



American String Teachers Association

ASTA SACRAMENTO SECTION FALL 2018 NEWSLETTER

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Kim Cole Feeney, *CalASTA State President*

Greetings ASTA members! Autumn has just begun, bringing with it its arboreal splendor, trees whose modulating chords of foliar color bring us such visual delight! Fall heralds our **Fall Recital** in November along with the **CalASTA State Solo Competition finals** in October.

An application form for the **FALL RECITAL** has been included. The recital will take place November 18 at Watermelon Music in Davis. Traditionally, our Fall recital includes hearing the winners of our Solo Competition held last May: **Jasmine Luh**, novice division violin and **Andrew Yung**, junior division violin, both students of Frieda Yang; **Alexander Chang**, novice cello, student of Julie Hochman; and **Esther Kim**, junior division cello, student of Andy Luchansky. These talented winners will receive their certificates and cash prizes at this event.

The **CALASTA STATE SOLO COMPETITION** will be held on October 20 in the Ann E. Pitzer Center at UC Davis. You are welcome to attend and root for our 2018 section winners, violinists **Andrew Yung**, and 1917 winners **Erik Yang** and **Amaryn Olmeda**; cellists **Alexander Chang** and **Esther Kim**, and 1917 winner **Starla Breshears**.

Parking for the Pitzer Center is the same as for the music building. The closest parking lot to the Center is on the corner of First Street and Old Davis Road. Parking is free on Saturday. The Solo Competition starts at 8:45 a.m. and runs until 9:30 p.m. There are 45 contestants. Since we are hosting this event, there is much to do, so if you would like to help out, **PLEASE VOLUNTEER!** Susan Lamb Cook graciously offered to set up work schedules:

Check-in: Check off name of contestant. Collect music, be sure that the measures are numbered, put post-it note on the music with the student number. Direct student to warm-up rooms.

Door Monitor (Back of Hall): Stay by entrance door to be sure no one enters or exits during a performance.

Time Keeper: Sit in front of judges. Start your stop watch as soon as the contestant enters the stage. Give judges a 4 minute, then a 2 minute warning (hold up a yellow card, then an orange card). 10 minutes for Novice, 15 for Junior and Senior. Determine with judges who will stop the contestant at the end of his or her audition time. (con't)

Door Monitor (Stage Door): Open door for contestant and pianist. Start your stop watch as soon as the contestant enters the stage. 10 minutes for Novice, 15 for Junior and Senior. Open the door when the time is up. Hand certificate to contestant when he or she leaves the stage.

Runner: Escort contestants from check-in table to warm-up and piano rehearsal rooms. Keep track of order of contestants and help escort contestants to Recital Hall stage door a few minutes before his or her audition.

Judges and Accompanist Meals: Prepare lunch buffet for the following times: 12:45 - 2:00 p.m., and 6:30 - 7:30 p.m. Keep snacks out for accompanists.

Susan says she needs more volunteers between 8:00 a.m. and 2:00 p.m. CAN YOU HELP OUT? If so, please contact her: www.susanlambcook.com or (916) 549-6873.

Have you been an ASTA National Conference? They are amazing and energizing!



The poster for the 2019 ASTA National Conference features a dark blue background. On the left, the text "2019 ASTA NATIONAL CONFERENCE" is written in pink and yellow, with "MARCH 6-9, 2019 ALBUQUERQUE NEW MEXICO" below it. On the right, a yellow sticky note contains the handwritten text "Connecting with other passionate string teachers is SO valuable!". Below the sticky note are two photographs: one of a string quartet performing and another of people socializing at a conference.

Connect with hundreds of string musicians and teachers like you at the only national strings conference!

LUTHIER PROFILE

We are continuing to profile our area's many fine luthiers. We are so lucky to have such fine craftsmen in our midst! For this newsletter, we interviewed ASTA member **Daniel Dumitru**. His workshop is located in Shingle Springs, and he can be contacted at (916) 724-9013.

Greetings, Daniel! Tell us, do you play any instruments?

Yes, I began playing the violin at the age of 9, over 40 years ago. I also play the viola some. In Junior High School, I was a member of the Advanced orchestra my entire 4 years, the last two as concertmaster. I continued playing more casually at events and church services after entering high school and later pursuing and obtaining a science/engineering degree at Virginia Tech. More recently, I have been blessed to play together with my eldest son (who plays the viola) and other talented musicians in Camerata, the baroque ensemble under the direction of Dr. Lorna Peters at the Sacramento State School of Music.

