

String Notes

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Fall 2024

The Journal of the Minnesota String and Orchestra Teachers Association



Final year of String
Notes in its current
format!



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In 2019, this cover art was submitted by an 8th grade orchestra student of Karen Kozak at Robbinsdale Middle School. The student, who had bounced back and forth between violin and bass, wanted to represent all instruments in her drawing and included a large alto clef to represent the viola; that clef was cropped from the cover picture for space reasons.

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

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From the President



I hope you all have a fantastic start to the 2024–25 school year. Things are in full swing at MNSOTA as we get ready for our first event of the year, Fall Clinic and Awards held at the University of Northwestern - St. Paul. Many of our events are open for registration or will be shortly. Please take notice that some of our events have been slightly modified over the last couple of years based off the needs and wants of our membership (such as the Middle Level Orchestra Festival and Middle Level All-State Orchestra—formerly Middle Level Honors Orchestra). We hope to see

many of you and your students participating this year!

As always, our members are what keeps this organization going. We are predominantly member-driven and funded. Encourage your colleagues to join our organization, get involved, and volunteer. And please,

always reach out with comments, questions, and ideas—we are here to serve you!

Have a great start to the 2024–25 school year!

Musically yours,

Becky Plachy Resch

From the Editor



Welcome to the new school year! With this issue of *String Notes*, you will find info for the MNSOTA events that have fall deadlines: Award Nominations, Fall Clinic, voting on Bylaw changes and a special election, Mary West Solo Competition, Middle Level All-State Orchestra and Middle Level Regional Festival. Please also enjoy the reports on our spring events, Middle Level All-State Orchestra, Middle Level Regional Festival and Eclectic Strings Day, as well as our wonderful pedagogy articles.

MNSOTA is moving towards a digital-only presence, and has long-term plans to make this magazine an on-line publication instead of print. I and my husband John have served as editor and layout designer since 1996 and we have decided to retire from MNSOTA with the spring issue in April 2025. We would be delighted to work with someone (likely a team) this year to make a smooth transition to when *String Notes* goes fully digital. Details of what we have done to produce *String Notes* are on page 6.

Transitions can be exciting. When I moved to Minnesota in 1978, I studied all the articles in MNASTA's *Strings 'n' Stuff* produced by Vic Arazzi on a Gestetner machine. When Vic retired, many wondered what *Strings 'n' Stuff* would be like, and there were a few interim editors, including Barbara Lamb, before I became editor in 1996.

The development of desktop tech has allowed my husband John and me to do more with graphics than Vic could have imagined. With 21st century digital media, the next stage of *String Notes* is likely to be as different from this paper magazine as this magazine is from legal-size Gestetner pages stapled together. I am confident that a wonderful future awaits *String Notes*; we just don't know what it will be like—yet.

Faith Farr

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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	
1/4 page	\$70 per issue
2.25" width, 4.75" height or	
4.75" width, 2.25" height	
1/2 page	\$105 per issue
3.5" width, 4.75" height	
2/3 page	\$140 per issue
7.25" width, 3.33" height	
3/4 page	\$185 per issue
7.25" width, 5" height	
4/5 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 *String Notes* editor Faith Farr, 4 Sunshine Lane, North Oaks, MN 55127, StringNotes@mnsota.org.

2024

MNSOTA

2026

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STRING NOTES PRODUCTION HELP NEEDED

After producing MNSOTA's String Notes magazine since 1996, Faith Farr (editor) and her husband John Farr (layout and design) have decided to retire from MNSOTA after the 2025 spring issue. MNSOTA is looking for people interested in working with Faith and John in the coming year as a transition, and then taking on the responsibilities they currently have, possibly continuing String Notes as a paper magazine or possibly developing digital communications through email, web, blog or social media.

Faith and John have been doing the following tasks:

Advertising — solicit ads; send invoices; work with the MNSOTA Treasurer to ensure payment.

