

STRINGENDO

Winter 2013–2014

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Message from the President

Happy Holidays from ASTA MD/DC Chapter! This is the time of year for getting together with family, eating too much, and of course, it is the time of year for music. Whether you have programmed a holiday-themed concert for your students or not, this time of year is full of concerts. As these performances come and go, it is a good time to think about the value of performance for our students. As you probably know, performances help our students prepare at a higher level of intensity, and offer them a goal to work towards. As teachers, preparing our students for performances can be a stressful endeavor. We don't want to give up on the important technical projects that are often ongoing, and yet we know that our students' performance selections often need extra attention. When our students reach the performance itself, we want their performance to represent their accomplishments and progress—we want them to play well.

Perhaps this is an occasion to step back and allow ourselves and our students to enjoy another aspect, maybe the most important one, of performance. Performances give our students a chance to share themselves with their peers, friends, and family. Live performance allows them to open themselves up emotionally, and at times, to create a silver thread that connects an audience to a musical work. This season, let's help our students weave that magical musical thread. When they understand and enjoy the communicative part of music making, it nourishes them, and keeps them coming back for more.

As you read this issue of *Stringendo*, please take note of our Annual Membership Meeting and Mini-Conference coming up on March 16, 2014. There will be great food, great presentations, great discussions, and great networking opportunities. For the first time ever, it will be free of charge as a gift to our membership. I look forward to seeing you!

Daniel Levitov



ASTA MD/DC CHAPTER
Annual Membership Meeting and Mini-Conference
Sunday, March 16, 2014
5:30 p.m. to 9:00 p.m.

Strathmore Hall, 5301 Tuckerman Lane, North Bethesda, MD 20852

Sponsored by the Levine School of Music

- All-new format for 2014!
- Free to all! Guests of members are welcome!
- Presentations! At print time, four presenters are committed. One or two more may be added later.
- Plenty of free food! There will be adequate finger food and beverages! No need to plan to eat elsewhere, either before or after the event!
- Socializing!
- Performances! Students of ASTA members will perform short selections. Details will appear later on our website and in our weekly eNewsletter.
- Networking!
- Presentation of awards for Teacher of the Year and Service to Strings.

5:30 to 6:00: A very short business meeting for all ASTA MD/DC Chapter members.

6:00 to 9:00 Presentations, awards, student performances, beverages and hors d'oeuvres.

Free! Did we mention free food? This is the first time this event has been free, so be sure to invite all of your friends!

Parking: Currently, parking in the Metro Garage is free on weekends. To access the Music Center from the Grosvenor-Strathmore Metro garage, walk across the glass-enclosed sky bridge located on the 4th level.

Mini-Conference Presenters and Topics:

Paul Scimonelli

Save Your Program, Save Your Studio: How classroom and studio teachers can use informed advocacy to stay afloat in difficult financial times.

Scott Herman

Professional Performances and The Orchestra Rehearsal: A blindfold comparison.

Daniel Levitov

Setting the Bar: How high or low should our standards be?

Matthew Tifford

Technology in the Studio: Tech tools to streamline both teaching and business elements of running your studio.

RSVP: astahotline@gmail.com

Be sure to check your email for our weekly eNewsletter updates on this event! Information is available at all times on our website: www.asta.net/eventdetails

ASTA MD/DC Chapter 2014 Nomination Form for New Officers

Election time has rolled around again. Current President-Elect Matthew Tifford will take over as President in May 2014. We have a very active and vital chapter. Let's keep the momentum alive! Nominate your capable colleagues (or even yourself) for the following officer positions, 2014–2016 term. You may submit a nomination for one position, or submit two nominations for the two positions.

- 1. President-Elect, ASTA MD/DC Chapter**
- 2. Secretary/Treasurer, ASTA MD/DC Chapter**

Contact President Daniel Levitov dan.levitov@gmail.com for duties required for each office. Please check with your nominee first to be sure he or she is interested. Send your nomination(s) either via email or postal mail to:

Catherine Stewart
17500 Princess Anne Dr.
Olney, MD 20832
cstewart91919@msn.com

Deadline for nominations is January 31, 2014.

Elections will follow. Winners will be announced in April 2014.

President-Elect, ASTA MD/DC Chapter

Nominee _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Please submit a statement detailing why you think this person should be nominated for this position. You may photocopy this form and write on the back, or send an email to Catherine Stewart.

Secretary/Treasurer, ASTA MD/DC Chapter

Nominee _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Please submit a statement detailing why you think this person should be nominated for this position. You may photocopy this form and write on the back, or send an email to Catherine Stewart.

Your signature _____

ASTA MD/DC Chapter 2014 Nomination Form for Annual Awards

At the Annual Membership Meeting on March 16, 2014, ASTA MD/DC Chapter will present two awards: **Teacher of the Year** and **Outstanding Service to Strings**. Do you know a string teacher who deserves recognition? Nominate that person for the Teacher of the Year Award! Do you know a person or business that has provided excellent services or support to string teachers and students? Nominate this person or business for the Outstanding Service to Strings Award! Send your nomination(s) to:

Catherine Stewart
17500 Princess Anne Dr.
Olney, MD 20832
cstewart91919@msn.com

Deadline for nominations is January 31, 2014.

Winners will be announced at the Annual Membership Meeting, March 16, 2014.

Teacher of the Year, ASTA MD/DC Chapter

Nominee _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Please submit a statement detailing why you think this person should be nominated for this position. You may photocopy this form and write on the back, or send an email to Catherine Stewart.

Outstanding Service to Strings, ASTA MD/DC Chapter

Nominee _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Please submit a statement detailing why you think this person should be nominated for this position. You may photocopy this form and write on the back, or send an email to Catherine Stewart.

