longer if it wasn't for that snafu. Normally, my two pairs of rechargeable batteries will last a week; however, that is only because I use them one or two hours a day. Both pairs were used up by the end of Friday night because I had been listening to music, music instructors and playing music almost twelve hours straight.

While Friday's music making was magical, Saturday's chamber music playing did not go so well. I had no problems hearing Liz and Christina play—I had problems hearing *me* play. I remember hearing my part as well as Christina's and Liz's part the day before. But I could now barely hear my part and Kyle commented on the fact my intonation was not as good as the day before. Somehow the sound mix coming from the Companion Mic system was not the same, but what changed? I started experimenting with the sound mix over lunch in an attempt to resolve the problem. I thought maybe if I put one transmitter on my music stand, maybe it would

resolve the problem. Still, the sound mix wasn't the same. Now that I'm at home, I think on Friday only one of my implants was connected to the Companion Mic system in the fifty percent mic/fifty percent telecoil setting that I like, while the other implant was in the normal microphone setting, allowing me to hear my part better.

As the camp neared its conclusion, we took a group picture and rather than billing the final event as a concert, it was called a "Music Sharing" event. I love how Scor! tries to keep everything low-key and non-threatening. Adult music students generally do not enjoy performing so putting the focus on "sharing" what music you learned puts the emphasis on the sharing rather than the performing. We played the large ensemble pieces we learned, and we also did our small chamber group pieces. I think my difficulties with hearing my part earlier on Saturday morning led Liz to suggest we play the simpler "Pat-a-Pan" for the music sharing event, but even so, I stumbled over a troublesome passage in the viola part where the rhythm changes abruptly. Afterward, everyone rushed to assure me that after we resumed playing at that passage, the playing was actually pretty good.

In conclusion, I loved my experiences at Chesapeake Scor! and think I will return next year. Now that I have a better idea what to expect, I think I will be better prepared and a little more proactive regarding how to cope with hearing loss at music camps. Eventually I hope to attend the Rochester Scor! camp one year.

String teachers, if you have adult students in your studio, please encourage them to attend Scor! camps. It is one of the few music camps where adult novice string players can grow musically at their own pace and develop skills in ensemble playing.



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Ed. note: MD/DC Chapter member Kimberley McCollum also wrote an article for the Winter 2008–2009 issue of Stringendo about the Scor! adult string camp. Read it at: www.asta.net/stringendo

Five Myths of Baroque String Playing

by Elizabeth Field

1. *Don't vibrate.*
2. *Don't sustain or play legato.*
3. *Swell on long notes.*
4. *Play out of tune.*
5. *Get a student violin, put gut strings on it, remove the chinrest, borrow a baroque bow and survive a Bach fugue.*

1 Don't vibrate: Trying to play beautifully by eliminating your most immediate expressive tool is like eliminating soy sauce from Chinese cooking to make your recipes “French.” French cuisine doesn't use soy sauce, so shouldn't that work? Not only are your new dishes not “French,” but you have diminished the quality of your old dishes. Trying to play beautifully and expressively simply by modes of subtraction is...well...*daft*.

2 Don't sustain or play legato: Baroque music was born from vocal music. Have you ever heard a song? All songs, especially those from the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries, contain lots of legato and long tones. Often the notes the violin plays are exactly the same notes as a singer who is singing vowels! Legato, lyrical, beautiful playing and singing was *prized* in the eighteenth century. So was phrasing, dynamics, articulation, inflection, stress, rubato, accelerando, good intonation, varied bow strokes, passion, drama, emotion—sounds like they liked expressive music back then!

3 Swell on long notes: It's called *Messa di Voce*. Basically, forget about it. The first early music scholars misunderstood eighteenth century bowing exercises that instructed string players how to develop their sound to make *long sustained tones* (see No. 2 above). We owe a great debt to those

scholars who opened up a world of information for us, but they got some things wrong. *Messa di Voce* is a beautiful, and very organic ornament that can be used if the moment really calls for it. (Just like a mordent, a *tierce de coule*, or a shot of vibrato...) But, the ubiquitous use of it is simply the confusion of this ornament with a bowing exercise; it was not something to do on every note. So, *extreme* swelling? Take ibuprofen, it doesn't belong in early music.

4 Play out of tune: As it turns out, seventeenth and eighteenth century string players were expected to achieve extremely detailed pitch accuracy. *Yes, really!* They understood that tuning one key perfectly (with pure intonation) on a keyboard will make other keys unusable. They devised various “temperaments” making all keys usable, with some sounding better than others. In this way, each key had a unique quality and character. They reveled in those differences and players were expected to be able to display those tonal distinctions. Early violin primers suggested teaching major and minor semi-tones in the second lesson (i.e. D – E \flat , vs. D – D \sharp). The French theorist, Joseph Sauveur, suggested limiting musicians to a 50-note octave in the “interest of practicality.” A whole step should be divided into only 5 semi-tones (D, D \sharp , D \times , E $\flat\flat$, E \flat , E). Equal temperament was the ingenious method of making everything equally out of tune

and uniform. People were scandalized by it! So, it can be challenging when at first working with wind and keyboard instruments at different temperaments, but in the end, this trial can hone your intonation to a new level of perfection. Try measuring the breadth of your beautiful vibrato. You might discover it spans several double sharps and flats.