Content — decide on desired content and recruit writers to provide it; send reminders when deadlines are coming up. Faith has recruited writers for the pedagogy columns, asked event coordinators to write up their event, and obtained info from National such as the membership list. The Board wants to move to a digital publication, and content may change. ASTA requires state chapters to communicate several times a year through print or digital. ASTA has encouraged states to create newsletters that focus on state events and member engagement and has stated that pedagogy articles are not expected. It is possible that MNSOTA's weekly email reminders about our events satisfy ASTA's requirement for regular state communication.

Editing text — check the content for grammar, spelling, punctuation and clarity; work with writers as needed. Standardize paragraph and heading styles so the publication looks uniform.

Editing pictures and diagrams — adjust the graphic elements of the articles appropriately for print and/or digital layout, e.g., color/b&w, size, dpi, file type.

Editing musical examples — some writers have provided scans of published or hand-written music examples; sometimes Faith has transcribed examples into Finale to produce PDF graphics to be used in the magazine. A new editor would choose convenient tech for music examples.

Print layout — decide on an order for the articles and placement for the ads and other content. Prepare a press-ready PDF that will be printed, folded and stapled by a commercial printer. Faith has used Rapit Print in New Brighton, MN. A new editor would choose a conveniently located service if a print magazine is produced.

Digital layout — currently Faith and John simply produce a digital PDF that corresponds to the print magazine. The Board imagines a digital *String Notes* could be a completely different design, e.g. one that works well on a phone.

Bulk mail the print publication — pick up finished magazines from the commercial printer. Work with the Membership Coordinator to get the current membership list and add addresses for contributors, advertisers and others who should receive the magazine, such as people at the National ASTA office. Upload the Excel member list to the Post Office portal which verifies addresses and produces a PDF of mailing labels to be printed and instructions on how to bundle the magazines for bulk mailing. Apply the labels and take the prepared mailing to a Post Office Business Mail Entry

Unit (BMEU). (Bulk mail cannot be submitted at a regular retail post office. Faith uses the BMEU in Fridley, MN. A new person would need to discover a BMEU conveniently located for them.)

Distribute the digital publication — this is a new area to be developed. Possibly the digital magazine would be emailed to members; possibly it would be available on the MNSOTA website.

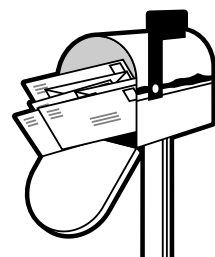
Pedagogy and event write-up archive — Faith and John have extracted pedagogy articles from each issue and made them available to MNSOTA members and authors on the *String Notes* archive page of our website. Event write-ups have been extracted and made available to Board members on its Google Workspace. The future existence, structure and access of these archives has not yet been decided.

Stipend — In the 2010s, MNSOTA's financial reserves were healthy and ad income for *String Notes* was strong enough to pay print production and mailing costs, and also provide Faith a stipend of \$600 per issue. At that time, she was maintaining the event and general information on our mnsota.org website in addition to producing the print magazine. Ad income declined significantly during Covid and MNSOTA's financial reserves declined over several years as our events lost money. There has been no stipend for *String Notes* in 2023 or 2024. Although ad income is expected to increase for 2024–2025 compared to the previous year, MNSOTA's reserves are still rebuilding. The Board has not discussed when/if a stipend might again be appropriate, and how it might be shared with the webmaster and other Board leaders.

If you are interested in helping with the editing, design and/or production of *String Notes* now and in the future, please contact editor Faith Farr StringNotes@mnsota.org or president Becky Plachy Resch President@mnsota.org. 📧

Letters

Write to us at StringNotes@mnsota.org about what you read in this magazine or elsewhere.



Thanks for all of the work you do putting together *String Notes*—I always find helpful articles that help me with my teaching.