Your signature _____

Studio Teachers Meeting

Date: Thursday, February 6, 2014

Time: 10:30 a.m. to noon

Topic: "A Few of My Favorite Things..."

Location: The studio of Julianna Chitwood, 403 Denham Road, Rockville, MD 20851

Julianna will share some of her favorite teaching ideas and materials. Please bring some of your favorite ideas or materials to share with attendees. Coffee and refreshments will be served.

Please phone or email Julianna to let her know you are planning to come.

301-424-4825 or julianna.chitwood@gmail.com

Violin Master Classes with Roy Sonne

January 4 and 5, 2014



Roy Sonne, former member of the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra and former Music Director of the Edgewood Symphony Orchestra, currently on the faculty of Carnegie Mellon University Preparatory Department and founder of the School of Violin Artistry website, will be guest clinician for a series of violin master classes on **January 4 and 5, 2014, at the home of ASTA MD/DC member Ronald Mutchnik**. Roy's unique approach to musical expression can be explored at his website: schoolofviolinartistry.com.

We are grateful to have him share his considerable knowledge with us as orchestra musician, conductor, teacher, and improvisation coach.

Sponsored by:

ASTA MD/DC Chapter

Peabody Conservatory of Music Preparatory Strings Department

Howard County Concert Orchestra.

Roy Sonne will coach 16 students in 4 separate master classes at the following times:

1. **Saturday, January 4, 2014, 2:00–4:00 p.m.**
2. **Saturday, January 4, 2014, 4:00–6:00 p.m.**
3. **Sunday, January 5, 2014, 9:00–11:00 a.m.**
4. **Sunday, January 5, 2014, 11:00 a.m.–1:00 p.m.**

Space is limited. Master class participants need to be at the level of Mozart Concerto No. 3 in G, or the equivalent and beyond.

Participants: There will be no cost to participants, their teachers, and their parents or guardians.

Observers:

- ASTA members pay a \$10 fee for each master class. If you plan to observe all 4 classes, the total cost will be \$30.
- Non-ASTA member observers pay a \$20 fee for each master class. If you plan to observe all 4 classes, the total cost will be \$60.
- Student observers pay \$5 per class.

Please fill out the application form on the next page and have it postmarked by December 15, 2013.

Send to:

Ronald Mutchnik, Chair of Roy Sonne Master Class Event
4222 Club Court
Ellicott City, MD 21042

— **Application Form** —

Violin Master Classes with Roy Sonne

STUDENT PARTICIPANT APPLICATION: (No fee)

(Please print clearly or type)

Name of Student: _____

Address: _____

Teacher name: _____

Teacher phone and e-mail: _____

Accompanist name: _____

Accompanist phone and e-mail: _____

Available to participate in: (Check all that apply)

Saturday, January 4, 2014, 2–4 p.m.

Saturday, January 4, 2014, 4–6 p.m.

Sunday, January 5, 2014, 9–11 a.m.

Sunday, January 5, 2014, 11 a.m.–1 p.m.

Students and teachers: Please note that you are responsible for providing your own accompanist for this event, and must inform us of any limitations in the scheduling of your master class.

You will be informed if you have been accepted into one of the master classes by December 22, 2013.

OBSERVER APPLICATION: (Fees listed below)

(Observers may choose to pay at the door, but space is limited to 90 persons so it is best to pre-register.)

Name: _____

Address: _____

Contact info: (phone number and e-mail) _____

ASTA MEMBER: Yes

No

STUDENT: Yes

No

Please include a check made out to ASTA MD/DC Chapter for the appropriate category:

• *ASTA members: \$10 for each master class; \$30 for all 4 master classes*

• *Non-ASTA members: \$20 for all 4 master classes; \$60 for all 4 master classes*

• *Student observers pay \$5 per master class*

Send to:

Ronald Mutchnik, Chair of Roy Sonne Master Class Event

4222 Club Court

Ellicott City, MD 21042

DINNER AND/OR LUNCH WITH ROY: At your own expense, Saturday evening after the master classes that day, we offer an opportunity to talk shop with Roy at a local restaurant in Ellicott City, Maryland, and again for lunch after the master classes on Sunday. If you would like to join us, please provide your contact information and e-mail Ronald by December 22, 2013, so he can make the reservations and confirm them with you. Ronald Mutchnik <rjm262@gmail.com>

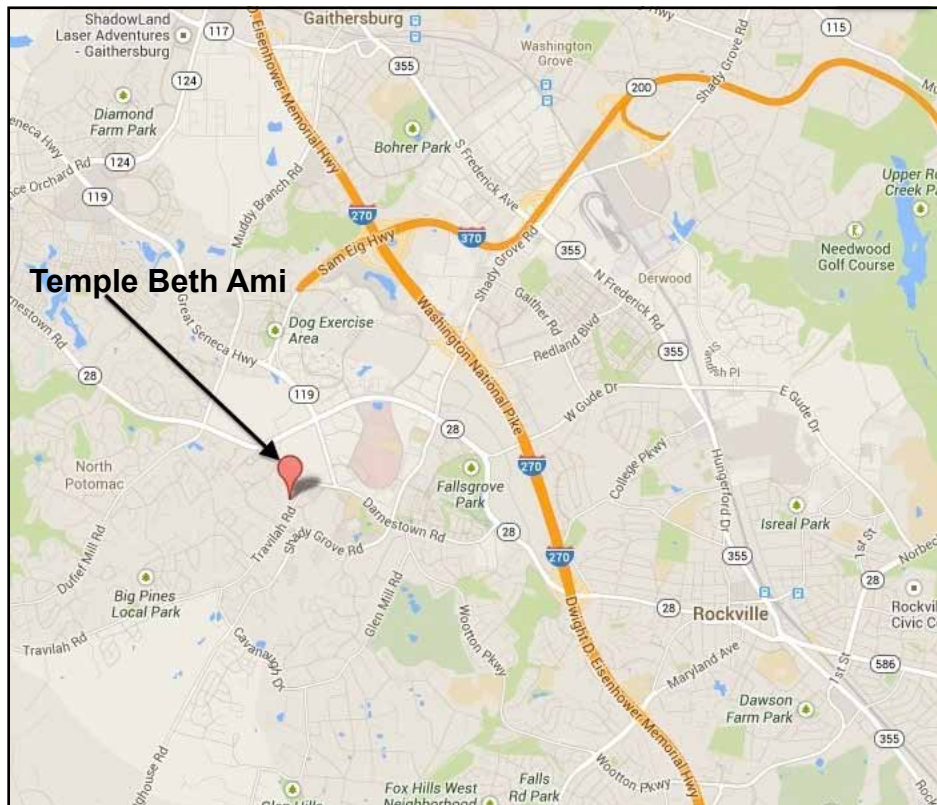
**ASTA MD/DC Chapter
announces:
Two ASTACAP Exams in 2014**

