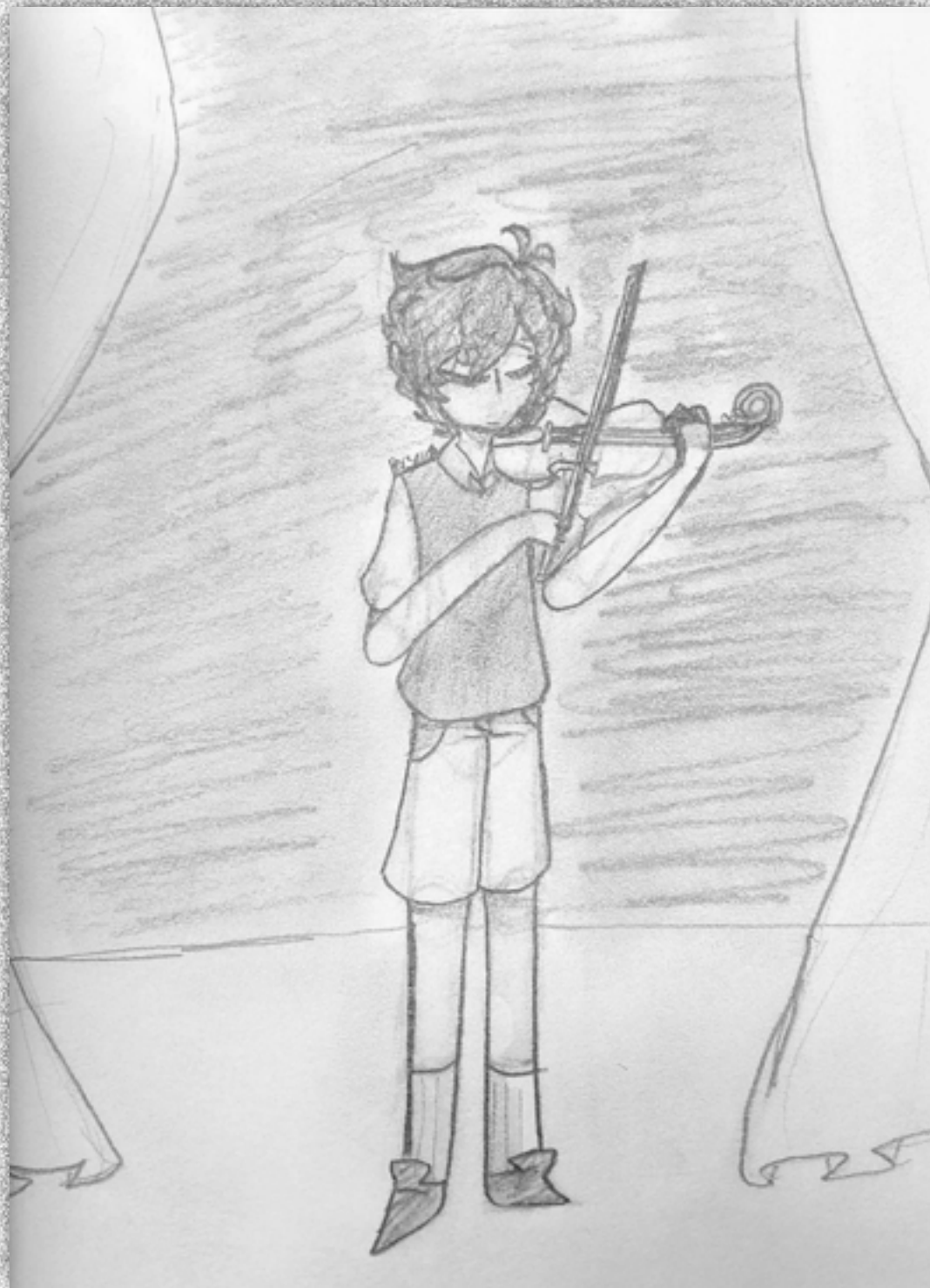


String Notes

Vol. 26, No. 3

Spring 2024

The Journal of the Minnesota String and Orchestra Teachers Association



Dates and Deadlines

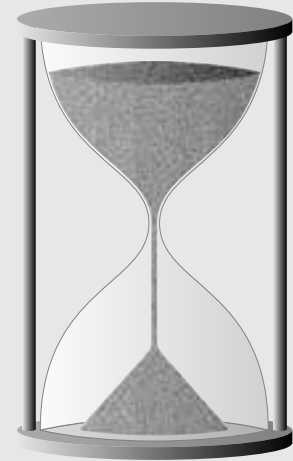
MNSOTA Board Meetings are held quarterly via Zoom. All members are welcome. Call a board member for dates and link. *String Notes* is published 3 times a year. Submission windows for articles and advertisements are: Jul 15–Aug 15 for the Fall issue; Nov 15–Dec 15 for the Winter issue; Feb 15–Mar 15 for the Spring issue

URGENT — Volunteer needed to be MNSOTA President-Elect
Contact President Chris Jannings president@mnsota.org

April 13, 2024 — Eclectic Strings Day
8:30 A.M.–3:00 P.M. — Champlin Park High School
Registration now open.

April 15 — Middle Level Regional Festival — Honors Concert
“Tier 2” — Orchestra Hall, Minneapolis

April 21 — Mary West Solo Competition Concerto Concert
Celine Bares performs Hindemith; www.bloomingtonsymphony.org



Find information for all events at www.MNSOTA.org



**UNIVERSITY OF
NORTHWESTERN**
ST. PAUL

DEPARTMENT OF
MUSIC & THEATRE

**SIGNIFICANT
SCHOLARSHIPS
AVAILABLE**

Learn more:



unwsp.edu/music-mnsota



In this issue

Upcoming Events...

MNSOTA Middle Level Regional Festival 14
 MNSOTA Mary West Solo Competition 14
 Eclectic Strings Day 2024 15

In Memoriam: Roger Zabinski 9
 Designing a Personal Model — Old Masters, New Expressions 9
 MNSOTA Middle Level All-State Orchestra 14
String Fun in the Summer Sun
 Summer Camps for Students and Adults in our 5-state area .. 18

String Notes

is the journal of
MNSOTA
 the Minnesota String
 and Orchestra
 Teachers Association,
 the Minnesota Chapter
 of *ASTA*

Recipient of the *ASTA*
Best State Newsletter Award
 2005, 2007, ... 2015, 2017

Recipient of the *ASTA*
Best Chapter Award
 2006

From the Archives...

Intonation 6
Maker's Bench
 Buying a New Instrument: A Luthier's Perspective 8
Orchestra
 To Piano or Not To Piano 16
Violin
 Examining the Witness 25
Cello
 Bringing Things into Focus 26

String Notes Pedagogy Archive 6
 Join *ASTA!* 13
ASTA National Conference 17

Cover Art Needed! 14
 Dates and Deadlines 2
 From the Editor 4
 From the President 4
 Index of Advertisers 4
 Letters 27
 Member Updates 27
 Reprint Policy 4
String Notes Subscriptions Available .. 4

On the cover...

Cover artist Perseus Thao, student of Julie Vanderstappen at Oak-Land Middle school, drew this picture in 2022.

From the President



Dear
MNSOTA
Membership,

It's hard to believe, but my two-year term as the MNSOTA President is almost up! In May, I'll be handing the reins over to Becky Plachy. I've really enjoyed working closely with my fellow board members and taking a hands-on role with some of the great events that MNSOTA offers. I continue to be impressed by and proud of the vibrant string education community that surrounds us.

While we recently completed an election cycle and filled our Treasurer and Secretary posts with fantastic individuals, we are still searching for our next President-Elect. I hope that one of our dedicated members will step up and fill this important role. I understand that a six-year term may seem a bit daunting and hard to commit to. The position, however, is really not all that time consuming—particularly in the President-Elect and Past-President years. As the President, I spend a little time each week updating and scheduling the weekly email blast, addressing time-sensitive emails, and communicating with other

board members and event coordinators. The time commitment goes up a bit as we get closer to Board of Director meetings (five per year—carried out on Zoom) and certain MNSOTA events, but it has never been a problem to balance this volunteer position with a demanding teaching position and two young kids at home. It's important and rewarding work! The future of our organization offering a robust slate

of student events and professional development opportunities depends on an influx of new leadership. Please consider serving MNSOTA or encouraging your friends and colleagues to join us.

Best of luck in your classrooms and studios as we march through the spring and say farewell to another school year!

Musically yours,

Christopher Jannings

From the Editor

With this issue of *String Notes*, I'm delighted to welcome Mary Sorlie as the editor for a new column *From the Archives*... Mary plans to highlight a different topic each issue, and summarize pedagogy articles from past issues that are available on our MNSOTA.org website. From the Resources tab, click *String Notes* archives.

Thanks go to John Waddle for his In Memoriam for Minnesota bow maker Roger Zabinski. Roger's skill in making and repairing bows is deeply appreciated and will be greatly missed.

This issue features our traditional list of all the string camps in our 5-state area that I find out about. Info is also available on our MNSOTA.org website. From the Connect tab, click Summer Camp Opportunities.

MNSOTA is moving towards a digital-only presence, and has long-term plans to make this magazine an on-line publication

instead of print. In order to make the magazine more readable on-line, with this issue I have set each article on continuous pages.

When I create an on-line PDF I hope to have clickable links in the table of contents and then each article will scroll.

I don't know yet how or when the magazine will be made available on-line. The MNSOTA Board is still developing policies about whether the information will be on the public website, available for the whole world, or will require a sign-in, available for members only. Stay tuned to your weekly email reminders to find out more.

Faith Farr



Index of Advertisers

All Strings Attached	28
Central MN Youth Orchestra	13
Farr Publications	17
Fein Stringed Instruments	24
Folland Violins	26
Claire Givens Violins	18
Greater Twin Cities Youth Symphonies GTCYS	27
House of Note	14
MacPhail Center — Madeline Island Adult Strings Retreat	22
MacPhail Center — Summer String Music Camps	23
Minnesota Youth Symphonies ...	21
Summer Camps	21
Schmitt Music	17
Stringwood Chamber Music Festival	19
University of Northwestern — St. Paul	2
John R. Waddle	20

String Notes Subscriptions Available

String Notes is available via subscription to libraries and interested individuals for \$15 per year. We hope the subscription will help our former members stay in touch when they move away or leave the profession, and will encourage teachers in other states to support our journal. Make your check out to MNSOTA and send it to Faith Farr, *String Notes* editor, 4 Sunshine Lane, North Oaks, MN 55127.

Reprint Policy

Copyright ownership of articles appearing in *String Notes* remains with the author. Permission to reprint an article should be requested from Faith Farr, *String Notes* editor, faith@farrpublications.com. When the author consents to a reprint, the reprint should credit both the author and *String Notes*.

Advertisers Welcome

String Notes welcomes your advertisement! Ads should be submitted electronically, via e-mail; submission windows are below. Please use high resolution (press-ready) PDF, TIFF, JPEG or PNG format. (All graphics must have a resolution of at least 300 dpi.)

Send advertisements to the Journal Editor, Faith Farr (address at right).

You will be billed after the issue is mailed according to the following rates:

1/8 page	\$35 per issue
2.25" width, 2.25" height	
business card size.....	\$45 per issue
3.5" width, 2" height	
1/6 page	\$70 per issue
2.25" width, 4.75" height or	
4.75" width, 2.25" height	
1/4 page	\$105 per issue
3.5" width, 4.75" height	
1/3 page	\$140 per issue
7.25" width, 3.33" height	
1/2 page	\$185 per issue
7.25" width, 5" height	
2/3 page	\$235 per issue
7.25" width, 6.67" height	
full page	\$300 per issue
7.25" width, 10" height	

For any advertisement placed on an outside or inside cover, add \$25. Call the Editor for rates on other sizes.

Advertisers who pay for a full year (3 issues) in advance by September 1 get a 25% discount!

Submissions — When & How

String Notes is published three times a year with target publication dates of September 1, January 1 and April 1. Contributions are welcome.

The submission windows are July 15–August 15, November 15–December 15 and February 15–March 15. Submit articles in electronic format via e-mail attachment or Google doc. Articles may be submitted in any popular word processor format or as plain text files. Illustrations or photographs embedded in the article must also be submitted separately in high resolution (press-ready) PDF, TIFF, JPEG or PNG format. Contact the editor about formatting music examples. Authors should include a brief (one paragraph) biography. Please send submissions to the Journal Editor, Faith Farr (address at right).

Address Corrections

Please send address corrections to Membership Coordinator Emily Heuschele, 1881 Pascal St, Falcon Heights, MN 55113, membership@mnsota.org.