Ingrid Koller
Violist, Composer

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

Annual Awards

- September 18 — nomination deadline
- October 17 — award presentations at Fall Clinic

Fall Clinic, Awards, and Annual Meeting

- September — on-line registration will open
- Registration available at the door
- October 17, 8:00–12:30 P.M. — University of Northwestern - St. Paul

Bylaw Amendments and Special Election

- October 17 — postmark deadline for mail vote
- October 17 — in-person vote at Fall Clinic annual meeting

2025 Middle Level All-State Orchestra

- October 11 — GetAcceptd audition window opens
- November 8 — GetAcceptd audition window closes
- February 14, 2025 — rehearsal at the University of Northwestern - St. Paul
- February 15, 2025 — performance at MMEA Midwinter Clinic

Mary West Solo Competition

- October 29 — registration deadline
- November 16 — competition at Bethel University
- November 17, 7:00 P.M. — Winners Recital, University of Minnesota — free admission
- February 9, 2025, 3:00 P.M. — Grand Prize Concerto performance with the Bloomington Symphony

Middle Level Regional Festival

- October — registration will open
- February/March — 3 sites anticipated (2 metro and 1 greater-Minnesota)
- April 7, 2025 — **Middle Level Festival Honors Concert**, Orchestra Hall, Minneapolis

April 2025 — Eclectic Strings Day

- January — registration will open

Find information for all events at www.MNSOTA.org



Student Membership Subsidy

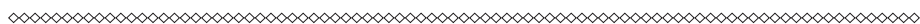
For New Student Members — Apply any time

To encourage new student members, MNSOTA will pay 50% of the first year student dues for new members. Students should join ASTA online at www.astastrings.org and then send a copy of the payment receipt to the MNSOTA Treasurer who will send a check to refund half the dues.

MNSOTA Treasurer: Ken Schuster — 1510 N. Washburn Ave, Minneapolis, MN 55411 — treasurer@mnsota.org

MEET YOUR BOARD (2024–2026)

Our election last spring and special election this fall give us an opportunity to introduce our entire Board to our membership. We appreciate everyone's efforts to improve string playing and teaching in the state. All our activities run smoothly because of the additional work of members who assist without the responsibility of sitting on the Board. Thank you! We also want to recognize the work of outgoing board members Cassandra Herold (Past-President), Dan Mollick (Treasurer), Cristina Seaborn (Eclectic Styles Chair), Ray Shows (Chamber Music Chair) and Emily Heuschele (Membership Coordinator). Thank you all for your past service. The position of Membership Coordinator is currently open. We are also looking for a "communications" specialist who will take on the responsibilities Faith Farr currently has as String Notes editor, possibly continuing String Notes as a paper magazine after Faith retires in the spring of 2025, or possibly developing digital communications through email, web, blog or social media. Contact President Becky Plachy Resch, president@mnsota.org if you are interested in serving on the MNSOTA Board.



Becky Plachy Resch becomes MNSOTA **President** for the next two years. Becky is in her 10th year of teaching, currently teaching 6th–8th grade orchestra at Central Middle School in the White Bear Lake school



district. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree in Music Education at Concordia College in Moorhead, MN, studying violin under Jane Linde Capistran, and her Master's degree in Education from Walden University. In addition to teaching middle school, Becky also teaches private violin and viola lessons. Becky has also served the MNSOTA Board as Secretary, and as coordinator for the Middle Level Orchestra Festival and coordinator of the August All-State Workshop.

Music educator, clinician, and conductor **Christopher Jannings** serves MNSOTA's Board as **Past-President**. He is currently the Director of Orchestras and Guitar Studies at Roseville Area High School. As a freelance



musician, he has performed in a number of styles and venues on string bass, electric bass, cello, and guitar across the Upper Midwest. Christopher holds a Bachelor of Music, Cum Laude in Music Education from the University of Minnesota-Duluth, a Master of Arts in Music Education from the University of St. Thomas, and a Ph.D. in Music Education from the University of Minnesota.

Jacob Crosy will become MNSOTA's **President-Elect** with our special election this fall. Jacob graduated from the University of Northwestern-St. Paul in 2016 where he received a degree in Music Education and a degree in Music Composition. He worked for three years in Robbinsdale School District as an Elementary Orchestra



and Band teacher and in 2019, he moved to his hometown of Austin MN and accepted a job teaching 7th and 8th Grade Orchestra. In addition, Jacob teaches individual viola and violin lessons both privately and for MacPhail Center for Music in Austin. Jacob is now in his 9th year of teaching.