5 Get a student violin, put gut strings on it, remove the chinrest, borrow a baroque bow and survive a Bach fugue: Yes, it is expensive to buy a whole new instrument, but if you simply put weird strings on your “second” violin and try to play it with a strange bow with no chin or shoulder support, you have only succeeded in playing a handicapped violin. Just because something looks a bit like something else, and feels different, it’s *not* the “something else.” Ever taste those beautiful, realistic fake sushi rolls? And, as towering and magnificent a composer J. S. Bach was, he was one of hundreds of composers during that period. Ever wonder why you haven’t heard of the others? Were they all bad?

All kidding aside, what is baroque performance practice?

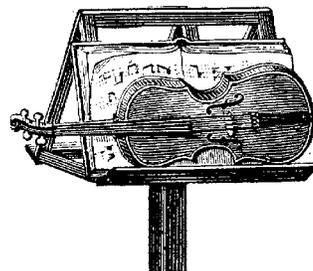
First, let’s start with the understanding that there is no such thing as a single “baroque style.” There was as much, if not more, diversity of performance traditions between 1600 and 1800 as there were in the following two hundred years. Of course, there was no internet or recordings, which meant there was no such thing as disembodied music. If you lived in Venice, you heard the music being played in Venice on that day. Maybe you got to hear a touring soloist from Paris, but the performance was the music and the player was the *only* vehicle through which the music could be heard. Music was an event, not a product. Furthermore, any composer who heard someone play had to rely on his memory to recapture what “that other music” sounded like. If he wanted to incorporate this new style of music into his compositions, it was 100% filtered through his own point of view and memory. Think of J. S. Bach writing French overtures. He had heard French music (i.e., Couperin) performed when he was studying in Lüneburg at the age of 15. Where do we look to understand how to play those overtures? Do we just study his scores? French music? Couperin? There are so many layers to this story, and so much to learn and think about and experiment with!

Every composer was unique, each a product of his locality (not simply his nationality), time period, and cultural environment. Communication among composers themselves was limited. However, they did write books and, it is mostly through these treatises that we can establish certain commonalities of notational and performance conventions of their time. But, these books are starting points. Every note is its own unique case; the books and scores left to us can’t tell us the whole story. As it turns out, Historical Performance Practice is a pretty extensive study. It is a wide array of varied languages, replete with immeasurable and nuanced expressions. Applying a few simple gimmicks to your current playing only cheapens an exquisite body of work by an important group of composers.

If you approach the study of early music with the same seriousness and integrity that you approached learning later music, the study will reward you with a world of personal, musical eloquence you may not have known lived within you. It was all about the expression back then. Is that really any different from now?



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The Lighter Side

Things I've Learned about Music

by Jim Harbert, with apologies to Dave Barry

- The badness of a musical composition is directly proportional to the number of violas in it.
- You will never find anybody who can give you a clear and compelling reason why instrumental parts are written in transposed pitch. (Especially trumpet parts in E.)
- People who feel the need to tell you that they have perfect pitch are telling you that their sense of relative pitch is defective.
- The most valuable function performed by a Wagnerian opera is its ability to drown out a rock concert.
- You should never say anything to a sideman that even remotely sounds like a compliment unless you are prepared to pay double scale.
- A string sample saved is worthless.
- Wynton Marsalis can hold all the Lincoln Center Jazz Concerts he wants. Billions of years from now, when the earth is hurtling toward the sun and there is nothing left alive on the planet except a few microorganisms, the microorganisms will still prefer...Yanni.
- The one thing that unites all non-musicians, regardless of age, gender, religion, economic status, or ethnic background, is that, deep down inside, they all have below-average musical taste.
- There comes a time when you should stop expecting other people to make a big deal about your musical talent. That time is age 11.
- There is a very fine line between "arranging" and "mental illness."
- People who want you to listen to their music almost never want to listen to yours.
- No group singer is normal.
- If you had to identify, in one word, the reason some composers have not achieved, and never will achieve their full potential, that word would be "copyists."
- The main accomplishment of Disney Studios was the film "Fantasia" in which they ripped-off Stravinsky's "Rite of Spring" by paying his agent \$2500, of which Stravinsky received \$500.
- You should not confuse your lack of musical talent with your inferiority complex.
- No matter what happens at a recording session (for example, the players shout "Bravo" and applaud) somebody will still find something wrong with your music, and the producer will begin to have doubts. Serious doubts.
- Your friends love you, even if you are tone-deaf.
- Nobody cares if you can't compose music well. Just go ahead and compose. You are sure to succeed...if you suck up to the right person.