2023

MNSOTA

2024

Members of the Board

President

Christopher Jannings

1415 Glenhill Rd, Arden Hills, MN 55112
612-209-7188
president@mnsota.org

President-Elect

Becky Plachy

546 W Kinne St, Ellsworth, WI 54011
612-695-4746
presidentelect@mnsota.org

Past-President

position open

Treasurer

Dan Mollick

3400 Zarthan Ave. S, St. Louis Park, 55416
612-516-0489
treasurer@mnsota.org

Secretary

Daniel Keeler

1566 Seneca Trl, White Bear Lake, MN 55110
651-230-6957
secretary@mnsota.org

Journal Editor

Faith Farr

4 Sunshine Lane, North Oaks, MN 55127
651-484-0522
StringNotes@mnsota.org

Webmaster

KC Thompson

Moorhead High School, Moorhead MN
webmaster@mnsota.org

Collegiate Chair & Mentorship Coordinator

David Kozamchak

628 11th Ave NW, New Brighton, MN 55112
612-597-3243
dkozamchak@unwsp.edu

Eclectic Styles Chair

Cristina Seaborn

427 SE Wilson Ave., St. Cloud, MN 56304
320-654-9048
cristina.seaborn7@gmail.com

Membership Coordinator

Emily Heuschele

1881 Pascal St., Falcon Heights, MN 55113
612-524-9584
membership@mnsota.org

Member-at-Large

Daniel Ericksen

18715 Clear View Dr, Minnetonka, MN 55345
651-303-3129
danielericksen1@gmail.com

Journal Staff

Violin Editor

Ian Snyder

iansnyder@gmail.com

Viola Editor

AJ Isaacson-Zvidzwa

aj.isaacson.zvidzwa@gmail.com

Cello Editor

Teresa Richardson

teresarichardson7@gmail.com

Bass Editor

Tom Pieper

thomas.pieper@yoga@gmail.com

Baroque Practice Editor

Charles Asch

charles.asch@gmail.com

Fiddle Editor

Cristina Seaborn

cristina.seaborn7@gmail.com

Eclectic Music Editor

Emily Heuschele

emheuschele@gmail.com

From the Maker's Bench

Angela Thompson

athompsonfiddle@gmail.com

Orchestra Editor

Wes Myers

wes.myers@marshall.k12.mn.us

Design and Production

John Farr

Advisor to the Board

Deborah Sittko

746 Marshall Ave., Saint Paul, MN 55104
651-335-7079 dsittko@gmail.com



FROM THE ARCHIVES....

Intonation

compiled by Mary Sorlie

I was recently reminded of the immense wisdom, experience and talent within the MNSOTA organization. I am continually amazed at how deep and rich the string and arts community is in our part of the country. Looking back on past *String Notes* articles, I found myself immersed and impressed with the depth and range of string topics. This new column, *From the Archives*, will take a look back the insights of previous contributors. I thought intonation would be a great place to begin.

What is intonation? How do we teach it? Is it different with solo, ensemble or orchestral playing? The simplest of definitions is the ability to play or sing notes in tune. Below are some excerpts (from the archives) that might help in the studio, ensemble or orchestra in developing excellent intonation.

Intonation, by Annette Caruthers

From Fall issue 2002

Intonation is one of the most basic elements of playing the viola, and for some students it is a never-ending quest. I do believe that intonation can be taught; here are a few of my thoughts or tips on how to help students do their best with intonation.

Be sure student can hear the difference between pitches that are close—have them turn their back and tell you which note is higher... or which one rings better... make it a game. Then when you are sure they hear which pitch is really accurate, they can learn to change their finger placement to match what they know is correct.

Listen for the “ring” the viola gives when a note is exactly right. If the pitch matches an open string, you can actually see the matching string vibrate with the note being played; or feel the string vibrating if you touch it with a finger while it is moving. Students love feeling the vibration and watching it happen.

Look for a repeated note in a passage... be sure it is exactly the same pitch each time it is played. You can improve a passage dramatically by correcting that repeated pitch, and this will help the student correct other notes in the same passage.

Play an octave lower while the student plays the upper octave. This gives students a basis and it is amazing how particular they can get when they hear that octave!!

Solfège + Theory —> Great Intonation, **by J. David Arnott**

From Winter issue 2005/2006

Which aural skills, if any, are worth the time, effort, and inconvenience to develop in school-aged orchestral musicians? As music performance or music education majors, we all had undergraduate ear training classes. Why did we suffer through them? Was it simply a hoop through which we had to jump in order to graduate? Or was it the beginning of lifetime journey of developing skills on which we rely during every musical moment of our lives, skills which we must share with our students.

How much music theory does a middle school or high school orchestral musician really need to know? Probably not much,

as a little bit goes a long way. Teaching the diatonic intervals found in a major scale is great way to begin to fine-tune your orchestra.

We already practice scales, but do we ever discuss why we practice scales? (“Because composers write them,” is the answer that always works for me.) Do we make it a point to relate our scales to specific issues in our orchestral repertoire? This practice goes hand in hand with teaching triads. How many times have your violas had an F# on the C string in a D dominant seventh chord and played it too low? Do you explain to them that it is out of tune and that they should try again? Or do you say to them that their note is the leading tone of the scale and, acoustically, it must be higher? Do your violas know when they are on the third or the fifth of a triad? Do your violins know when they are playing octaves with the bass? Do your cellos and basses play perfect octaves together?

String Notes Pedagogy Archive

Pedagogy articles since 1998 from *String Notes* volunteer writers encompassing all our instruments, as well as Orchestra, Chamber Music, Makers Bench, Performer Corner, Baroque Practice and Fiddle, among others, are now available on-line and as PDF download to MNSOTA members and article authors. Go to the mnsota.org website and choose the resources tab -> *String Notes* archive. As access to this resource is a benefit of membership, you will need to sign in with the email associated with your ASTA membership.

Once signed in you can simply scroll through the list, organized by issue, including a thumbnail of our wonderful original cover art for each issue. Or use your browser to search for title, topic, author or any other search term you would like.

Some of our wonderful contributors include: David Arnott and Annette

Caruthers (39 articles each), David Holmes (38 articles), Ann Anderson (37 articles), Sally O'Reilly (28 articles), Tom Pieper (24 articles), John Waddle (21 articles), Jason Vanselow (20 articles). Are you surprised that over 30 of the topics deal with practicing?

The plan is that shortly after each new paper issue of the magazine is mailed the PDF of the pedagogy articles will be uploaded to the webpage.

Copyright ownership of the articles remain with the author. Permission to reprint / use an article in another setting should be requested from Faith Farr, StringNotes@mnsota.org, as *String Notes* editor. When the author consents to a reprint, the reprint should credit both the author and *String Notes*.

As our write-ups for student events often include photos, these are not on the webpage because we don't have photo permission.

Is there a practical way to combine aural skills and beginning music theory? Of course, but I believe it requires some singing. Make your students sing. Make them sing often enough so it does not always seem like a chore. Make them sing so much they lose all self-consciousness about singing. Encourage especially those without any background in singing. For those who profess to not be able to sing, the rule in my studio/ensemble is that as long as you can grunt in tune, you will get by just fine. Sing for them by example.

Claudette Laureano spoke of this at the All-State Teachers Workshop at Gustavus this past summer and it was a great hit with the participants. Teach your students a little solfege; whatever brand suits your comfort level or experience will be just fine—"moveable do," "fixed do," note names, or the number system. It really does not matter, as solfege is more a practical means to an end than a process in and of itself.

Teaching Intonation Creatively for String Orchestra, by Kirk Moss (reported by Faith Farr)

From Winter issue 2018/19

Kirk reminded us that there are many systems of intonation or temperament, including: mathematical; just; Pythagorean (which fixes the fifths and moves the thirds); mean tone (which fixes the thirds and moves the fifths); well-tempered; equal tempered; expressive; harmonic tuning (where the melody notes are influenced by the harmony); melodic tuning (e.g. double sharps are extra sharp); coloristic (where wide intervals are wider). String teachers live in the world of "corrective tuning"—where things always need fixing.

Prerequisites for good intonation include a balanced body platform for functional instrument placement, and left-hand format that has correct instrument position and angle, correct elbow/arm placement, correct and functional thumb placement, and curved, flexible fingers. It is important to realize that fingerboard tapes should be more for the teacher's use than the student's!

For upper strings, it may be helpful to drill students in Bornoff's finger patterns. Students should be able to give the "Live long and Prosper" hand greeting in any of the patterns: pattern 1 = 1-23-4; pattern 2 = 12-3-4; pattern 3 = 1-2-34 (low 1, low 4); pattern 4 = 1-2-34 (high 3). For cello forward extensions, it is essential to move the thumb a long way—the whole step is always between fingers 1 and 2.

Kirk recommended *The Tuning CD* by Richard Schwartz because it includes different overtones, e.g. D with major third, with minor third, with perfect fourth etc. With all the technology available, it is essential to train students to tune by ear, and not exclusively by eye.

Traditionally, shifting is driven by a constant key signature—the finger pattern changes in the new position. The *Sound Innovations* shifting system is kinesthetically driven—keeping the same finger pattern in the new position. For example, upper strings might shift from first position pattern 1 (E-F#G-A) to third position pattern 1 (G-AB-C).

There are many steps to teaching students how to tune their open strings. Matching the tuning tone with the voice (singing) should be a regular part of the tuning routine with the goal of matching the tuning tone with the open string. Peg manipulation is a second- or third-year skill.

The prerequisite skill is to answer yes/no to the question "Is it in tune?" If the answer is "no," remember that it is easiest to match the pitch by coming up from too flat. Cellists and bassists need to learn the additional skill of octave transposition—cellists are listening to A=440 but playing A=220. It may be helpful to teach cellists and

A cellist walks on a beach and picks up a bottle. A genie pops out and says, "I give you two wishes."

The cellist says: "Wow, I'd like to have world peace."

The genie thinks for a second and says, "That's too hard! What's your second wish?"

The cellist says, "Well, I'm turning 60 and I want to play in tune."



The genie thinks for a second and says, "What was your first wish again?"

Told by Yo-Yo Ma in 2015 ahead of his 60th birthday.

bassists how to tune by harmonics because the harmonic pitches are easier to sing than the fundamental. (Cellists compare the 1/2 string harmonic played by finger 3 to the 1/3 string harmonic played by finger 1 in fourth position on the next lower string. Bassists compare the 1/3 string harmonic played by finger 4 in third position to the 1/4 string harmonic played by finger 1 on the next lower string.)

Kirk likes having a class tune from the basses. He has electronic tuners by the bass rack. After the bassists have tuned themselves, the rest of the ensemble tunes by listening. His tuning routine is: basses play A. Cellists add A, at the tip, softer than the person next to you. Then violinists and violists add A. Everyone sings D while playing A. Bassists go to D while everyone else stays on A. Then cellists go to D, violinists/violists go to D, etc.

The acoustics of the orchestra classroom affect intonation. Make sure your room is "live" enough that you can hear the overtones. Research has shown that inaccuracy in tuning is related to distance from the tuning tone, so consider your room setup. In a typical room, the speakers are at the front and the bassists are at the back—the farthest from the speakers and with the greatest challenge of octave displacement. Consider having the basses nearest the conductor so that everyone can hear better.

Mary Sorlie is currently the Artistic Director for the GTCYS Harmony Program, as well as conductor of the GTCYS Philharmonia East and West Orchestras. She maintains a violin and viola studio in her home. She loves teaching, playing, running and all things chocolate. ♪



MAKER'S BENCH

Buying a New Instrument: A Luthier's Perspective

by Angela Thompson

One of my favorite aspects of working in a violin shop is assisting players who are looking to purchase a new instrument. Whether the student is buying their first full-sized instrument or college-bound and looking for a better-quality instrument to suit their growing talent, instrument shopping can be intimidating as much as it is exciting. I have put together a list of practices that we follow at David Folland Violins that seem to be helpful in choosing the right instrument.

When a customer calls to set up a time to come look at instruments, we lay out what we have in their price range. For first-time buyers, the selection (especially for violins and violas) usually looks like a few good quality factory-made student instruments and a few hand-made instruments. The factory-made instruments are often new and set up to spec in the shop, and the hand-made instruments can be older 19th and 20th century and have been repaired or restored. It's important to know that both are great options and one is not necessarily better than the other. If they're trying violins or violas, I then play through all of the instruments to make sure they are sounding and playing nicely and note any issues or irregularities. We pick the best three to five so that the customer isn't overwhelmed by too many options. If, during the visit, the ones we chose are not suitable, we have backups to show and others above the price range as well.