Jacob is the principal violist of the Austin Symphony Orchestra, and is part of the newly-formed Austin Symphony String Quartet. Jacob is honored to have worked and taught at the Upper Midwest String Camp, as well as an Austin-born string camp, formerly known as the Seven

Springs String Camp, now run by MacPhail in Austin.

Minnesota born cellist **Daniel Keeler** serves the MNSOTA board as **Secretary**. Daniel is a passionate musician, educator, and composer who has performed across the United States as a soloist, orchestral and collaborative musician. He has established himself as a pedagogue with numerous masterclasses and lectures across the country. As a performing musician, his leadership roles span nearly a dozen orchestras



at the community, collegiate and professional levels. As an educator, Daniel is the string ensemble director for Concordia University-St. Paul, an orchestra director for Mounds View Public Schools, and teaches private lessons in the Twin Cities. He holds degrees from the University of Minnesota-Twin Cities, the University of Missouri-Columbia, and the University of Minnesota-Duluth.

Ken Schuster joins MNSOTA's Board as **Treasurer**. Ken is a Twin Cities based violinist and educator currently living in Minneapolis. In addition to serving as the Treasurer for MNSOTA, he serves as secretary and treasurer for Gamer's Rhapsody, a 501c3 nonprofit organization focused on celebrating the music and art of video



games. Ken has led orchestra programs in public schools ranging from 4th grade to 12th grade and teaches private lessons for violin, viola and piano students.

Faith Farr has been **Editor** of MNSOTA's *String Notes* since 1996. *String Notes* has won the ASTA Best State Chapter Newsletter Award seven consecutive times. In 2007



Faith also received MNSOTA's Community Service Award for her work on *String Notes*.

Faith retired from MacPhail Center for Music and currently teaches cello at her home studio in North Oaks. In 1996, MN ASTA presented Faith with their Master Teacher award.

Faith self-publishes *Foundations for Music Reading*, a string-based theory curriculum for violin, viola and cello. With Brian Wicklund, she co-authored *The American Fiddle Method for Cello* and *The American Fiddle Method for Viola*, which are published by Mel Bay.

David Kozamchak serves MNSOTA as **Collegiate Chair and Mentorship Coordinator**. He is an Associate Professor of Music at the University of Northwestern–St. Paul where he has served as the conductor of the UNW Orchestra and Coordinator

of String Studies since 2003. He maintains a private violin and viola studio through Northwestern's Academy of Music. He has conducted numerous orchestras both domestically and internationally and has become increasingly more in demand as a clinician, adjudicator and guest conductor for school music festivals throughout Minnesota. David holds degrees from the University of Missouri-Columbia and Texas Tech University. He studied conducting



with Edward Dolbashian at the University of Missouri-Columbia and with Michael Jinbo at the Pierre Montoux School. He is a Past-President of the North Central Region of the College Orchestra Directors Association (CODA) and has run for National President of the organization.

Levi Comstock joins the board as **Eclectic Styles Chair** and has served as host and coordinator of our annual Eclectic Strings Day. He teaches orchestra at Champlin Park High School. Levi graduated from St. Olaf



College in 2008 and received his Masters in Differentiated Instruction from Concordia University in 2018. He spent three years in Boston helping to launch an El Sistema music program at Conservatory Lab Charter School, and now lives in Minneapolis with his wife and two children.

Daniel Ericksen serves the board as **Member-at-Large** and is the coordinator of the Middle Level All-State Orchestra. He has just finished his 10th year teaching middle school orchestra in the Minnetonka Public



Schools. He received his Bachelor's Degree in Music Education at Indiana University as well as a Masters Degree in Differentiated Instruction from Concordia St Paul. Daniel is also the Associate Principal Cellist of the Bloomington Symphony Orchestra.

KC Thompson has served MNSOTA as Webmaster since June 2023. She teaches in the Moorhead School District. †

"If I could express with words what I can express with music, I would of course use words. Music begins where language fails. That is why I write music."