**Winter Exams:
Sunday, February 23, 2014, 2 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.**

**Spring Exams:
Sunday, June 1, 2014, 2 p.m. to 6:30 p.m.**

*For details on all exams, and online application, please visit:
www.asta.net/certificateprogram*

***Location for all exams in 2014:
Temple Beth Ami
14330 Travilah Road
Rockville, MD 20850***



ASTACAP for First-Timers

by Lorraine Combs

Background:

The year 2014 will mark the sixteenth anniversary of the ASTACAP exams. MD/DC Chapter held the first exams—Levels One through Four for violin only—on June 6 and 7, 1998, at the Benjamin T. Rome School of Music, Catholic University, Washington, D.C.

ASTACAP was developed under the leadership of Lya Stern, who was the MD/DC Chapter President at that time. That first year it was called “Certificate Program for Violin,” and in following years, “Certificate Program for Strings” after the viola and cello curricula were added. The program quickly expanded to eleven levels for all three instruments. The ASTA National Executive Board voted to adopt it as an ASTA-sponsored program in 2004 and the name was changed to ASTACAP (ASTA Certificate Advancement Program). Bass and harp are now included.

You can find a detailed description of ASTACAP on our website: www.asta.net/certificateprogram. Also, the curricula for violin, viola, cello, bass, and harp are on our website in PDF format.

Each year, as many as 150 students participate in the ASTACAP exams. Students and their parents have found the exams to be extremely beneficial for the technical and musical development of the student. Teachers who have participated in the program have found that the program enhances their professional teaching skills, and they value the input from the examiners’ comments. Students gain a sense of pride that their hard work has been officially recognized by the ASTA national organization.

If you have never entered students in the ASTACAP exams, you surely have some questions about it before you decide to take the plunge and enter some, or even all, of your students in the 2014 exams. Here are a few questions and answers that might help you in making your decision.

Questions & Answers

Q: *Why should I enter my students in yet another performance exam? Don't they already get the same experience by playing in their All-County or All-State solo string exams?*

A: The ASTACAP exams are similar to All-County or All-State performance exams in that the student plays in a room before a judge, and receives a comment sheet about his or her performance. However, more is involved in an ASTACAP exam. Solos, usually two or more depending on the level, must be memorized. There is also a required etude (not memorized) for the student, and the scale and arpeggio requirements are more detailed. Sight reading is also included as part of the exam. After completion of the ASTACAP exam, the judges’ comment sheets are sent to the teacher to review with the student and parents, along with a certificate of achievement. Several years of participation in ASTACAP exams, with the certificates as validation, can be a positive influence in college applications.

Q: *How do I know which level to enter a student?*

A: One of the many helpful things in the ASTACAP handbook is a suggested list of **goals** for each particular level. This information can help you decide if a level is too easy, or too advanced, or just right for your student at that time. Taken from the handbook, here are goals for four levels (Foundation, Level 1, Level 2, Level 3) for violin, viola, cello, bass, and harp:

Foundation Level Recommended Goals

Violin and Viola

- Good posture, left hand position, and bow hold
- Good intonation
- Correct rhythm
- Use of half bows or whole bows
- Meters of 2/4 and 4/4

Cello

- Good posture, left hand position, and bow hold
- Good intonation and correct rhythm
- Use of first, third, and fourth finger
- Meters: 2/4 and 4/4

Bass

- Good posture and instrument position
- Good bow hold and right arm position
- Good left hand shape in first and fourth positions
- Use of first, second, and fourth fingers

Harp

- Good posture and hand position
- Use of thumb and second finger
- Rhythm: whole, half, and quarter notes
- Meters: 2/4 and 4/4

Level 1 Recommended Goals

Violin and Viola

Good posture, left hand position, and bow hold
Good intonation and clear tone
Correct rhythm
Use of four fingers and four strings
Use of low second finger
Bowings: half and whole bows, legato, détaché, staccato
Awareness of bow division
Meters: 4/4, 3/4, 2/4

Cello

Good posture, good left-hand position and bow hold
Good intonation and correct rhythm
Pizzicato
Bowings: détaché, staccato, legato
Awareness of bow division
Meters: 4/4, 3/4, 2/4

Bass

Proper use of body and left arm in each area of the bass
Shifting between first, fourth, and thumb positions
Developing control of bow speed and placement,
Bowings: détaché, staccato, legato

Harp

Good posture and hand position
Use of all fingers
Intervals of 3rds, 4ths, 5ths, and 6ths
Glissando ascending and descending
Rhythm: whole, half, quarter, and dotted half notes
Meters: 4/4, 3/4, 2/4