Something I have noticed that makes a difference when testing the instruments is to play long, sustained notes in a scale from the lowest register to the highest the student can play. Playing "into" the strings instead of "on top of" is a technique I find valuable—using the weight of the bow arm to pull out the sound, but not digging into the strings aggressively. This displays the evenness of tone throughout the strings and it gives the student a better idea of the true sound of the instrument. Once the student has narrowed their preference between two or three instruments, I suggest playing the same piece or pieces on each. We encour-

age students to think about what they are hearing and what kind of sound are they drawn to. Beyond the tonal ideas of bright versus dark sounding instruments—is the tone clear, clean, even, sweet, warm, inviting or does the sound feel nasal, closed off or tight? How is the response of the sound when you play slow versus fast? Does it take more effort to pull the sound with the bow or does it immediately project and ring? The bow that is used can make a difference as well. We have a nice, professional level bow that we encourage students to use as they test instruments. And of course it is important to play the instruments with their personal bow, but during the visit it's nice to hear the instruments at their fullest potential.

Another approach is to listen to someone else play the instrument. I always ask if the student would like me to play the violins or violas they are interested in. There can be subtle differences under the ear and from a distance. Sometimes this helps making the decision a little easier. Of course, there is no pressure in making the decision on the spot either. Most shops allow players to take an instrument or two on a trial period for up to two weeks. This is a great opportunity to show the instrument to a private teacher for their professional opinion. It's also beneficial because it takes time to adjust to playing a new instrument and the player can hear how it sounds in different rooms. It's also usually acceptable to take the instrument to an appointment at another shop to test against their instruments.

It's important that I mention that adjustments can be made as well—simple or complex. Maybe the instrument sounds lovely, but something about the playability is difficult. For example, fiddle players often prefer to have a bridge where the arc is less curved to make it easier to play double stops. Other adjustments can be made to bridges to change string heights as well; some players prefer a lower or higher action. A neck can be carved down if it feels too thick or is top heavy. Pegs can be replaced

with mechanical or perfection pegs for ease of tuning. Tailpieces with all fine tuners can be installed. Strings can also have a significant effect on the tone of an instrument. We experiment with strings to find what we believe sound the best on a particular instrument, but it would be a quick and easy accommodation to try a different set if the player has a specific preference.

Lastly, commissioning an instrument to be made is always an option, especially in Minnesota. Most of this article is addressed to students and parents who are buying their first instrument and may not know much about quality and good practices, but for players who are considering going to conservatory or already studying music in college and plan on having careers in performance and/or teaching, buying an instrument from a maker is an excellent path to consider. Fortunately, there is a rather high concentration of luthiers in the Twin Cities and surrounding areas who make new, personalized instruments and have instruments already made to sell. The timing on construction can vary, but the end result is an instrument made explicitly for the player.

Selecting the perfect instrument can be challenging, but hopefully these tips and practices will add a touch of ease to the process. Luthiers and other shop workers want to help players find an instrument they love, so don't hesitate to ask questions and express feelings. Ultimately, a loved instrument is a played instrument.

Angela Thompson is a violin maker, repairer and player. She is a 2016 graduate of Belmont University in Nashville, Tennessee with a Bachelor's degree in violin performance, and a 2020 graduate from Minnesota State College Southeast in violin repair, where she is now a substitute teacher. Angela is a member of the Violin Society of America and currently works under the instruction of acclaimed luthier David Folland in Northfield where she repairs instruments and continues the study of violin making. †

IN MEMORIAM: ROGER ZABINSKI

by John Waddle

Minneapolis bow maker Roger Zabinski died too young of brain cancer, on February 27th, 2024, at the age of 74. He was born in Sauk Center, Minnesota, in September of 1950 and grew up in Hibbing. He studied music at the University of Minnesota, majoring in music history and literature, and graduated in 1974.

Roger's introduction to violin making came in 1972 with a visit to Chester Groth Music in Minneapolis, where he met the luthier Vaido Radamus who was doing repairs at Groth. Roger made his first violin in 1973, helped by Radamus, and went on to make 20 violins, 3 violas and 3 gambas, before turning to bow making.

In 1975, Roger met the Minneapolis bow maker Martin Beilke. At that time, Beilke had gone blind, but he was able to pass on some of his bow making knowledge and experience to Roger. Beilke died in 1979.

Roger started his own shop in 1976. In about 1981, he stopped making violins and started to focus on bows. In 1982, Roger accepted a job at Givens Violins in Minneapolis doing instrument and bow repairs. In 1984, he attended a bow-making seminar with William Salchow in New Hampshire.

In 1985, Roger was able to devote all his efforts to making and repairing bows. Gradually, learning from the bows he worked on, comments from musicians, other colleagues in the trade, and his own experience, he developed his own models of violin, viola, cello and bass bows.

In 1985, he was elected a member of the American Federation of Violin and Bow Makers, and was awarded a journeyman's certificate from them. In 1986 Roger won a gold medal for one of his violin bows at the Violin Society of America international competition and meeting. Roger became a member of the Entente Internationale des Maitres Luthiers et Archetiers in 2011. Roger was also a consultant for Coda Bows of Winona, Minnesota, and helped them develop their Coda GX model bows.

By the end of his life, Roger had made over 900 bows. He made them one at a time, and made all of the parts of each bow himself. He started numbering his bows early on, and kept a 4 by 6 inch card in his shop with the number of each bow and details about the individual bow, and where each bow went. I had a chance to

visit Roger not long before he passed away and I knew that he kept records of each bow that he made individually on small cards. I was concerned about what would happen to those records once he was with us no more, and when I asked him about it, he said, "Since you asked, you can have them."



I took the cards back to my shop to study and had some questions about the information that was on them, so I went back to Roger's for clarification. His mind was still sharp, even though his body was giving out. Since he numbered each bow, there was a card for each bow explaining which type of bow it was (violin, viola, cello, bass), a description of the pernambuco (light or dark, plain or figured), the mountings, (ebony, ivory, tortoiseshell, silver, or gold). There were measurements pertaining to the dimensions of the stick, head, or frog. Roger explained that if a musician came to him and asked him to make a bow like one

that they had tried that a friend or acquaintance owned, the cards helped him to do that.

He was also careful about the weight of each bow, and especially the balance. He was able to make bows that were consistent. He talked about how important it was to make the bows straight, looking from the head back to the frog, and that the most important thing in bow making was the camber. Roger knew how to work with each bow to make the best use of each piece of wood, knowing that each piece of wood was unique. He mostly made round bows, but he knew how to make octagonal bows work too.

We will remember Roger for his many years of service to the musicians who bought bows from him, and the musicians whose bows he repaired. Roger was also gracious with young people who came to him for guidance about learning bow making, always willing to share his knowledge. We will miss him.

John R. Waddle is a violin maker, dealer, and restorer whose shop is in St. Paul, Minnesota. He is a 1981 graduate of The Violin Making School of America in Salt Lake City, Utah, and has had his own shop in St. Paul since 1986. John is a member of both The American Federation of Violin and Bow Makers, and the Violin Society of America. †

DESIGNING A PERSONAL MODEL — OLD MASTERS, NEW EXPRESSIONS

by Roger Zabinski

In 2011–2012, Roger Zabinski served as editor of the From the Maker's Bench... column for this magazine. As a tribute to his artistry and life's work, we are pleased to reprint his 3-part series on the design of a bow. [ed.]

Part I: The Head

When a bow maker sets himself about the task of developing a new model, he is placing himself into the stream of a long history of aesthetic culture and practice. The bow of course is a useful object, a

tool, in a sense, to help the musician express the beauty of their art; but the bow, too, in its own way is an expression of beauty. For over 200 years bow makers have been making these useful little objects,

but always incorporating an inherent and inextricable aspect of art. A fine bow must be a beautiful bow.

When you survey this aesthetic history of bow making, you are astonished at the wide variety of shapes and visual impressions a bow can present. You notice, too, that each epoch of bow making history seems to possess its own character; we can identify the combination of shapes and sculptural movements as belonging to one period of time or another; not rigidly so, but we do see strong inclinations at one time period or another. We speak of the Pajeot school, the Voirin school, and the like. Regardless of the school, a fine head presents to us a certain “stillness in motion;” while many contrasting or complementary shapes contribute to the overall effect, the whole must be visually at rest.

So that the bow maker’s new model flows in the continuum of this aesthetic history, he must be deeply immersed and informed by it; the eye, the hand, the heart must be attuned to all the sculptural details and how these particulars articulate with the others. This is accomplished only by years of study, self-discipline and practice; the bow maker has to be able to copy several master bows so perfectly that even a connoisseur may have difficulty discerning the original from the copy.

Personally, I have always been attracted by the bows of the early to mid 19th century. This, for two reasons. One, my first teacher, Martin Beilke, used these early models almost exclusively; seeing his talent, he was encouraged in that direction by figures like Rembert Wurlitzer of New York and Kenneth Warren of Chicago. Secondly, musicians have always coveted the tonal and playing characteristics of the early 19th century bows. The best among those bows have a strong flexibility that musicians so much desire; their superior tonal capabilities are legendary. They can be more difficult to play, but the experienced bow arm can easily overcome the obstacles; the effort is well worth it in superior expressiveness and tone color.

In discussing the head of a bow, we will consider the following constituents: the back of the head, the head plate, the point, the forward ridge and the chamfer. We will be using examples of Etienne Pajeot, Francois Tourte, and Alfred Lamy for our comparison study.

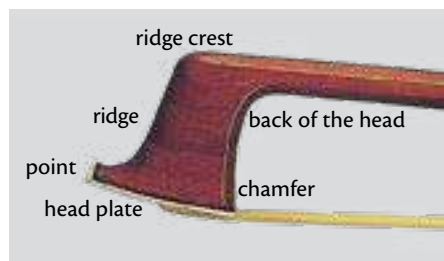
Back of the Head

The back of the head (inside curve where

the head joints the shaft) is the foundation and starting point of any design: How much curve does it have? Is the movement more vertical, forward-thrust, or backward-thrust? How does the shape move as it approaches the under side of the shaft? All these factors will strongly affect successful sculpting of the other components.

Look, for example at the Pajeot head. You will see that is gently scooped out, radiused, with a slightly backward moment. Consider then the Tourte head; the back of it is a bit stiffer, slightly more vertical. The difference is slight, but these small differences will make big differences in the overall expression.

Compare these two with the Lamy: a rather vertical movement, with a tight radius at the underside of the head. Lastly, consider the back of the head of my model, and compare it with the Tourte and Pajeot; note the slightly more swept back angle, the tighter radius at the underside of the shaft. I have gently accentuated these movements so that the shape is still much reminiscent to the Tourte and Pajeot, yet distinct enough to be a new expression.



Parts of the bow head

Head Plate

Next we will consider the head plate (i.e. the ivory). Note that the head plate of both Pajeot and Tourte the are rather flat, and lay out at a fairly flat angle; but note the Tourte has a bit more upward thrust than the Pajeot. This was necessary to balance and counteract the flatter, slightly more vertical movement the back of the head.

Next, consider the head plate of my model. You will notice the same rather flat expression, but it lays at an even flatter angle than either the Tourte or Pajeot. This flatter angle pushes the limits of what one can do with a head plate; I did it to create a sense of drama in the overall execution, but there is a definite limit.

Note also the movement of the camber at the top of the shaft; compare it with the angle of my head plate; it is as if the head plate is moving synchronously with the

top of the shaft, extending the thrust of the camber. A drooping angle would make for a weak, disappointing statement, almost as if the head were broken or “falling off” the shaft.

Compare these examples now with the Lamy. Note the more strongly radiused and upturned head plate of the Lamy. While not by any means exclusive to his generation and later, this detail becomes more typical of his epoch and into the 20th century. We can look to the Sartory and Ouchard schools which flow from this historic archetype.

Point

Now let us consider the point. First, study at the Pajeot. See how the front ridge rapidly descends, dives, right to the distant end of the head; the narrowest point of the head is on the ebony liner at the end. Note too, the backward thrust of the ivory tip; this complements and reinforces the dramatic sweep of the ridge, and the slightly backward sweep of the back of the head; recall we said that the back of the head strongly influences all other movements of the head sculpting.

Compare the Pajeot with the Tourte head. Note that the narrowest point of the Tourte remains on the pernambuco; the upward movement from there is more gradual, not so dramatic as the Pajeot, giving a more vertical sense. It is remarkable how so small a detail can so strongly influence the entire model.

Now look at my model; you will note that the narrowest point is more as the Tourte; if I had chosen the more dramatic expression of the Pajeot, combined with the already accentuated back of head and head plate, would have rendered the whole sculpture exaggerated. We are looking for stillness in motion.