Jean Sibelius



ORCHESTRA

The Power of Good Classroom Management

by Wes Myers

Every fall we have an opportunity for a fresh start. It's an exciting time to revisit the positives and negatives of last year. Did the students struggle with instrument care and maintenance? Did we fall short in quality programming for concerts? Should this year include more communication with parents? I enjoy creating a new plan of attack for the year to continue growing as a teacher, and I can think of no better target than classroom management. However, in our efforts to create a safe and secure environment, are we missing the point? When does a plan for managing a classroom move beyond serving the students and instead serve our own need to feel in control? What I am going to propose is a very fine line between management and power, but altering our perception can serve our students better in the long run.

When a teacher sets out to manage a classroom, they aim to create a place with limited disruptions to the learning process. We want an environment where a student's ability to learn is not hindered, and time on task is maximized. Creating a room like this takes a lot of planning. Students need to know solid expectations, and we can't allow students to work against the best interests of the whole classroom. There are many ways to create expectations and thousands of books to help with the process, so we won't go over them here. Find what works best for your management style, and don't be afraid to change when things aren't working.

Factors for Student Success

We should consider what factors positively

impact a student's ability to learn when creating a successful classroom environment for all students. Some factors, such as nutrition, sleep, and other basic needs, are out of our control. Schools have been helping students with these basic needs more and more, but it's beyond the scope of a single classroom teacher. If you do have the opportunity to help students meet their basic needs, you should do so without hesitation. It's the groundwork necessary for learning. Trying to meet those greater relational needs won't matter if a student is not fed and cared for.

A student's success in the classroom is also impacted by the relationships they have. When they can make those connections and interact socially, students feel connected to one another. Orchestra is a team activity, and a good team starts with knowing and trusting one another. Finding ways to build relationships among your students with team building activities, ice breakers, or topical conversation is worth the time invested. Students should also feel that their teacher cares about them. Making a solid connection with students creates a relationship where they are more likely to comply and be willing to engage in harder activities. Students also handle behavior related consequences better when they know you and your motivations for handing out discipline.

Students need a safe and secure environment to learn. If your classroom is too chaotic, it will be difficult for students to engage in structured tasks. Students need to feel comfortable to be genuine. Answering questions or playing a passage requires confidence that they can be correct or have permission to fail. Beyond that, an orchestra classroom is a unique environment where we play together. The focus must be all in one place, and students have to be working together for a singular purpose.

The Power of Less

Balancing all these factors is a lot of work. It requires planning, flexibility, and experience. The teacher must be able to make decisions and have a certain degree of control. Still,

are there some things that teachers do in service to classroom management that may not be required? Perhaps even some of our decisions work in opposition to our goal of an ideal learning environment. Here are some ways I think a classroom can be over-managed.

The first way I think teachers can hurt the classroom environment is by overvaluing the student-to-teacher dynamic. Music ensembles particularly exist in a world that requires a teacher's role as conductor. We have a great deal of power over how our rehearsals are run and how our ensembles sound at concerts. This can make it difficult to develop authentic relationships with our students; it's almost as if a wall exists between us and them. At times we need to drop our guard. Tell a personal story, listen to a student using active listening skills, or allow them to share their own thoughts and ideas. I believe this is especially hard for young teachers. Lacking in the confidence built from years of experience, young orchestra teachers can fear losing the students' respect. It takes a great deal of confidence to know you aren't going to lose your authority when you let your guard down. Once you've taken those steps, there's a great deal of value to be found.

I have a special opportunity teaching 4th–12th grade. Getting to know my students and building relationships over many years is something special. We know one another, and our relationship is built on trust that goes both ways. It also allows me to make mistakes of my own rather than having to exist as the infallible "director." Not everyone has a position that teaches a wide age range, so don't wait to build those relationships. Students value authenticity, so take time to be a real person. Let down your guard a bit, and it will pay dividends throughout the year.