Level 2 Recommended Goals

Violin and Viola

Same goals as Level 1, plus simple dynamic contrast

Cello

Same goals as Level 1, plus introduction of second, third, and fourth positions, and simple dynamic contrasts

Bass

Same goals as Level 1, plus shifting between positions separated by half or whole steps
Developing control of bow weight, speed, and placement, and the relations between them

Harp

Good posture and hand position
Cross-unders and turn-arounds
Intervals up to an octave
Rhythm: whole, half, quarter, eighth, and dotted quarter notes
Keys of C, G, F
Meters: 4/4, 3/4, 2/4, 6/8

Level 3 Recommended Goals

Violin and Viola

Good posture and position of right and left hand
Good intonation and clear tone

Correct rhythm

Bowings: détaché, staccato, martelé, and legato
Introducing shifting above the first position
Confident use of whole bow and bow division
Dynamics: crescendo and diminuendo
Beginning of vibrato on longer notes
Ritardando

Cello

Good posture and position of right and left hand.
Good intonation and clear tone
Correct rhythm
Use of correct bow distribution
Increasing skills in second, third and fourth positions
Bowings: détaché, staccato, martelé, and legato
Dynamics: crescendo and diminuendo
Beginning of vibrato on longer notes
Ritardando

Bass

Increasing control of intonation, rhythm, and tone
Increasing control of bow use
Martelé stroke
Dynamics
Beginning vibrato on longer notes

Harp

Good posture and hand position
Rolled triads (3 fingers), hands separately and hands together
Harmonics
All intervals
Muffles
Glissandi, ascending and descending with turn-arounds in each hand
Rhythm: sixteenth and dotted eighth notes, triplets
Keys: C, G, D, F, B \flat , E \flat , and relative minors (harmonic form)

Q: Do I have to choose a piece listed from the particular level in which I want to enter a student?

A: No. You can pick a piece that is not listed in the curricula, as long as it is appropriate for the level the student will play. The ASTACAP Chair will be happy to give advice on this.

Q: Where should I look to find more information?

A: Visit www.asta.net/certificateprogram, and click on [Certificate Advancement Program page](#) at the bottom of the article. That will take you to the ASTA National website for the Certificate Advancement Program, where you can read or download the entire handbook after you click on the members' link. If you have never visited the ASTA National website, you will need your user name and password to look at the handbook. There are instructions to find your user name and password if you do not know them.



2014 Spring Festival: Strings Plus Sunday, March 2, 2014

Chamber Music Competition for Strings and Any Other Instruments with Strings

Presented by MSMTA and ASTA MD/DC Chapter

KELLY S. HSU, Chair, 301-610-7530, kellyshoe@verizon.net

- Date:** Sunday, March 2, 2014, 9:00 a.m. to 1:00 p.m.
- Deadline:** Friday, January 10, 2014
- Location:** The Landon School Mondzac Performing Arts Center
6101 Wilson Lane, Bethesda, MD 20871
- Fee:** \$12 per person per ensemble entry, regardless of the number of performers
Entering teacher should send *one check* for all entries.
Make payable to MSMTA, and send to:
KELLY S. HSU, 532 West Montgomery Ave, Rockville, MD 20850
- Eligibility:** Students through 12th grade, age 6 and above, as of March 3, 2014
- Time Limits:**
- | | |
|------------|------------|
| Ages 6–9 | 4 minutes |
| Ages 10–12 | 6 minutes |
| Ages 13–15 | 8 minutes |
| Ages 16–18 | 10 minutes |
- Repertoire:** Two movements of a composition are acceptable but not required.
Please contact the chair if there are any questions.
- Procedure:** The following rules apply to this festival:
1. The coach must have worked with the ensemble at least 75% of the time and be a member of either MSMTA or ASTA.
 2. The piano part must be performed by students. A professional pianist may perform only in case of orchestral reductions for piano.
 3. Ensembles may enter competitively or non-competitively for a rating.
 4. Students must have an original part and teachers should make a good faith attempt to provide an original score for the judge.
 5. Ensembles will be grouped according to the average age of the participants.
 6. In competitive events, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, or Honorable Mention may be awarded.
 7. If a student plays in more than one ensemble, coaches and pieces must be listed on the back of the application form.
 8. Judges' comments of each ensemble's performance will be sent to the coach.
 9. Judges' music should be measure numbered on each staff.
 10. Teachers must be available to help on the day of the event.

*The general rules governing MSMTA events also apply.
Please read them carefully: www.msmta.org under Student Activities*

— **Application Form** —
2014 Spring Festival: Strings Plus
Sunday, March 2, 2014

**Chamber Music Competition for Strings and
Any Other Instruments with Strings**

Presented by MSMTA and ASTA MD/DC Chapter

Application form should be filled out by an MSMTA or ASTA member teacher only.

Teacher writes only one check for all entries, made payable to MSMTA.

Postmark deadline: Friday, January 10, 2014

Send to: KELLY HSU, 532 West Montgomery Ave., Rockville, MD 20850

Please print or type. Be sure to complete all information.

Average Age of Group: _____ (For Office Use Only)

Competitive Non-competitive

Is a piano needed? Yes No

Name of Coach: _____ Phone: _____

Coach's Address: _____

Coach's Email: _____

Name of Student 1: _____ Birthdate: _____ Age: _____

Instrument: _____ Is student in another event? Yes No

Name of Student 2: _____ Birthdate: _____ Age: _____

Instrument: _____ Is student in another event? Yes No

Name of Student 3: _____ Birthdate: _____ Age: _____

Instrument: _____ Is student in another event? Yes N

Name of Student 4: _____ Birthdate: _____ Age: _____

Instrument: _____ Is student in another event? Yes No

Composition(s):

Title: _____

Composer: _____ Performance time: _____

Note: If any student is in more than one ensemble, list name, composition, and coach of each additional group(s) on the back of this application.