Ridge

Our fourth detail is the ridge, i.e., the forward leading edge of the head. After the back of the head, head plate, and point have been defined, the maker is left with somewhat more freedom to finish this shape. Critical to the overall expression, though is the crest, where the ridge blends with the top of the shaft. Whether rounded or sculpted with a harder corner, on every fine bow I have seen, the downward descent of the crest begins about half way or farther back at the top of the head. Otherwise, the expression will likely feel severe or overly forceful.

Chamfer

Now for the lowly chamfer (beveled edge). Arguably the most unassuming element of the head, it is nonetheless the bow maker's opportunity to exercise sheer power, delicacy, mastery of skill, sleight of hand, illusion.

Why is this so? First, almost all the other sculptural parts may be worked and reworked until perfected; the chamfer, on the other hand must be executed immedi-

ately and directly. It will take several strokes of the knife to fully cut the chamfer, but the last stroke must be one, continuous, unflinching movement. The knife must be sharp; the hand and eye, strong and certain. Any attempt to correct a false movement will render the cut as overworked, unconvincing. Secondly, the chamfer can be used to create illusion. By subtly changing the width or angle of the cut, the maker can introduce a subliminal complexity of the expression at

the back of the head, thus enhancing the sculptural interest of the whole.

Look at the image of the Peccatte chamfer. Note how the chamfer is narrowest at the head plate, widens rapidly as it moves upward, then narrows again as it joins the underside of the shaft. This acceleration/deceleration subtly changes the perceived curve of the back of the head, adding interest and complexity to the whole. My model uses that same detail.

Part 2: The Shaft, Camber and Taper

The Shaft

Everybody knows how profoundly the bow affects the sound of your instrument; this common observation implies that the shaft is just as much an acoustic body as is the instrument. While difficult to quantify, it may not be excessive to say that the shaft vibrates as much as the instrument. At very least, the vibration of the shaft strongly influences the vibration of the string, therefore of the instrument. It is precisely the nature of this shaft's vibration that makes one bow sound so very different from another; its acoustics are substantive and proper to it, making it a unique acoustic member.

The shaft has two separate, but intimately related components to consider: the camber, or bend of the stick, and the graduation, i.e., how it tapers from end to end. Both of these markedly affect both the sound and playing characteristics of the finished bow. While it is true that the character of pernambuco itself has the single most powerful influence, these two factors of camber and graduation are powerful enough so that we can say it is these two that will define the degree of success of the bow.

Since we are speaking about developing a new pattern after historic models, the maker has to be aware of the habits of the period that he is emulating. Each epoch of bow making has an habitual way of approaching these two aspects, but not rigidly so. After all, we are dealing with the diversity of biological products and the human spirit, both of which bear an unending wealth of creative possibilities. Formulas are insufficient to satisfy the demands of art and artist.

The Camber

Over the years players have come to my studio and have said things like, "This bow

does everything—it plays itself," or "My arm and this bow feel like they are one piece. It's like an extension of my hand; it makes me feel so connected." When a first-rate player comes and says something like that, I try to understand why. The only consistent thing I have found lies in the cambering; that it is smooth and even, with neither soft spot nor kink, and this with remarkable subtlety.

That being said, the ways are myriad that the camber can flow from end to end, and each approach powerfully bears its effects on tone quality and playing characteristics. Typically, the curve of a good student bow will slowly accelerate from the frog to the head, perfectly counterbalancing the increasing flexibility of the tapered shaft. However, on every fine bow I have ever seen, with rare exception, the camber is a bit flatter under the winding. This seems to hold true in every epoch of bow making.

The early 19th century French bow bears an interesting, additional deviation. As a norm, the camber of these early bows is a bit flat four to six inches behind the head. Since my model is that of the early 19th c. French, the cambering I use follows this detail. In contrast, makers of later periods, as the Lamy, all but universally add extra curve behind the head. The images provided below show the differences of approach.

The Taper

As is true of the camber, you can see many approaches to the taper of the shaft depending on when the bow was made; these too, powerfully influence sound and playing characteristics. Historically, there are two broad approaches that makers have taken: either make the thickest part of the shaft directly under the winding, slimming down from there to the head. Or he can put a "belly" in it, i.e., a bit slimmer under the



Etienne Pajeot



Francois Tourte



Alfred Lamy



Roger Zabinski



Peccatte chamfer

Photo credit: Paul Childs

winding and increasing the diameter, sometimes even as far as the middle of the shaft, then slimming again to the head. The early French makers seem to exclusively use the former approach; the earliest example I have seen of the “belly” approach was a Joseph Henry, ca. 1860. By the early 20th century this “belly” approach became the norm.

Though following the early 19th c. ideal, the maker has yet to choose how rapidly the shaft tapers. Of this early time period, the graduations will drop between 0.25 mm. and 0.9 mm., or more for the larger bows. The completed graduation is decided by a number of factors: the strength of the wood, its density, the type of sound the maker wants to develop, or the tastes and desires of the one who commissions the bow.

There is reason to believe that the early 19th century graduation closely approximates a mathematical model; a graph of these graduations will very closely follow a parabolic curve. I believe this is so, not because they took pencil and paper and calculated a “perfect graduation.” No; these makers were fine craftsmen and artisans; due to their practical methods, a direct hand and eye execution automatically generates the mathematical model. You can find a fuller explanation of this observation on my website blog <http://www.zabinskibows.com/blog>.

Part 3: The Frog and Button

The Frog

English-speaking people borrow a word from the French “ensemble” which expresses the union of separate elements into a synthesized unity, a “wholeness,” or “togetherness,” if you will. Whatever an artist’s intent might be, his creation has to accomplish this sense of integrity and oneness if his efforts are to give any fulfillment to aesthetic sensibilities. The bow for stringed instruments is no exception. The same sculptural elements that come together and define the style of the head must also come together and define the style of the frog. The head, frog and button of a fine bow must join together into one aesthetic whole.

Take a look at the Tourte frog and compare it to the head; the somewhat vertical, angular movement of the back of the head is reflected in the throat of the frog. Likewise, compare the head and frog of the Pajeot; the shape of the throat evokes the same sense of movement as that of the back of the head. For contrast, look at the Lamy and compare it with the Tourte and Pajeot; its movements are quite a different expression than the older models, but remain harmonious and integrated, an “ensemble.” You will see in the head and frog of my model the same integration of shapes; the throat of the frog echoes the same somewhat flat, backswept movement at the back of the head.

The thumb seat, too, helps define a model, and it normally correlates with the period of the bow. The rounded thumb seat of the Lamy reflects the rounded expressions of the head, typical of the late 19th into the 20th century aesthetic. In contrast, the thumb seat of the Tourte and Pajeot are rather square—typical, though not universal, of the time. Because it is inspired by the early 19th century aesthetic, my model uses that same rather square shape. For many players who grew up with an inexpensive student bow, this detail can feel somewhat foreign, and even uncomfortable. A younger student is more inclined to “squeeze” the bow, using force and tension, pressure and fast bow speeds to propel the sound from the instrument. The early 19th century bow needs a different approach



Etienne Pajeot



Francois Tourte



Alfred Lamy



Roger Zabinski

to the hand and bow arm; rather than “squeezing” the stick as the smaller, round thumb seat allows, the square thumb seat of earlier style demands less tension in the hand. And from the bow arm, more the feeling of weight rather than pressure. On the contrary, the square thumb seat becomes a luxurious point of control, a little more wood into which the thumb may rest.

There are many more elements of the frog, which we could discuss, e.g., the decorative eyes at the side of the frog, the ferrule height, width and shape, the three-dimensional sculpture of the sides, the angle of and shape of heel plate. No less important are the species of shell products and the alloys used for the frog. These are significant but lesser elements that create an aesthetic impression, and we note them only in passing.

The Adjuster Button

Like a precious little vignette in a museum which gets lost in the midst of great works of art, the adjuster button, though relatively inconspicuous, bears a significance all its own; the minute details of the button are integral to the overall concept of the bow. Unique to the early 19th century French bow, the button usually flares a bit as it approaches the outer ring. That flaring movement picks up and extends the increasing diameter of the shaft as it nears the frog, continuing past the frog right through to the outer ring. This flaring movement stands in contrast to later generations, Lamy providing our example of a later aesthetic. Compare the image of the Lamy with those of the Tourte and Pajeot; you will understand the point.

Not insignificant to the button’s execution is the forward collar,



Etienne Pajeot (violin bow)



Francois Tourte (cello bow)



Alfred Lamy (violin bow)



Roger Zabinski (violin bow)

which adjoins the end of the shaft. As a norm of the early 19th century, the diameter of the collar is slight larger than the flats of the button. Aesthetically, the larger diameter gives a sense of strength and rich elegance to the whole; practically, it provides a better protection against wear to the end of the shaft.

In the Round

Up until this point I have spoken of the elements of bow design only in 2-dimensional terms. But the bow, as any sculpture, is a three-dimensional object. This third dimensional aspect “realizes” the whole, creating highlights and shadows as the eye moves over surface of the piece. A little story here will be useful in making

the point.

A little over 20 years ago when I moved into my new workspace, I thought how wonderful it would be to install skylights. “Just think of all the light,” I thought, “and so very smooth and even.” How wrong I was! Plenty of light, yes, but the wrong kind of light. All the shadows upon which I depended to shape the head and frog had disappeared. The shapes looked lifeless, ghostly, difficult to perceive. I never understood until then how much the 3-dimensional shadows give substance and “reality” to the 2-dimensional elements.

We might liken this difference to a person’s shadow and their real presence. The shadow presents us with an idea of what a person might look like; but when we see them in person, how different our perceptions might be. How rounded are their cheeks? Are they flat? Well-rounded? Maybe a bit sunken? In the same way, a maker can choose to make a surface very flat, or convex, or even concave; these contribute a sort of triologue between the two-dimensional elements, completing them, giving them depth and reality.

Conclusion

In the course of this article, I have talked about a number of ideas of which bow makers are aware when they fashion this little object so very essential to the music making process. Some of these ideas address only what is technical; some of these ideas penetrate to what is uniquely human, i.e., our remarkable ability to both create and appreciate an object of beauty. And in that dialogue of creating and appreciating, we are all made a bit more human, we are all a little bit more connected. Perhaps the next time you look at a fine bow, you will see it with different eyes. †



Join ASTA!
www.astastrings.org
membership@astastrings.org
 phone 703-279-2113
 fax 703-279-2114
 ASTA, PO Box 160605
 Altamonte Springs, FL 32716-0605

Mission Statement:

"To provide a unique orchestral experience leading to performances that shape, educate and inspire lives of developing youth musicians in the communities of Central Minnesota."

CONTACT INFO

Mailing Address:
P.O. Box 671
Saint Cloud, MN
56302

Register online at:
www.cmyo.org

MNSOTA MIDDLE LEVEL REGIONAL FESTIVAL

Honors Concert April 15

The MNSOTA Middle Level Regional Festival (“Tier 1”) was held March 4 at Minnetonka High School, March 5 at the College of St. Benedict and March 27 at Irondale High School. Thanks go to judges Gary Wolfman and Emily Heuschele, and to clinicians Jim Bartsch, Mary Sorlie, Laura Hebert, Pat Kelly and Andrew Towey-Grishaw. Site hosts were Sarah Finn, Andrew Towey-Grishaw and Rosa Glade-Arnold. Festival Coordinator Dan Mollick was the MNSOTA rep on site all three days. KC Thompson, our amazing webmaster, put together website links to the Preparation Checklist, Master Schedule, Visitor Guide and Festival program for each site. In all, thirty-one orchestras participated; at press time, the orchestras selected to play at the Middle Level Regional Festival Honors Concert had not been announced.

Please plan on attending the Honors Concert (“Tier 2”) at Orchestra Hall, Minneapolis, on April 15. †

MNSOTA MARY WEST SOLO COMPETITION Concerto Performance

Sunday April 21, 2024 3:00 P.M.

Masonic Heritage Center
11411 Masonic Home Drive, Bloomington, MN

Celine Bares performs
Hindemith *Der Schwanendreher*
with the **Bloomington Symphony**

Contact the Bloomington Symphony
952-563-8575 for tickets
952-563-8573 for more information

www.bloomingtonsymphony.org

MNSOTA MIDDLE LEVEL ALL-STATE ORCHESTRA

The MNSOTA Middle Level All-State Orchestra (“Honors Orchestra”) was held February 16–17, 2024, conducted by Lucas Shogren. Rehearsals were held at the University of Northwestern—St. Paul, and the performance was at the MMEA Midwinter clinic in Minneapolis. Thanks go to coordinators Daniel Ericksen and Brian Cole, the judges who rated the on-line audition recordings, the sectional coaches at others who helped during the rehearsal and performance, and to the staff at UNWSP and MMEA who helped make the event a success. Although not all pieces were performed at

the concert, the students were challenged to rehearse *Lullaby to the Moon* by Brian Balmages, *New World Symphony, mvt IV* by Dvorak, arranged by Deborah Baker Monday, *Epic Adventure* by Kathryn Griesinger, *Rondo in Blue* by Robert Longfield, *The Dark Rebellion* by Lucas Shogren, *Primrose Hill* by Alan Lee Silva, and *March Slav* by Tchaikovsky, arranged by Carrie Lane Gruselle.