Where did your interest in string instrument setup and tonal enhancement come from?

My interest in string instrument setup and tonal enhancement began a few years ago after hearing what some students and youth were paying for their instruments. I recall thinking to myself that the instruments sounded ok, but that they often lacked resonance, sweetness, projection, power, and/or balance across all strings, especially for the price being paid. The sound was often muted, lacking depth and richness. On occasion, the instruments suffered from unwanted "wolf" tones. This was the case with my own instrument as well. This sparked in me a profound desire to unlock the secrets to what makes string instruments resonate and sing. I approach this research from a perspective that merges traditional luthier principles and measurements, modern-day scientific/engineering principles, combined with my experience as a player.

What is your area of specialization?

My focus and passion is in "enhanced setup" of string instruments so that they play, project, and "sing" effortlessly across all the strings. I have developed what I call an 18-point "Enhanced Setup" (ES) checklist I use which includes checking, modifying, and improving the nut, bridge, and sound post. I also offer optional components such as matching pegs, lightened, compensated tailpieces, and endpin sets that further enhance sound and also provide a customized, aesthetic, cohesive look.

Do you only work on violins and violas?

No, I work on cellos and upright basses as well. The same overall principles apply.

What can I expect as a result of Enhanced Setup changes?

My experience is that the instruments that undergo Enhanced Setup (ES) changes experience an increase in sound projection, sonority and resonance, precision, depth, and richness of sound, as described to me by those who have experienced the changes. An analogy I like to use is the difference between a flat 2-dimensional (2D) image versus a 3-dimensional (3D) object with depth. Wolf tones also are often eliminated or greatly minimized, especially if a

compensated tailpiece is used. And, generally, the better the instrument is constructed, the greater the increase. ES can take a badly constructed or poorly setup instrument and make it sound “good”, a good instrument and make it sound “great”. Well constructed instruments made with quality tonal woods respond especially well to the changes. And, generally, the larger the instrument, the more amplified/noticeable the changes. Thus, a cello will generally experience a more noticeable change than a viola, for example.

Are there any principles which guide you in your work?

Yes, there is one in particular: “A test is worth a thousand guesses”. As an inventor, it is said, Edison made 1,000 unsuccessful attempts at inventing the light bulb. When a reporter asked, “How did it feel to fail 1,000 times?” Edison replied, “I didn’t fail 1,000 times. The light bulb was an invention with 1,000 steps.” Science and technology have advanced rapidly since the time of Amati, Stradavari, and Guarneri. Violins and violas, for example, were originally set up without chin rests, and commonly used strings made of lamb gut. Today, in contrast, chin rests and synthetic core strings are commonplace. Violin strings have even been spun from spider silk threads. Dr. Shigeyoshi Osaki of Japan's Nara Medical University has used 300 female *Nephila maculata* spiders - one of the species of “golden orb-weavers” renowned for their complex webs - to provide dragline silk. For each string, Dr Osaki twisted between 3,000 and 5,000 individual strands of silk in one direction to form a bundle. The strings were then prepared from three of these bundles twisted together in the opposite direction. The result? A unique and thrilling sound, with a brilliant timbre.

We also have string instruments today that are electric, or made of carbon fiber or even titanium; components such as tailpieces are often made of composite materials with built-in fine tuners. Fine tuners made of carbon fiber or titanium are also readily available as components that can be retrofitted to existing wood tailpieces in order to save weight. Compensated, or “harp” tailpieces offer increased lower-end response. The list goes on-and-on.

The point is, don’t be afraid to imagine how the sound of a string instrument can be positively affected, and be willing test, re-test, and test again.

What are some of the things you enjoy most about your work?

I enjoy improving the sound of string instruments to their fullest potential and making sure players are pleased with it. I also particularly enjoy seeing and hearing the reaction of players the first time they try their enhanced instrument.

What else would you like our readers to know?

If you would like a sample audio or video file, please contact me directly. I look forward to meeting and working with you to tailor and customize your instrument. Visit and like my facebook page, Blue Octave Strings, to learn more: <https://www.facebook.com/blueoctave>.