I hereby acknowledge that I have read and understand the rules governing MSMTA events and this specific event and agree to abide by them. My students and/or parents have also been apprised of the rules. I understand that I must be available to assist with the event on competition day. If I fail to fulfill my work obligation, I understand and agree that my students may be declared ineligible to participate in this event. Please do not request exceptions to this requirement.

I am a member of: MSMTA ASTA Both

Teacher's signature _____

2014 Spring Festival: Solo String Instruments

Sunday, April 6, 2014

Presented by MSMTA and ASTA MD/DC Chapter

SARAH COTTERILL, co-chair, 301-588-8983, pscotterill@verizon.net
MAY ING RUEHLE, co-chair, 301-277-8031, wuyeemei@gmail.com
JEAN PROVINE, co-chair, 301-927-5312, jean.provine@gmail.com

Date: Sunday, April 6, 2014

Deadline: Monday, February 24, 2014

Location: Clarice Smith Performing Arts Center, University of Maryland
Rt. 193 and Stadium Drive, College Park, MD

Fee: \$20 per entry

*Entering teachers should write **one check** for all entries.*

Make the check payable to MSMTA, and send it to:

JEAN PROVINE, 4611 Beechwood Road, College Park MD 20740

Eligibility: Students through 12th grade, age 6 and above, as of April 6, 2014.

First Place winners from last year may enter competitively.

Time Limits:	Ages 6–8	4 minutes
	Ages 9–10	6 minutes
	Ages 11–12	7 minutes
	Ages 13 and up	10 minutes

Rules: The following rules apply to this festival. Failure to comply with any rule may result in disqualification.

1. Teachers are not allowed to accompany their own students. (Parents may accompany)
2. Competitive students must perform from memory. Non-competitors may play from music.
3. Students must bring an original copy of either the score (accompaniment) or solo part to give to the judge. Non-competitors who play from music may, but are not required to, provide a copy for the judge. No one should give the judge a photocopy.
4. In competitive events, 1st, 2nd, 3rd, and Honorable Mention may be awarded. The judge's decisions are final and not open to discussion.
5. Teachers must be members of either MSMTA or ASTA and be available to help on the day of the event or the day before or the day after. Contact one of the Festival Chairs for details.

The judge's comments of each of the students' performances will be sent to the teacher.

The general rules governing MSMTA events also apply.

Please read them carefully: www.msmta.org under Student Activities

— **Application Form** —
2014 Spring Festival: Solo String Instruments
Sunday, April 6, 2014
Presented by MSMTA and ASTA MD/DC Chapter

Application form should be filled out by an MSMTA or ASTA member teacher only.

Teacher writes only one check for all entries, made payable to MSMTA.

Postmark deadline: Monday, February 24, 2014

Send to: JEAN PROVINE, 4611 Beechwood Road, College Park MD 20740

Please print or type. Be sure to complete all information.

Instrument: Violin Viola Cello Bass Guitar Harp
 Competitive Noncompetitive (Last year's winner may enter competitively)

Name of student _____ Grade in school _____ Date of birth _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

Accompanist's name _____ Phone _____

Accompanist's email _____

For scheduling purposes: Please list any time restrictions affecting you or your accompanist. _____

If you need an accompanist, the Festival has several available for hire. Contact one of the Festival Chairs for details.

Compositions (either 1 or 2) to be performed

Please list all information such as opus, key, movement, etc. If the piece is from a collection, please identify the name of the collection. You may not change the program after the application deadline. Be sure to include all teacher information.

Composer	Title	Movement	Performance time
1. _____	_____	_____	_____
2. _____	_____	_____	_____

Teacher's name _____

Address _____

Phone _____ Email _____

I hereby acknowledge that I have read and understand the rules governing this event and agree to abide by them. My students and/or parents have also been apprised of the rules. I understand that I must be available to assist with the event, either on the day or before or after. If I fail to fulfill my work obligation, I understand and agree that my students may be declared ineligible to participate.

I am a member of: MSMTA ASTA Both

Teacher's signature _____

Navigating Our Teaching Choices

With Some Ideas on Using Lesson Time and Materials

by Jean Provine

A few years back, someone gave me a crusty old copy of Ludwig Spohr's *Violin School*.¹ First published in 1832, this was one of the early method books meant as a complete teacher's guide from beginning to professional level. For a more complete picture of the various "schools" of violin playing in the early 19th century, see Robin Stowell's book, *Violin Technique and Performance Practice*.² Compared to what we teach today, there are major differences in posture, and the expectation that the student completely understand not only the parts of the violin, but details of construction, as well as all the note values, time signatures and notes names before beginning to play. It is suggested that lessons be taught daily. Diligence and talent on the part of the student were considered the key to success, and the teacher was simply the mechanism for the flow of information. Looking at this I tried to imagine how different it would be to start at the beginning of such a book, and simply and methodically guide my pupils through the exercises that advance quickly into various keys and positions, in comparison to the teaching of today. For my beginner of course I would not have had a shoulder rest, tapes for the fingerboard, bow hold aids, model recordings, fine tuners and strings that stayed in tune, electronic tuners or metronomes, recording equipment, youth orchestra opportunities, or parental help (doubtful). How difficult that must have been and how lucky we are today! Thanks to improved teaching methods and devices, the standard of playing has soared.