Students in grades 7–9 are eligible to audition each fall for selection for the February performance. We look forward to having your students audition next year. †

House of Note

Dealers and Makers of Violins, Violas, Cellos and Bows

Extensive Selection of Instruments for the Advancing Student
Expert Restoration and Repairs
Rental Instruments
Appraisals

Serving
the String
Community
Since 1959

7202 Minnetonka Boulevard, St. Louis Park, MN 55426
952-929-0026 www.houseofnote.com

Cover Art Needed!

Teachers and students are encouraged to submit original black & white artwork suitable for the cover of this magazine. Drawings should fill an 8.5” wide by 9.0” tall space.

Send artwork to

Faith Farr
String Notes editor
4 Sunshine Ln, North Oaks, MN 55127
StringNotes@mnsota.org
August 15 is the next deadline!

Where:

Champlin Park High School
6025 109th Ave N
Champlin, MN 55316



When:

April 13th 2024
8:30 am - 3:00 pm



Eclectic Strings Day 2024

What:

Welcoming all players ages 10 and up!!! College and adult players in addition to school-age players welcome. Styles of music include: Jazz Swing, Fiddling, Pop, and Rock.



Who:

Clinicians:

Greg Byers, cello, bass
Levi Comstock, viola,
and
Ernest Bisong, violin



Register Here:

<https://www.mnsota.org/event-details-registration/eclectic-strings-day>

Registration deadline April 12, 2024 or pay \$5 late fee.





ORCHESTRA

To Piano or Not To Piano

by Wes Myers

String teachers, both in the classroom and in the studio, have used piano. Not all and not always, but with any tool used by an educator it's worth exploring. Personally, I have used the piano in the classroom since I began teaching in the public school. My prior experience with piano was minimal. I learned a great deal of my piano skills "on the job." However, I would encourage any orchestra teacher to consider the positives and negatives of piano use and decide for yourself where it may be appropriate.

Benefits

Playing a string instrument in tune is a lifetime effort. Each day we encourage our students to listen to their sound and make small adjustments to achieve fine intonation. But how will students know when they have achieved good intonation? Using the piano, you can provide a pitch reference for students. This can happen at an individual note level, within the chord, or in time. You can also use a stringed instrument, but I've found the difference in tonal quality makes it easier for students to hear. A violin can blend in with the students rather than standing out. A pitch generator or tuner also works but can lack the ability to change quickly.

Piano may be most useful for our youngest students. It can reinforce the tempo and provide a leader for them to follow. Beginners often need time to develop ensemble skills and it can be frustrating to work through cohesion issues. For them, the piano can provide something to follow. If you are playing with a group, you can also lead with phrasing, dynamics, and articulation. It's much easier to play a loud forte when a piano is providing reinforcement.

One area where piano can be particularly useful is when using method books. Once again, I find myself using method books in a rehearsal setting mostly with my youngest students. Most teacher editions contain a piano part, and it contains additional music to "spice up" the music. In *Essential Elements* there are several early songs that contain a single note or use just

two or three notes. These are very useful in helping students learn and internalize the notes, but the music itself is quite boring. Adding the piano part can make playing these songs more fun. Often these piano parts are quite accessible for the moderately skilled pianist. I've also found some methods where the piano parts increase in difficulty through the book serving to help develop our piano skills as well as the skills of our students.

Drawbacks

While piano can be an excellent tool, it has its drawbacks as well. Older students may not need the pitch reinforcement, and the leadership provided by a piano may be stopping students from taking on leadership roles of their own. After the difficult season of distance learning and the hybrid model, I personally leaned heavily on the piano to help day-to-day in the orchestra classroom. My students were able to prepare quality concerts and play grade-level appropriate repertoire. However, once they went to the later grades where I did not use piano, I found that students would play behind the beat. They were waiting for someone else to initiate the note, following rather than leading. It developed timid musicians who relied on others rather than using the skills they developed.

This over-reliance on piano also stopped

the development of other skills as well. Students working on rhythm reading found themselves following rather than counting. I would assume a skill like counting was taught and learned, but the evidence was faulty. While it sounds like they understand the rhythm, your piano playing might be doing the heavy lifting. If you are playing piano daily, you may also not be developing students who understand conducting and learn to watch. Students can also miss out on other aspects of music reading. They may not actually see the crescendo or articulation marking, instead simply responding to what they hear. You may be developing fantastic listeners with good ears, but not creating whole musicians.

Aside from not developing the whole musician, you may also not be hearing mistakes that need to be addressed. I've often found rhythmic errors I never noticed or inaccuracy in pitch that was hidden behind the piano's sound. The piano, like any tool, should be used with purpose and thought.

Getting Started

Since the use of the piano has its benefits and drawbacks it's best to have it as an option but not as a constant necessity. If your reason for not using the piano is a lack of developed skills, I would suggest a few ways to slowly integrate it into your rehearsals and lessons. First, you can play single

14. LET'S READ "E"

The image shows a musical score for the piece "Let's Read E" from the book *Essential Elements*. The score is arranged for a string quartet and piano. It consists of five staves: Violin (top), Viola, Cello, Bass, and Piano (bottom). The key signature is one flat (B-flat major or D minor), and the time signature is 4/4. The music is in a simple, repetitive pattern. The piano part is written in a way that provides harmonic support and rhythmic reinforcement for the string parts. The score includes dynamic markings like *ff* and *f*, and articulation markings like *acc.* and *acc.* The piano part includes chords and single notes, with some chords labeled as C, Am7, Fm7, G6, and C.

From *Essential Elements*, Hal Leonard 2004.

The piano part can "spice up" the early basic music students learn.

CONDUCTOR SCORE Richard Meyer

Duration - 3:00

Allegro (♩ = 112) 4

Violins I

Violins II

Viola (Violin III)

Cello

String Bass

Piano Accompaniment

From *Dragon Hunter* by Richard Meyer Highland/Etling Publishing 2003.
When playing from open score, consider playing just the 1st violin and bass parts.

lines in the music. Just providing reinforcement to the basses may prove beneficial or supporting a smaller section while leaving the rest to their own playing. I spend most of my piano playing reading open score and playing just the 1st violin and bass parts. This is a much more attainable skill than expecting a full piano reduction without missing any notes. Reading an open score does take practice, but it provides full context of the individual parts making it a great way to continue rehearsing without losing important information. If the provided piano music is a reduction of the orchestra parts you can also omit the inner notes to make it easier to play. If you are handy with music writing software, you can also write out your own piano part that meets your personal level of skill.

Conclusion

Whether you use piano consistently in an orchestra setting, never use piano, or find yourself somewhere in between, I encourage you to thoughtfully consider its use. There are many great ways to use piano that can benefit our students. There are also drawbacks that need to be considered. As I found out for myself, you can be doing more harm than good with your piano playing. I encourage you to consider all of this and find an approach that is right for you and your students.

Wes Myers is the 4th–12th grade orchestra and High School Beginning Guitar teacher in Marshall, MN. In addition, he is the assistant director for marching band, jazz band, and directs the pit orchestra for the fall musical. He is also the principal bassist with the Southwest Minnesota Orchestra and a conductor of the Marshall Municipal City Band. †

The transition from “learning to read” to “reading to learn”

Foundations for Music Reading

Theory curriculum for violin, viola and cello

Farr Publications
4 Sunshine Lane, North Oaks, Minnesota 55127
651-484-0522 fax: 651-483-5362
e-mail: faith@farrpublications.com
www.farrpublications.com

Paul A. Schmitt
VIOLIN SHOP

Fine Instruments & Bows
Expert Luthier Services
Exceptional Selection

violinshop@schmittmusic.com | schmittmusic.com/violinshop

@schmittmusicviolinshop @schmittviolinshop

Schmitt Music

ASTA National Conference

March 19–22, 2025
Atlanta, GA

National Orchestra Festival
Master Classes

Registration opens Fall 2024

<https://www.astastrings.org>

String Fun in the Summer Sun

Summer Camps for Students and Adults in our 5-state area

This article summarizes information on summer programs in Minnesota and nearby states. Student opportunities are mostly for pre-college age students. Teacher training opportunities are pedagogy classes for teachers and college students. Legend: R&B — room and board; gr — grades; opt — optional; aud — audition; req — required; reg — registration

Student opportunities in Minnesota—In Person unless otherwise noted

Upper Midwest String Camp — sponsored by MNSOTA — has sunset. We hope you find another opportunity in this list.

Cannon Valley Youth Orchestra (CVYO): Northfield. Video placement audition; info on their website. Combined final concert for Summer Orchestra and Chamber Camp, July 12 followed by a super fun outline to the arcade + bowling alley in Northfield. Reg deadline June 1. Scholarship deadline May 15. Contact: info@cvyomn.org, cvyomn.org

CVYO Summer Orchestra: Tues June 11, 18, 25, Jul 2, 9 + Jul 12 concert. \$125; sibling discount. Age 8–18. 3 levels of orchestra: 5:00–6:00 P.M. advanced-beginner; 6:15–7:15 P.M. intermediate; 7:30–8:30 P.M. advanced

CVYO Chamber Camp: July 8–12; 9:00–noon. \$200; sibling discount. Discount if also doing Summer Orchestra. No chamber experience necessary. String players with 1+ yrs experience through Class of '24 HS grads. Chamber music and instrument choir.

North Star Chamber Music Festival and Symposium. Concordia College, Moorhead. June 15–19. 9:00 A.M.–3:00 P.M. Final performance June 15, 7:00 P.M. \$285. String and piano students (grade 8 through college) are invited to participate in 5 days of

chamber music, chamber orchestra, private lessons, musicianship classes, composition + conducting workshops, as well as faculty and student recitals. Recorded aud. Deadline May 15. (Concurrent Symposium for music educators includes a special ASTA reading session, observe coachings/workshops and presentations on special topics.) Contact Dr. Eduard Teregulov, eteregul@cord.edu, <https://www.concordiacollege.edu/music/performances-and-events/north-star-chamber-music-festival-and-symposium/>

St. Olaf Summer Music Academy: June 16–22, Northfield. Gr 9–12. \$925 incl R&B. Orchestra, lessons, chamber music, choir, band, ear training, theory, electives. No aud. Contact: St. Olaf College, 1520 St. Olaf Ave., Northfield, MN 55057, 507-786-3031, events@stolaf.edu, <https://wp.stolaf.edu/camps/music-academy/>

University of Northwestern-St. Paul Violin Group Camp. M, T, Th, F, June 17–21. 9:00–noon. \$20 reg + \$120. Age 6–13; Suzuki Book 1–3 or equivalent. Games and activities emphasizing aural skills, note reading, rhythmic dictation, ensemble playing and leadership within a fun, judgment-free learning environment. Deadline June 13. <https://unwsp.edu/events/violin-group-camp/>

University of Northwestern-St. Paul Brío Children's Music Camp. June 24–28. 9:30–noon. \$20 reg + \$120. Age 4–8; Suzuki Book 1–3. Music and Movement including listening to a variety of music, learning about rhythm, tempo and the musical alphabet. Students will be exploring the connection between music and movement, storytelling, concert listening, singing, and much more. Deadline June 17. <https://unwsp.edu/events/brio-childrens-music-camp/>

MacPhail Camps: For all camps Contact: MacPhail Center, 501 S. 2nd St., Minneapolis MN 55401, 612-321-0100, contact@macphail.org, www.macphail.org

MacPhail Summer Strings Bootcamp: M, T, Th, F June 17–21, 1:00–4:00 P.M. MacPhail Minneapolis. \$340. Age 7–11; Suzuki Books 1–3. ear training, note reading, leadership, technical skills, teamwork; 1-on-1 instruction on a polished piece; larger group setting on repertoire.


MacPhail Introductory Chamber Camp for Adults: M, T, W, July 8–10, 6:00–9:00 P.M. MacPhail Minneapolis. \$145. Deadline June 18. Electronic placement recording due June 16. Contact: Jeremy Swider, swider.jeremy@macphail.org

MacPhail Rock Week: July 8–12, noon–4:00 P.M. MacPhail Minneapolis. \$485. Age 11–17. For singers, guitar, strings, drums and keyboard.

MacPhail Sartory String Quartet Institute: July 8–14, 9:00 A.M.–3:00 P.M. MacPhail Minneapolis. \$525. Age 9–15. String quartet coaching, performance. Digital aud. including required excerpts. Deadline Apr 30. <https://www.macphail.org/sartory-quartet-institute/>

MacPhail Adult Chamber Music Camp: M, W, Th, July 8–17, 6:00–9:00 P.M. MacPhail Minneapolis. \$415. Deadline June 18. Electronic placement recording due June 18. Contact: Jeremy Swider, swider.jeremy@macphail.org


MacPhail Suzuki Institute for Piano and Guitar: July 22–26. MacPhail Minneapolis. Guitar Book 1: age 6 and under, 9:00–noon, \$315. Guitar Book 1 and up: age 6–18, 9:00 A.M.–4:00 P.M., \$561.



**CLAIRE
GIVENS VIOLINS, INC.**

— Established 1977 —

Fine Violins, Violas, Cellos & Bows



1201 MARQUETTE AVENUE SUITE 150 MINNEAPOLIS, MN 55403
800.279.4323 612.375.0708 GIVENSVIOLINS.COM

STRINGWOOD CHAMBER MUSIC FESTIVAL

August 3-18, 2024

Concerts... Coachings... Masterclasses... Outdoor Adventures



Frank Almond, violinist



Brandon Vamos, cellist



Paul Laraia, violist

Chamber Music
Immersion with
ARTARIA STRING 4TET
Ages 12-22

APPLY NOW

STRINGWOOD.COM

Guitar Book 4 & above: age 13–18, 1:00–4:00 P.M., \$315. Deadline June 23.

MacPhail Jazz Camp: July 29–Aug 2, 12:30–4:00 P.M. MacPhail Minneapolis. \$450. Age 12–19. Jazz combo to match ability level; jazz history, jazz theory.

MacPhail String Chamber and Orchestra Camp: Aug 5–9, 9 A.M.–3 P.M. MacPhail Minneapolis. \$525. Age 12–18. Orchestra, quartet, lessons. Deadline June 30. Electronic placement recording due June 30. <https://www.macphail.org/string-chamber-music-orchestra-camp-information-form/>

MacPhail Adult Strings Retreat on Madeline Island: Aug 11–14. Madeline Island. \$1,200 incl R&B; discount for commuter; discount before April 1. Opt \$840 companion food & lodging only. Deadline June 1. String Orchestra for beginning/intermediate players. Chamber Music for intermediate/advanced players. Electronic placement recording for Chamber Music. Contact: Jeremy Swider, swider.jeremy@macphail.org. <https://www.macphail.org/2024-strings-retreat/>

American Fiddle Method (Fiddle Pal) Camp: June 18–21, 9:00 A.M.–4:00 P.M. with evening activities. Stillwater MN. \$395 + \$50 opt daily lunch. Age 9–99. Players of the violin, viola, cello, guitar learn tunes and techniques from a variety of traditions such as Bluegrass, Scottish, Jazz, Appalachian, Irish and Blues. Students learn in groups with others of a similar experience level. Brian Wicklund & others. Contact: fiddlepalcamp@gmail.com, <https://www.fiddlepalcamp.com>

St. Paul Chamber Music Institute: St. Paul MN. June 23–29. \$100 reg + \$2,000 incl R&B. For strings and piano. Gr 7–12, college & graduate. Immersive chamber music program; daily coachings, lessons, solo and chamber music concerts. Jasper Quartet. Deadline Feb 15. Contact: registration@thespcm.org, 651-224-2205, <https://thespcm.org/chamber-music/institute>

[org/chamber-music/institute](https://thespcm.org/chamber-music/institute)

The Minnesota Youth Symphonies (MYS) will host a **Summer String Camp** June 24–28, 2024 at Messiah Episcopal Church in Saint Paul, MN. This weeklong day camp is designed for advanced beginner/intermediate string musicians entering grades 2–9 (Suzuki Books 1–5). Directed by Patricia Kelly, the camp includes full rehearsals, sectionals, music history classes, guest artist performances, and an informal Friday concert. The deadline to register is June 17 (no audition required). Tuition is \$425 per student (scholarships are available). Visit mnyouthsymphonies.org/summer-string-camp or contact mys@mnyouthsymphonies.org to learn more.

St. Paul Conservatory of Music Summer Music Camp: July 8–19, M–F, 8 A.M.–4 P.M. The Saint Paul Conservatory of Music. \$675. Completed gr K–6. Classes, creative play, performances. Electives: keyboard, violin, cello, ukulele, guitar, instrument exploration, orchestra, composition/songwriting, drum circle, rock ensemble, chamber music. Contact: The SPCM, 100 Oxford St, St. Paul, MN 55105, 651-224-2205, patricia@thespcm.org, <https://thespcm.org/summercamp>

International Cello Institute: July 14–Aug 4. St. Olaf College, Northfield. \$70 reg + \$4,050 incl R&B. Scholarships avail. Age 15–23. Private lessons, master classes, workshops, chamber music, concerts. Video aud. Deadline Feb 1. Contact: internationalcelloinstitute@gmail.com, <https://internationalcelloinstitute.com>

ICI: iCONNECT: July 14–Aug 4. St. Olaf College, Northfield. \$70 reg + \$4,050 incl R&B. Scholarships avail. Age 9–14. Virtual program: July 15–19. \$30 reg + \$200. Held via Zoom. Private lessons, group technique classes, master classes, re-recorded concert. In-person program: July 22–26. \$30 reg + \$500 does *not* incl R&B. Private lessons, group classes, ensemble coaching, master class, final performance. Video aud. Deadline Feb 1. Contact: internationalcelloinstitute@gmail.com, <https://www.internationalcelloinstitute.com/iconnect-2024>

GTCYS Summer camps: July 22–26 9:00 A.M.–noon. UMN School of Music, Minneapolis. \$25 reg + \$350; tuition assistance avail. Summer Philharmonia: introductory string orchestra for age 7–12; no aud. Summer Sinfonietta: full orchestra for string players age 12–15 and wind/brass/perc players age 13–16; upload scale & solo playing sample. Summer Symphony: full orchestra for age 15–18; upload audition req including excerpts. Video due June 25. Contact: 651-602-6800, mail@gtcys.org, <https://gtcys.org/programs/summer>

MN Sinfonia Youth Outreach Week: July 22–26. Minneapolis. *Free!* Experience a “week in the life” of a professional musician as you participate in a week of intensive evening orchestra rehearsals, then join the MN Sinfonia Orchestra in performing in a free-admission public concert at the beautiful Lake Harriet Bandshell! Advanced music students up to age 19 accepted with a teacher recommendation. Contact: Jay Fishman, 612-871-1701, programs@mnsinfonia.org, www.mnsinfonia.org/youth-outreach-week

42nd Annual Minnesota State Old Time Fiddle Championship: Aug 3. Mountain Iron. Six divisions for students & adults; for all bowed and plucked string instruments; cash prizes totaling over \$2,500. Contact: Sheila Wilcox, 218-290-9877, sheila.wilcox@trps.org, <https://www.mesabisymphonyorchestra.org/fiddlecontest>

Stringwood Chamber Music Festival: Aug 3–18. Eagle Bluff Environmental Learning Center, Lanesboro MN. \$60 reg + \$2,800 includes R&B. For strings age 12–22. Chamber music, masterclasses, lessons, concerts, adventures with naturalists. Deadline May 1. Digital audition. Contact: Ray Shows, 1790 Richard Circle, St. Paul, MN 55118, 651-587-7595, ray@artaria.us, www.stringwood.com

Northern Lights Chamber Music Institute: August 13–22 at

LUTHIER:
VIOLIN, VIOLA &
CELLO MAKER/DEALER

John R. Waddle
VIOLINS, INC.

2032 Saint Clair Avenue
Saint Paul, Minnesota
55105-1650
Telephone: 651.698.4692
email: johnrwaddle@gmail.com
website: www.waddleviolins.com

discover

Intermediate to collegiate-level orchestras
Complimentary teacher concert tickets
Generous need-based scholarships
A tradition of excellence since 1972
Auditions June 14-15 for Fall 2024



play

Join us for an immersive and fun

SUMMER STRING CAMP

- Weeklong day camp June 24-28, 2024
- Advanced beginner/intermediate level (entering grades 2-9)
- Enjoy full rehearsals, sectionals, music history classes, and guest artist performances!
- Camp culminates with an informal concert on Friday.
- Open to violin, viola, cello, and bass players.

www.mnyouthsymphonies.org



“

My child has enjoyed String Camp for the past few years. Pat Kelly is awesome, and I love how older MYS musicians help out and inspire younger players.

Camp Vermilion, Cook, MN on beautiful Lake Vermilion. \$50 reg + \$1600 incl R&B. The NLCMI is the proud educational wing of the Chamber Music Society of Minnesota, a 10-day immersive chamber music institute/festival for advanced high school students through college and post docs. Daily coaching of chamber groups as well as string orchestra with internationally renowned faculty, culminating in four public performances. Deadline May 15. Contact: www.chambermusicmn.org/apply or email sarah@chambermusicmn.org for further information.

Student Opportunities in Minnesota—pending at press time

Crescendo Youth Orchestra String Camp: MN Discovery Center, Chisholm. Usually second week of June. Three levels of orchestra; challenging groups for the more experienced musicians and comfortable learning for all other levels. Contact: crescendoyouthorchestra@gmail.com, <https://cyo.mymusicstaff.com/>

Bravo! Summer Music Academy: Usually 2 weeks in June. Shattuck-St. Mary's School, Faribault. Gr 6–college. Private lessons, technique classes, master classes, chamber music, concerts. Digital audition. Contact: Benjamin Downs, Shattuck-St. Mary's School, 100 Shumway Ave., Faribault, MN 55021, benjamin.downs@s-sm.org, <https://www.s-sm.org/news-events/programs-summer-camps/bravo-summer-music-academy/>

Monticello Community Strings Orchestra. Usually once a week for seven Tuesdays Jun–Jul plus final concert. Monticello High School. Two levels of orchestra. Find & “Like” us on Facebook for updates throughout the course. For more information, call Community Education at 763-272-2030. Contact: Michelle Schettler, michelle.schettler@monticello.k12.mn.us, <https://monticello.ce.eleyo.com/>

Student Opportunities in Nearby States—In Person unless otherwise noted

Schoolhouse Fiddle Workshops—Online. Baroque Fiddle Tunes: April 16 7:00 P.M., Apr 17 10:00 A.M., Apr 17 7:00 P.M. Klezmer Fiddle Tunes: May 14 7:00 P.M., May 15 10:00 A.M., May 17 7:00 P.M. Each workshop for violin, viola, cello, bass, mandolin, recorder. \$10 + opt \$15 for music book. Contact: Deborah Greenblatt, debby@greenblattandseay.com, www.greenblattandseay.com

Interlochen College of Creative Arts (for adults): Interlochen, MI. For all programs: CEUs avail. Contact: Admissions Office, 4000 J Maddy PKWY., Interlochen, MI 49643, 231-276-7340, <https://www.interlochen.org/college-creative-arts>

Interlochen College String Orchestra Retreat: April 12–14. \$395. Adult. Masterclasses, rehearsals, sectionals, performance opportunities. Deadline April 5.

Interlochen College Early Renaissance Music Retreat: June 4–8. \$495. Adult. Music from Ferrara; Italian Renaissance music written or commissioned by women. Deadline June 4.

Interlochen College Acoustic Guitar Retreat: July 23–27. \$695 Adult. Acoustic and fingerstyle guitar technique, arranging, composing, performance tips. Deadline July 16.

Interlochen College Adult Chamber Music Camp: August 12–18. \$695. Chamber music, large ensemble, pedagogy workshops,

masterclasses, concerts. Deadline Aug 5.

Dorian Summer Music Camp: Luther College, Decorah, IA. \$660 incl R&B. June 9–15: Middle School Camp. June 16–22: High School Camp. Contact: 563-387-1389, dorian@luther.edu, <https://www.luther.edu/music/dorian/>

Green Lake Festival Chamber Music Institute: June 9–22. Ripon College, Ripon, WI. \$1800 + \$1400 R&B. Scholarships avail for early applicants. College and graduate violin, viola, cello. Coachings, masterclasses, lecture-discussions, performances. Video aud. Contact: Green Lake Festival of Music, P.O. Box 569, Green Lake, WI 54941, 920-748-9398, info@greenlakefestival.org, <https://greenlakefestival.org/chamber-music-institute/>

Shell Lake Arts Center Camps and Workshops: Shell Lake WI. For all programs: Gr 6–12; \$895 incl R&B; scholarships available. Contact: Shell Lake Arts Center, 802 1st St., Shell Lake, WI 54871, 715-468-2414, info@ShellLakeArtsCenter.org, <https://ShellLakeArtsCenter.org>

Shell Lake Guitar and Bass Workshop: June 9–14. All styles of electric and acoustic guitar and bass.