However, we do have new problems. Today we have more choices to negotiate and less time. Just as we have historically unprecedented choices in every area of our modern lives—our food, clothes, entertainment, and transportation—today's teachers have a much bigger job than in Spohr's day choosing, not just how to teach, but which of an huge array of methods to use, and what to teach and when.

First of all, there is that long list of basics: posture, tone, scales and etudes, piece preparation, practice skills, musical expression, listening, sight-reading, theory, and ear training. In addition, most of our students are involved in at least one orchestra or

ensemble that requires help on the parts. They have upcoming auditions or competitions. Perhaps they also want to learn to improvise, play folk, jazz, or rock, so we must add these to our "to do" list. Add to that decisions about which electronic and video aids to use. Finally, we have real time constriction on the schedules of both teacher and student. The "daily lesson" mentioned by Spohr is certainly not a possibility! With every new invention—the car, the phone, the computer—we have facilitated the ability to hear about, join, and physically get ourselves involved with a dazzling variety of activities in a shorter space of time. For comparison, look at the now famous little orchestra from Paraguay who made their instruments from local junk and practiced diligently. Or look at the success of *El Sistema*. What those students have that we don't have is *time*. So, how can we be most thoughtful and efficient when navigating this array of duties, both in a single lesson and over the course of time?

Lesson Time Division

- Divide the lesson time into 1) technique, 2) work on a piece and its practice approach, and 3) "other." "Other" could be orchestra music, audition prep, theory, listening, fiddling. The proportions will probably lean more towards the "other" and less towards the basic technique on the higher levels.
Pros: Keeps a good weekly balance, provides a stable structure, checks on a variety of things weekly.
Cons: Doesn't allow for in-depth examination of an important point or area, or the intensity of preparation required for a competition.
- Concentrate on one point for the lesson.
Pros: Really drives home something that needs major work, good for remedial work.
Cons: Can let mistakes creep in to other areas, especially for early stages.
- Go with the flow. Follow up on a student's current interest, be it an extra piece for school, audition or orchestra piece. Concentrate on the upcoming performance.
Pros: Great for student motivation.
Cons: Basics might suffer.
- Spend one semester concentrating on an item that needs attention, but not at the expense of basic things such as sight-reading, theory, or a physical skill such as vibrato.

- Ask the student to set a 3-month or year's goal for something specific and concentrate on that, again, not to exclude other things completely.

All of these can work well. The important thing is to occasionally take a step back to stop and think what will work best at the moment, at the level and age for each of your students. Do they need a heavy dose of basics, repetition to harden skills, or maybe just some motivation above all else? Is some technical skill lacking that is now, or soon will be, hindering them? Should you stop and leave for later something they seem not yet ready for or interested in? Don't fail to teach techniques for good practice. It will save much lesson time. As for concentrating on one thing, like good nutrition, it never hurts to gorge on your favorite unhealthy food, as long as the long-term general diet is good. You may find yourself circling through the teaching areas periodically.

Although some students need more help in one area than another, within your studio it is generally useful for the elementary and intermediate pupils to go through pretty much the same steps. They enjoy comparing themselves and can note progress better than if everybody is doing something different. In that kind of studio comradeship is important. For younger pupils, find a balance between the fun and games, and the hard work of mastering the basics. Students will not work well if they don't enjoy it, and you as their first teacher are responsible for establishing their attitude towards music lessons.

Teaching Material

A personal teaching method develops around the material you use, and you teach most efficiently when working with the familiar. You know where the problems are, how to prepare technically for them and which bits to highlight for special attention. However, unlike in Spohr's day, we have and should take full advantage of our feast of materials and opportunities to learn from other teachers. Attend workshops, talk to other teachers, and keep open to everything! You can often try a new idea such as an analogy or exercise immediately, and sometimes it is just the thing you needed to solve a problem. Look through as much material as possible, keeping in mind the individuals and your present studio. Regularly incorporating some new material is as important to your teaching sanity as spice is to food, but be careful about making major changes in method or material all at once. The exception would be

when your situation or student clientele has totally changed, as when you move to or from a school classroom situation.

Consider your own strengths. For example, if you are not a skilled fiddler, rock, or jazz player, learn enough about these areas to refer interested students to the appropriate material, a teacher, or workshops; but stick with teaching what you do best.

Each Student Is Special

For many years I have wondered whether treating students individually extends to expecting less quality from some than others. Suzuki says "every child can," but at what rate? Some will take years to finish Book 1; others only months. Do I demand the slower ones rise to the same level of perfection as the high flyers? Do I not sweat if their posture isn't perfect and they play a little out of tune? If I skip the basics and they suddenly develop interest later might they be handicapped? What about those who show the greatest potential? Should they follow a special track? I try to teach all my students the basics of posture, reading, and tone production to the same level, no matter how long it takes. No escapees. High flyers will simply get through more material: extra pieces, more etudes. However, at some point, normally in the last couple of years of high school, there will be students who obviously are not ever going to play classical music at a very high level. At that point sometimes curved pinkies, scroll height, and high position facility cease to matter, and finding where their musical heart lies becomes the prime focus. Might they want to play with a folk group or rock group or small ensemble? Do they like duets? I try to concentrate on those things that will encourage future playing in their area of interest with the equipment they have. Others may have the sort of skills and experience to find a place in adult or college orchestras or play quartets. It is wonderful that they all will have so many musical choices available at every level to enjoy when they leave us. I just hope that I have prepared all of my students to choose their own musical paths.



¹Spohr, Ludvig. *Violinschule*. Wien, 1832. <https://archive.org/details/violinschulevonl00spoh>

²Stowell, Robin. *Violin Technique and Performance Practice in the Late Eighteenth and Early Nineteenth Centuries*. Cambridge, 1985.