Shell Lake Jazz Band Camp: Wk 1: June 16–21; Wk 2: June 23–28. All levels of experience from beginner to advanced. Small and large ensemble. Placement aud.

Shell Lake Classical Strings Camp: June 30–July 5. Violin, viola, cello, bass. Intermediate/advanced; minimum Suzuki Book 2. Chamber music, orchestra, technique class, musicianship. Placement aud.

Shell Lake Jazz Combo and Improv Camp: June 30–July 5. For keys, wind/brass, drums, perc, bass, guitar. Beginner to advanced. Small group performance practices; in-depth exploration of improv.

Interlochen Arts Camp: Interlochen, MI. June 15–August 4. Tuition includes R&B. 2 wks for Gr 3–6 \$4510; 4 wks for Gr 3–6 \$7775; 3 wks for Gr 6–12 \$6765; 6 wks for Gr 3–12 \$10,080; 1 wk intensive for high school violin, viola, cello, bass, classical guitar \$1830. Financial aid avail except for 1 wk intensives. Orchestra, chamber music, lessons, enrichment classes. Aud req. Contact: Admissions Office, 4000 J Maddy Pkwy, Interlochen, MI 49643, 231-276-7472, admission@interlochen.org, www.interlochen.org

Dakota Chamber Music Workshop for Strings, Winds and Piano: June 17–23. Minot State University, ND. Two-day session

MacPhail
CENTER FOR MUSIC

Madeline Island Adult Strings Retreat Commune & Connect Through Music

AUGUST 11 - 14

- Insightful Topic Discussions from MacPhail's Outstanding String Faculty
- Individual Lessons
- Group Classes and Ensemble Practice with the Strings Orchestra
- Nightly Activities and More!



Scan to Learn More

Registration is Open! • Financial Aid is Available





MacPhail
CENTER FOR MUSIC

Summer, Sun, and Strings! Discover Summer String Music Camps at MacPhail

- Opportunities for All Ages and Skill Levels!
- Guitar, Violin, Cello, and Other Instruments!
- Quartets, Ensembles, Orchestra, and More!



**Sign up today to sharpen
string skills this summer!**

Financial Aid is Available

\$215 + R&B. Six-day session \$420 + R&B for university age & adults; \$490 incl R&B for gr 7–12. Credit available. Scholarships avail. Rehearsals, coachings, masterclasses, performances. Contact: Dakota Chamber Music, Division of Music, 500 University Ave W., Minot ND, 58707, 701-858-3576, 800-777-0750, j.erik.anderson@minotstateu.edu, <http://www.minotstateu.edu/dcm/>

Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp: June 21–August 13. Twin Lake, MI. Various sessions 4 days to 2 week sessions: Suzuki, intermediate orchestra, high school orchestra, harp, adult. Tuition depends on the session. Contact: Admissions, 300 E. Crystal Lake Rd, Twin Lake, MI 49457, 231-894-1966, 800-221-3796, www.bluelake.org

UW-Whitewater Camps: Whitewater, WI. String Summer Camp June 23–28 for Gr 7–8 and Gr 9–12. \$490 incl R&B. Deadline June 8. Jazz Camp July 7–12 for Gr 9–12. \$600 incl R&B. For all programs: Contact: University of Wisconsin, 800 West Main St., 2005 Roseman, Whitewater, WI 53190, 262-472-3165, cesevents@uww.edu, <http://www.uww.edu/ce/camps/music/>

Madeline Island Chamber Music: Madeline Is, WI. Chamber Music for Strings for college and advanced high school students, age 14–24: June 23–July 14. App fee \$100 + \$4,200 incl R&B. Financial aid available. Fellowship String Quartet program for advanced college and graduate students, age 18–24: June 23–July 28. App fee \$100 + \$500 incl R&B. Deadline February 15. Study with members of the American String Quartet and artist faculty. Lessons, coaching, master classes, and concerts weekly. Contact MICM—A Program of MacPhail, 501 S 2nd St, Minneapolis, MN 55401, 612-321-0100, micm@macphail.org, <https://www.micm.org>

Birch Creek Music Performance Center, Egg Harbor, WI. For all programs. contact: Birch Creek Music Performance Center, 3821

County E, P.O. Box 230, Egg Harbor, WI 54209, 920-868-3763, www.birchcreek.org

Birch Creek Symphony Academy: June 30–July 13. \$100 reg + \$2300 incl R&B. Scholarships available. Gr 7–12. Orchestra, sectionals, chamber music, technique classes. Rolling deadline. Recorded or live aud.

Birch Creek Chamber Music Retreat: Aug 19–22. \$75 reg + \$425 + opt R&B. Adults of intermediate and higher skill in strings, winds, piano. Chamber music, master classes, final performance. Non-competitive.

International Music Camp: All programs held at International Peace Garden (Manitoba/North Dakota). Deadline for early bird pricing below May 1. Contact: International Music Camp, 111-11th Ave S.W., Suite 3, Minot, ND 58701, 701-838-8472, info@internationalmusiccamp.com, www.internationalmusiccamp.com

IMC Guitar: July 7–13. \$630 incl R&B. Gr 6–12. Different levels of guitar instruction in a variety of styles including folk, classical, jazz and rock. For acoustic or electric guitars. Private lessons avail.

IMC University Prep Program: Prep A, B & C: 3 wks July 7–27; \$1,880 incl R&B. Prep A & B: 2 wks July 7–20 \$1,255 incl R&B. Prep C 1 wk (must take Prep A & B first) July 21–27 \$630 incl R&B. For advanced gr 10–12 musicians interested in studying music at the university level. Music theory, ear-training and sight-singing, music history and appreciation, composition and applied music, private lessons, chamber music, orchestra.

IMC Orchestra: July 21–27. \$630 incl R&B. Gr 5–12. Four orchestras, masterclasses, sectional rehearsals, theory, chamber groups, optional private lessons.

IMC Fiddle School: July 21–27. \$630 incl R&B. Free for stu-

dents in IMC Orchestra. For intermediate and advanced players; gr 6–adult; focus on various fiddling styles. Private lessons are available. Fiddle can be taken alone or combined with the Orchestra Program.

IMC Harp: July 21–27. \$630 incl R&B. Gr 7–12. All levels; beginner track for pianists with 3+ years of study; harp rental available. Lessons, masterclasses, harp ensemble.

IMC Guitar—Adult: July 27–30. \$320 incl R&B. Age 21+. Different levels of guitar instruction in a variety of styles including folk, classical, jazz, and rock. For acoustic or electric guitars. Private lessons avail.

IMC Harp—Adult: July 27–30. \$320 incl R&B. Age 21+. All levels; beginner track for pianists with 3+ years of study; harp rental available. Lessons, masterclasses and harp ensemble.

IMC Adult String/Symphony Orchestra: July 27–30. \$320 incl R&B. Large ensembles & chamber music. Choose your own schedule to be in more than one ensemble! Private lessons are available.

American Suzuki Institute: Stevens Point, WI. July 14–20: cello, violin, piano, voice for children at all levels. July 21–27: violin, viola, cello, harp, and One-week Chamber Music. \$135 reg + \$495–\$620 for one week program depending on level + R&B additional; \$65 for optional electives. July 14–27 Two-week Advanced Chamber Music, \$1080 + R&B additional. Deadline May 31. Late fee after May 31. Contact: Aber Suzuki Center, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, Stevens Point, WI 54481-3897, 715-346-3033, suzuki@uwsp.edu, www.uwsp.edu/suzuki/asi

Teacher Training Opportunities—In Person unless otherwise noted

All-State Teachers' Workshop — sponsored by MNSOTA — will not take place this year.

North Star Chamber Music Festival and Symposium. Concordia College, Moorhead. June 15–19. 9:00 A.M.–3:00 P.M. FREE Symposium for music educators includes a special ASTA reading session, observe coachings/workshops, chamber music collaborations and presentations on special topics. Runs concurrently with Chamber Music Festival for string and piano students grade 8 through college. Deadline May 15. Contact Dr. Eduard Teregulov, eteregul@cord.edu, <https://www.concordiacollege.edu/music/performances-and-events/north-star-chamber-music-festival-and-symposium/>

Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp: Twin Lake, MI. Suzuki Teacher Training. June 15–23, \$700, Violin Bk 1. Cello Book 1. SAA and req. Contact: Anne Kearney-Looman, Registrar, 300 East Crystal Lake Rd, Twin Lake, MI 49457, 517-930-5401, suzukifamilycamp@gmail.com, www.bluelake.org

CMP Workshop (Comprehensive Musicianship through Performance): June 24–28. University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. Hands-on workshop, geared to K-12 and college level music educators and conductors. Graduate credit available. Contact: learning@wsmamusic.org, <https://wmeamusic.org/cmp/>

Paul Rolland String Pedagogy Workshop—Online: June 24–29. Synchronous and asynchronous. \$450 regular reg / \$275 returning participant / \$175 student reg. Level 1 Endorsement in Paul Rolland String Pedagogy. Register: <https://www.paulrollandsociety.org/workshop>. Contact: <https://www.paulrollandsociety.org/contact>, paulrollandsociety@gmail.com

Mimi Zweig Summer Retreat for Violinists and Violists: July 6–12. \$920 + opt housing \$309. Intensive Jacobs School of Music String Academy Pedagogy Workshop, incorporating the philosophies of Shinichi Suzuki, Paul Rolland and Mimi Zweig. Rolling deadline; discount before April 1. Contact: Brenda Brenner

bbrenner@iu.edu, musicsp@iu.edu, <https://jacobsacademy.indiana.edu/descriptions/summer-string-retreat.html>

The Clearing—Chamber Music for Strings: July 9–15, Ellison Bay, WI. \$775 + opt R&B. Adult. Intermediate to advanced level players. String quartet, string orchestra, masterclasses. Contact: Registrar, 12171 Garrett Bay Rd, Ellison Bay, WI 54210, 920-854-4088, 877-854-3225, clearing@theclearing.org, www.theclearing.org

American Suzuki Institute—Hybrid: Online & in-person: July 13–27, Stevens Point, WI. \$150–\$820 depending on course length. Suzuki teacher training in Every Child Can!, violin, cello, voice, Suzuki Early Childhood Education. Late fee after May 31. SAA aud requirements. Contact: Aber Suzuki Center, University of Wisconsin-Stevens Point, Stevens Point, WI 54481-3897, 715-346-3033, suzuki@uwsp.edu, www.uwsp.edu/suzuki/asi

MacPhail Suzuki Teacher Training—Guitar Unit 4—in person or online: July 22–25. 4:00–8:00 P.M.; observations 10:00 A.M.–4:00 P.M. MacPhail Minneapolis. \$561. Deadline June 23. SAA aud requirements. Contact: MacPhail Center, 501 S. 2nd St., Minneapolis, MN 55401, 612-321-0100, www.macphail.org

University of St. Thomas Summer Graduate Programs in Music Education: various dates June–August. UST, St. Paul. A variety of short courses including Kodaly, Orff, Dalcroze, Choral and Instrumental Conducting. Graduate Credit available. Contact: Graduate Programs in Music Education, UST, BEC 107, 2115 Summit Ave, St. Paul, MN 55105-1096, 651-962-5870, music@stthomas.edu, <https://cas.stthomas.edu/degrees-programs/graduate/music-education/>

This article is as accurate as we know at press time and is intended for the convenience of the membership. For complete information, please contact program coordinators or visit their websites. [ed] †

FEIN STRINGED INSTRUMENTS
DEALERS, REPAIRERS AND MAKERS OF
VIOLINS, VIOLAS, CELLOS AND BOWS
Andrew Fein

WONDERFUL INSTRUMENTS and BOWS

Open Every Day, Including Saturday and Sunday, From 10 to 6

ON-LINE & ON GRAND AVENUE
www.FineViolins.com

1850 Grand Avenue / St. Paul, Minnesota 55105
Call us: 651.228.0783; Text us: 651.373.1300





VIOLIN

Examining the Witness

by Ian Snyder

As teachers, we work under a great deal of pressure to communicate as much information as efficiently as possible. We have an intrinsic desire to be helpful, we want to see students make rapid progress, and we work under the pressure of the clock, whose hand mischievously accelerates toward the 29-, 44-, or 59-minute mark! With beginning students, I am able to provide a distilled action plan because the repertoire tends to highlight single concepts at a time, the parents are involved in practice, and the child's attention span and lesson time are shorter. As we progress into intermediate, concept-diverse repertoire and the children move toward independent practice, I often find myself trying to stock a student with practice techniques like a bag of groceries for the week.