A Tool for the Digital Studio: *Evernote*

by Matthew Tifford

In the last issue of *Stringendo* I wrote a column on tips for running a private studio. In that article I mentioned a number of software applications that I use, including a note-taking program called *Evernote*. In this issue I will focus in on why and how I use *Evernote*, and why I believe it to be a truly must-have tool for studio teachers like myself.

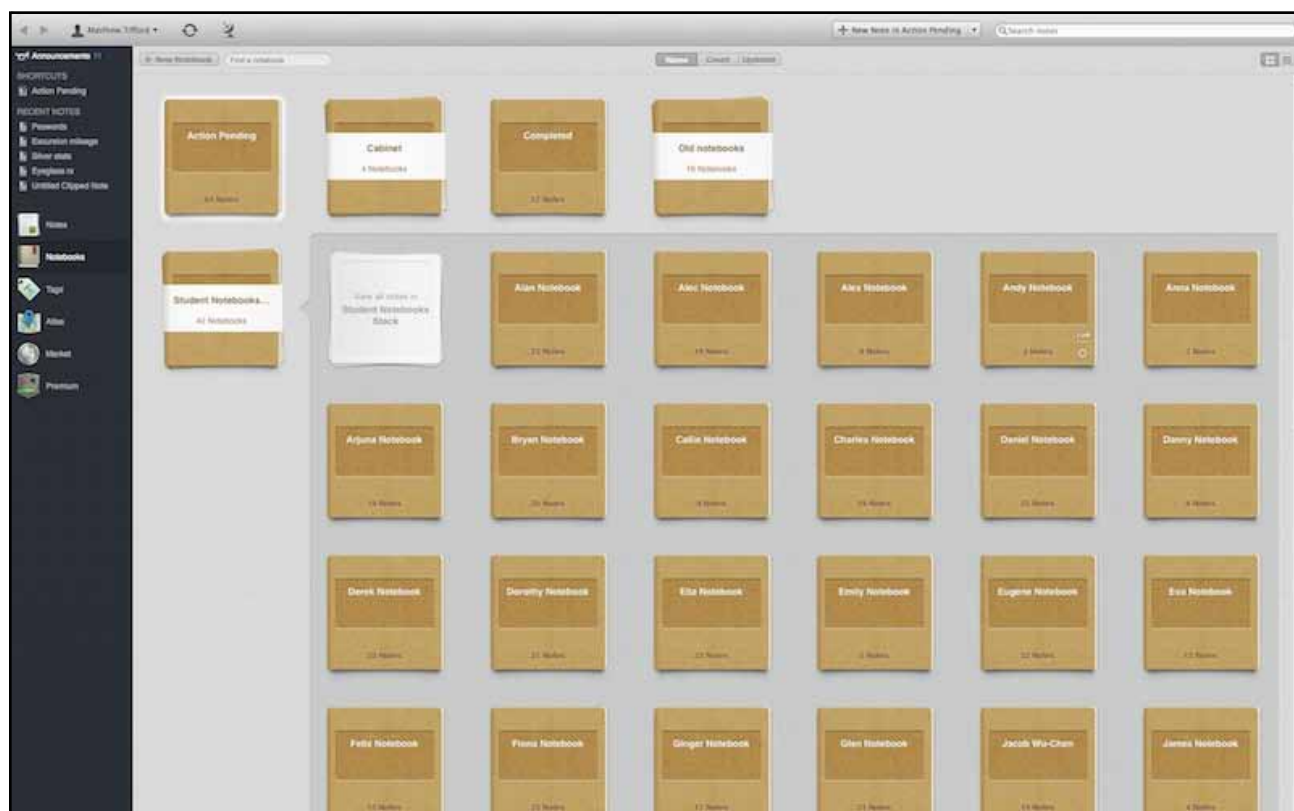
I have been using a digital notebook to keep track of students' lessons since the early years of my studio when I would drive all over suburban Maryland and Northern Virginia teaching in peoples' living rooms. With all the stuff I had to lug around, I was attracted to the idea of keeping both my calendar and lesson notes in one small device.

In 1996 I purchased an Apple Newton Messagepad. This was the device that Palm Computing eventually copied with the Palm Pilot. It had a stylus-based touch screen with which one could write on the screen and have the handwritten words almost instantly converted into text. The technology isn't all that remarkable now, but back in 1996 it was almost like magic. I used it to keep notes on all my students, and also used the calendar and address book for

general management of my studio.

Eventually, I moved from making house calls to teaching in my home studio, and my calendar and notes system naturally migrated to my desktop computer. Over the last 17 years I've lost track of how many different devices and programs I have used for my notes. Invariably, each always had some significant flaw that had me longing for something better—some perfect application that would do everything I needed and would integrate seamlessly into my teaching process. The program I use today, *Evernote*, is that program.

I use the *Evernote* desktop application on my Mac. Since I teach in my home studio, I do not have much need for the phone or tablet versions, except for the occasional closeup photo of a bow hold. *Evernote* allows you to group notes in what it calls "Notebooks", and to group Notebooks into "Stacks." These work similarly to the hierarchical folders on a computer hard drive. I have a Stack called "Students", and within that Stack I have a Notebook for each student. Inside each Notebook I have lesson notes sorted by date. I create a new note at each



lesson, usually by duplicating last week’s note to use as a template for the new lesson.

Links

Being able to include links really takes any kind of document to the next level of usefulness. If you use the internet at all, you will be familiar with how they work. A link can be either text or an image, which when clicked, initiates an action, usually loading a new web page, downloading a file, e-mailing someone, or even opening a file or folder on your computer. These days, most word processors allow you to create these links in documents and *Evernote* has this same functionality. (Side note, if you want to link files on your hard drive, the easiest way to do this is to install either Dropbox or Google Drive and move all of your documents into the new Dropbox or Drive folder)

When I am teaching, I go to my computer frequently for all kinds of things. I play students audio recordings, show them YouTube videos, print music both from my computer and imslp.org (International Music Score Library Project), look up audition requirements, and much more. Instead of constantly searching for what I need, I keep an *Evernote* page with links to all my most commonly used videos, websites, and documents so I don’t have to waste time searching around for them.