In the past handful of months I noticed that I felt frustrated at times by students who didn't remember information I expected them to know or who weren't doing things in practice that I expected them to do. This happened even in cases where I had patiently repeated myself over a number of weeks, and had shown and explained a given concept in many different ways. I began to understand that if I expected students to know and do certain things, I needed to prompt the students to come up with that information on their own. Socrates said, "I cannot teach anyone anything. I can only make them think." Indeed, teaching through questioning is the so-called "Socratic Method." My hope here is to shed a little light by sharing my exploration along that avenue in recent months.

One thing I have discovered is that there is a lot of information that students do know, but which takes a bit of time to retrieve. I have one student who I suspected was navigating shifts solely by ear, without knowing what position he was going to or how to get there. His hand looked to me like it was trying to jump onto the right note. We recently began Csardas, and I asked him how he would practice the shifts. He readily described shifting with guide notes, and I began to ask him about individual shifts. "What position are you going from and to?" "Which finger does the shift?" "What note does that finger shift to?" Con-

sistently, he would take around 10 seconds to answer, but he was correct each time. His retention of what I had been teaching was strong, but the retrieval process was the muscle that seemed to need training. In a way, we had stumbled into a form of flash card learning. To my delight, he came back the following week with the introduction's shifts in tune and mechanically smooth. I could have told him what to do in less than a quarter of the time, but seeing the quality of implementation helped me understand that involving him deeply was the true time saver.

Another thing I've noticed is that asking open-ended questions can lead us to the exact information that a student needs. One student recently played about half of *Meditation from Thais*, and the pulse and rhythm made me wonder if I was having a stroke. He knew that he needed to improve the rhythm, but struggled to do so, even after a few attempts and some more questions like "how many beats is X worth?" or "do you change after 2 or after 3?" After a few minutes, I asked him, "What do you feel is the most difficult part of this?" He explained that he kept noticing notes that were out of tune and that he felt like he needed to fix them or get them closer before moving on. I told him that I wanted him to try again and focus purely on rhythm, and that I gave him permission to be as out of tune as he needed to be. He proceeded to play it with impeccable rhythm. (I also asked him what he thought of the intonation and we agreed that it hadn't suffered particularly.) We had spoken before about ways to isolate variables in practice, but he needed permission when merging variables to highlight some priorities and come back to others later. This is something that felt so intuitive to me that I wouldn't have thought to explain it, but it was the clarification he needed and spared him from a lengthy sermon about different aspects of rhythm and pulse.

Even for students who have developed strong executive function on the instrument, I believe that prompting them to come up with clear plans helps them to play with commitment. A student of mine recently began the second movement of Sibelius *Concerto* and came in with the bones of the

movement very well prepared but without much of a sound concept. I spent a bit of time asking her for the kind of sound she wanted—dark, brooding, sonorous—and the technical changes she'd need—slower, heavier bow, wider vibrato—and as soon as she began again, bam! It was all there. I have the feeling that if I had spent the same amount of time sharing my interpretation it wouldn't have prompted such an internalized result. And in any case, letting students feel ownership of the process is a worthwhile investment in their long-term learning.

For as many "Aha!" moments as my interrogations prompted, there were as many moments of blank stares and monosyllabic responses. Some students tended to struggle with naming things they had done well, challenges they're facing, or both. Some students were able to name challenging spots, but couldn't point to areas of violin playing or musicianship they needed to work on. My hope in these cases is that I managed to arouse curiosity. For a student who needs a couple minutes to come up with something they did well, perhaps that moment of "taking positive inventory" will feel encouraging and will help them to consolidate good habits. For the kid who thinks their sole difficulties are measures 18 and 44, perhaps they can begin to realize that they don't have to have all technical difficulties ironed out before being allowed (and obliged!) to work on tone, phrasing, vibrato, etc. And in cases where a student is truly drawing a blank, maybe the inevitability of my questioning at the next lesson will inspire them to begin thinking about their playing from a Bird's Eye view for the first time.

Ian Snyder teaches privately in Southwest Minneapolis and has served on the faculty of the University of Minnesota Bravo! Institute for Keyboard and Strings. He has performed with the Minnesota Orchestra and Minnesota Opera, as well as a variety of freelance projects, including a recording for Prince. As a teacher, he is particularly interested in developing natural physical motions in playing, enhancing students' awareness of tone, and in integrating musical style from the earliest levels. †



CELLO

Bringing Things into Focus

by Teresa Richardson

The ability to focus is an essential skill that young students learn in music lessons. In my own studio, I am troubleshooting ways to best serve my young beginners for whom focusing in lessons can be a significant challenge. My goal for these students is to help them listen, follow directions, and remain actively engaged. Here are a few strategies I have found to be effective in helping my students.

It is, of course, crucial to limit distractions in the studio. I ask that students and parents silence phones and place them out of reach. I encourage parents to keep siblings quietly occupied or have them wait outside. Sometimes I even find it necessary to give a polite reminder that the parent needs to remain a silent observer, as I know a child can feel overwhelmed when receiving directions from both a parent and teacher.

I try to offer a lot of structure in my lessons with young students who struggle to focus. Students who need to move around a room and have a hard time sitting still can benefit from aids that guide their movements. For example, a foot chart or a hula hoop “magic circle” can communicate

where the student’s body needs to be. Some teachers find fun ways of helping a student remain stationary by having them balance a stuffed animal on their head or keep their feet covering hidden coins.

Some students benefit greatly from a visual agenda. This does take the teacher a few minutes to create ahead of time but can make all the difference for students who need predictability to thrive. Examples of a visual agenda can include a written list, paper “cards” with images or hints, a bag of objects, or a board game.

I also find my students focus better when I communicate my expectations simply and clearly. Some students enjoy maintaining agency through choosing the order in which they complete tasks, while others appreciate the predictability of a consistent weekly routine. A “one-point” lesson with a single central goal (e.g. a focus on tone quality) focuses attention more easily than a multiple-point lesson.


I always include at least two breaks in my agenda for physical movement. Young students welcome the opportunity to move, and I use the time as both a reward and a thank you to the student for making a good

effort to focus with the instrument. I might challenge a student to stand up from the chair and sit back down without moving their feet, or practice rhythms with body percussion, marching, shakers, or castanets. We practice bowing patterns with vertical “air bowing,” or trace stickers on the bow with the right index finger. Teacher and student can stand and face each other to do the “Rhody Dance,” taking big and small steps to reflect the bowing pattern. I even have my students take a crayon and draw bowing motions on a piece of paper. I love to use body solfège for Suzuki Book 1 pieces. (My ascending scale is: feet, shins, knees, thighs, hips, shoulders, head, sky) Sometimes, a student just needs to do a few jumping jacks to reset!

For kids whose attention drifts a lot, I like to incorporate plenty of “games.” Young students like to “win,” and gamifying a concept can provide the opportunity to do just that. Guessing games are great, as are games that use a buzzer or a bell to indicate whether something was correct. Games that require eyes to be closed can help eliminate visual distractions. Using a timer adds urgency: How fast can you plop all four fingers down on the D string after playing open A? How many correct reps can you do in thirty seconds? Can you focus your eyes on your curved bow thumb for one whole minute?

Immediate positive reinforcement is very satisfying for a young student and can really bolster continued focus. Kids can get positive reinforcement from getting a high five, taking a bow, eating a Cheerio, getting a sticker, moving ahead on the game board, or earning a visual point (bead, crayon, etc.). My studio has a popular “emergency goat noisemaker” with four buttons students can press to hear goat sounds! I’ve borrowed toys from my own children’s collection and had a student reach into a mystery box to pull out an item each time she finished a task. I’ve even gathered costume accessories to transform a lesson into a gradual game of dress-up.

Lastly, communicating or posting a few basic rules can benefit students who thrive



"I have tried many Folland Violins over the years and have twice ordered violins with very specific, nuanced differences. I had complete confidence that the instruments, when completed, would have all of the qualities I wanted. They have proven themselves daily, in orchestral, chamber and solo performance, to be all that I had wished for and more."

— Peter McGuire
2nd Concertmaster
Zurich Tonhalle Orchester

FOLLANDVIOLINS.COM
Adjustment and repair that will make
your instrument sound and play better than ever.
Large selection of student violins.
DAVID@FOLLANDVIOLINS.COM
507-645-7557

when given distinct parameters. A favorite rule of mine, and one I find quite crucial is “listen silently when it is the teacher’s turn to talk or demonstrate.” A parent in my studio had the brilliant idea to make a laminated sign that had a red stop sign on one side to indicate that it was time to listen, and a green traffic light on the opposite side giving the student agency to respond by following my directions. After only two or three lessons using the sign, the student had learned the rule and was more focused in subsequent lessons.

Working with kids who have short attention spans can be arduous and exhausting. It is important as teachers that we extend grace both to ourselves and our students, as there are so many elements in a student’s life which we can’t control. A child might have undiagnosed or untreated ADHD, and their family could be on a journey to find help and resources. It can be so helpful when a teacher chooses to meet a child and family where they are on their journey and is willing to entertain new ideas and strategies to best serve that student. When a lesson feels particularly exasperating, I find it useful to remind myself that a student is doing the best they can, even if their best feels particularly frustrating at that moment!

Working with young beginners to improve focus during lessons has required me to dig deep into my well of creativity to find working strategies. Despite the many challenges presented by students who struggle to focus, I have experienced fun, rewarding and truly wonderful moments filled with smiles and successes that remind me of why I teach. I hope that these ideas will help “bring things into focus” for your students, too!

Teresa Richardson, cellist, is Acting Principal of the Minnesota Opera and teaches at North Star Cello Academy in Roseville. †

greater twin cities youth symphonies **gtcys**
PLAY YOUR PART



MAKE GTCYS PART OF YOUR MUSICAL JOURNEY!

10 SCHOOL-YEAR ORCHESTRAS • SUMMER CAMPS

AGES 7 - 18 • ALL MUSICAL LEVELS

STRINGS • WOODWINDS • BRASS • PERCUSSION

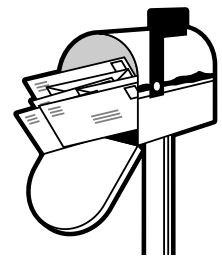
SIGNIFICANT TUITION ASSISTANCE & SUPPORT FOR PRIVATE LESSONS

GTCYS provides phenomenal year-round orchestra experiences for nearly 1,200 young musicians of all levels, meeting students where they are at in their musical journey.

Mark Russell Smith, Artistic Director

Learn more: www.gtcys.org

Letters



Write to us about what you read in this magazine or elsewhere. Several readers commented on the history of the Upper Midwest String Camp published in the Winter 2023-2024 issue.

Thanks much Faith—a great article.

Jane Capistran — Concordia College, retired.

This is a fantastic article! Thank you for capturing so many wonderful shared experiences for the journal!

Nick Gaudette — Edina High School

I thought you mixed history with heart in a wonderful way. I was touched by the memories I had forgotten and amazed by the influence of this long standing institution on our current teaching ranks. Thank you for this particular labor of love.

Mark Gitch — Wayzata High School

Member Updates

MNSOTA members are ASTA members who live in Minnesota. ASTA keeps complete contact information for all members at astastrings.org.

Welcome New and Renewing Members!

Gabriel Bacig, Anoka, cello, student
Matthew George, St. Paul, Director of Bands & Orchestra—
University of St. Thomas

Lee Coker, Lauderdale, viola, studio teacher
Rich Alton Gonzales, Moorhead, double bass, orchestra teacher
Sarah Kremer, Sartell, violin, elementary school

WI, ND & NE Reminder

When you renew your membership, ASTA makes you a member of the state where you live. If you want to be a MNSOTA member, you must request it from National *every time you renew*.

Membership questions?

Contact MNSOTA membership coordinator Emily Heuschele, membership@mnsota.org

MN SOTA

Minnesota String & Orchestra Teachers Association

1881 Pascal St., Falcon Heights, MN 55113



NONPROFIT ORG
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 28056
Twin Cities MN

ELECTRONIC SERVICE REQUESTED



All Strings Attached

STRING INSTRUMENTS & BOWS

GOLDEN VALLEY

8224 Olson Memorial Hwy.
Golden Valley, MN 55427
763-542-9542

STILLWATER

2000 Industrial Blvd.
Stillwater, MN 55082
651-439-8899

www.allstringsattached.com



Minnesota's Largest Bass Shop!

- ♪ Excellent Selection of Sales & Rental Instruments
- ♪ Professional Musicians & Award Winning Luthiers
- ♪ Special Teacher Pricing & School Discounts
- ♪ Celebrating 20 Years of Music!