Note Sharing

I have just recently started experimenting with note sharing with a couple of my students, and so far it’s worked great. To do this you do have to convince your students/parents to download and install *Evernote* on their home computers or handheld devices, but since it’s free and relatively easy to install, it shouldn’t be a hard sell for most.

Here is the scenario that I think really “sells” *Evernote* for the studio teacher:

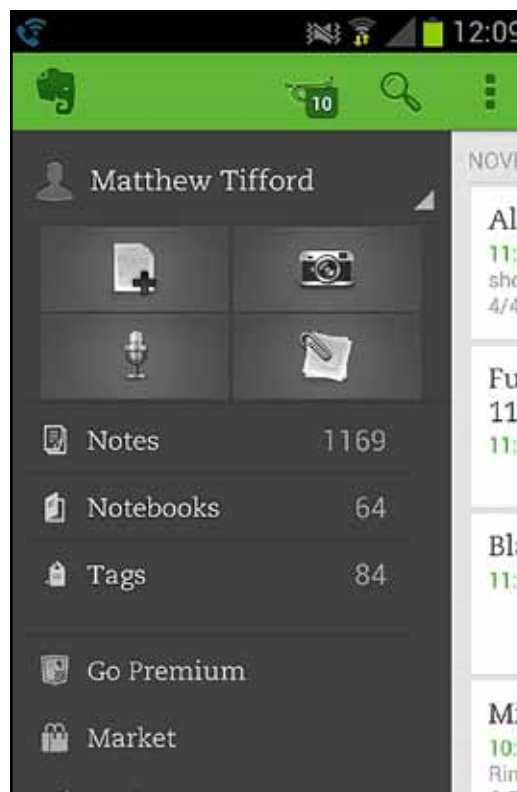
As your next student walks into the studio for his lesson, you open his *Evernote* folder and create a new page for today’s lesson. For convenience, you copy and paste the text from last week’s lesson to use as a template for this one. This saves a lot of typing, because many assignments will be the same, although with different practice notes.

Throughout the lesson, you update the page with new assignments and practice notes for the week. You take a couple photos, which are attached to the

page—perhaps close-up shots of your bow hold, illustrating an element the student is working on improving. Then you record an audio clip with *Evernote*’s audio recording feature, also attached to this page, demonstrating how you want the phrasing in a particularly challenging passage. As described earlier, you include links to a relevant YouTube video, music store website link for sheet music, or a needed accessory. Now the *pièce de résistance*: with a couple mouse clicks you share the page with your student. When he gets home, the new page you created, with practice notes, photos, audio clip, and web links are awaiting both student and parent to guide them through the week.

I’ve been doing this kind of thing in a more clunky fashion for years, usually by e-mailing the relevant information. Note Sharing with *Evernote* makes it all much simpler. My hope is to have my entire studio onboard as soon as possible.

While each of us has our own style for both teaching and running a studio business, there are an abundance of excellent tools, many free or at least very inexpensive, available now that can be adapted to fit virtually any workflow. If you haven’t already, you may want to play around with *Evernote*. It’s worth a look.



The Lighter Side

Dictionary of Musicological Absurdities

Adagio fromaggio: To play in a slow and cheesy manner.

Al dente con tableau: In opera, chew the scenery.

Allegro con brillo: The fastest way to wash pots and pans.

AnDante: A musical composition that is infernally slow.

Antiphonal: The prohibition of cell phones in the concert hall.

A patella: Unaccompanied knee-slapping.

Bar line: What musicians form after a concert.

Basso continuo: The act of game fishing after the legal season has ended.

Basso profundo: An opera about deep sea fishing.

Concerto grosso: A really bad performance.

D.C. al capone: You betta go back to the beginning, capice?

Diminuendo: The process of quieting a rumor in the orchestra pit.

Eardrum: A teensy, tiny timpani.

Fog horn: A brass instrument that plays when the conductor's intentions are not clear.

Grace note: The IOU you deposit in the church collection plate when you're out of cash.

Kvetchendo: Gradually getting annoyingly louder.

Opera buffa: Musical stage production at a nudists' camp.

Pastorale: Beverage to drink in the country when listening to Beethoven with a member of the clergy.

Pipe smoker: An extremely virtuosic organist.

Pizzacato: The act of removing anchovies from an Italian dish with short, quick motions and tossing them to a nearby awaiting feline friend.

Rubato: Cross between rhubarb and a tomato.

Toiletto: The effect on the human voice of reverberation in small rooms with ceramic tiles.

Wood wind: A noise in the game of golf, made by a club missing the ball on a tee shot.

Humor from the Internet

For sale: Viola, German, 405 mm.
Excellent condition. Recently tuned.

Established string quartet seeking two violinists and one cellist.

CONDUCTOR TO ORCHESTRA AT THE BEGINNING OF A REHEARSAL: Please get your pencils out. We have some marking to do on this score. The first two bars are in 3/4, not 4/4 as written. Next, in the fifth bar, change it to 7/8 and this remains to the end. Now, in bars 7 through 12 we lower the pitch one half step. In bar 13, lower the pitch one whole step and this will remain to the end. Thank you. Now, let us begin.

SOPRANO SOLOIST: Excuse me, Maestro. What would you like for me to change?

CONDUCTOR: Nothing, madam. Just sing it exactly as you did yesterday.