A second way I think teachers can hurt the classroom environment is by always needing full control of the classroom. This is related to the teacher-to-student dynamic but manifests in a slightly different way. Teaching in a room full of instruments

Viola writer needed

Currently there is no-one overseeing the Viola Column on a regular basis. If you are interested in contributing, please contact Faith Farr StringNotes@mnsota.org. *String Notes* is published 3 times a year with submission windows Nov 15–Dec 15, Feb 15–Mar 15 and Jul 15–Aug 15.

capable of making noise means it's quite easy for the environment to feel chaotic. As stated earlier, students need to feel safe and secure. You may need to serve a particular student by controlling the noise in your room. However, your class might be able to handle a little more energy. Deciding where the line is drawn depends on the needs of students and your own level of comfort.

Specifically, I feel there are two moments where we can allow a little more energy to benefit our students. Many students enrolled in orchestra do so not just to play an instrument; it's also a place to be with friends. Allowing room for conversation at the beginning or end of class can help them realize the social part of being in the group. The other moment where I've found energy is when we are working on new music. Sight reading can be a chaotic event. I used to dread sight reading days and tried to prepare myself to manage the classroom even more strictly. At one point I realized the reason why: they are trying to figure things out. The most human reaction to a problem is to try and fix it right away. While the most efficient way to rehearse a new piece is to listen and let the

teacher guide the process, I wanted my students to engage with the material. Giving them thirty seconds after we fell apart to do their own work satisfied their need to work through the music and gave them valuable practice. Students grew to appreciate that approach, and they were then much more receptive to my instruction. Often when a rehearsal breaks into chaos, I stop them, tell them to take a moment to work through it, and then I will help them from that point. I suggest giving it a try. Not every teacher will welcome the chaos, but it works for me knowing they are doing so with a purpose.

The last way I think teachers overmanage the orchestra classroom is by sticking to curriculum only. Our job is to teach students. We want them to grow as musicians, build their technique, and be able to work on increasingly difficult repertoire. However, when we insist on sticking to the plan, we miss opportunities to help our students grow as people. I love to see skilled musicians leave my orchestra program. I even have a few that have gone on to professional careers. But I am happiest when I see former students who have become

lifelong musicians and good people. Don't forget to leave room for those spontaneous moments: chances to teach life lessons, build character, and shape children into good adults. I don't have a specific example in this case, but if you leave yourself open to those little detours you'll know when the moment arrives.

As good orchestra teachers, we all want to create a positive learning environment for our students. This new school year we should all take time to think through our plans for classroom management, building our space to care for every student and setting them up for success. This time, think about leaving room for vulnerability, off-topic conversations, and even a little chaos. You might be happy with the results.

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. ‡

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FROM THE ARCHIVES....

Practice!

compiled by Mary Sorlie

There always is excitement this time of year as students and teachers head back into the classrooms and studios. With another year, comes new students and fresh ideas. How to help students with their practice time seems to be one of the biggest challenges (and opportunities) that we face as musicians and educators. Helping students learn how to practice efficiently and effectively is perhaps the most important skill we can help them develop.

We've all heard the joke, "How do you get to Carnegie Hall?" "Practice, practice, practice." Practice can be described as working at something repeatedly so as to become proficient. Is it really as simple as playing repetitions of the same thing? As we begin the new school year, here are several excerpts from the past that offer strategies, routines and ideas on helping our students with becoming effective practicers.

How do you Get to Carnegie Hall?

by JoAnn Turovsky

From Fall issue 1998

A daily practice appointment can be very helpful. For some, several short periods work best. Some people do well by getting up early in the morning. Others might like to schedule a time in between homework. If possible, a consistent time is ideal. It is most important to make the appointment and then keep it. Consistency is vital because, as we have all probably learned the hard way, cramming does not work!

Achievement is the objective; the amount of time spent is irrelevant. Some students learn more quickly than others, but all need to set and meet realistic goals.

Have your students begin each practice session with a predetermined list of very specific objectives. Sometimes practice can seem overwhelming, but if one sticks to modest goals it is possible to feel a sense of accomplishment. Build on these positive feelings. For young students, the teacher determines the agenda, both daily and weekly. College students are taught to set their own goals, first by term and then weekly and daily.

I have seen several books with pre-printed practice schedules. This is fine, but it is also pretty easy these days to sit down at the computer and devise some-thing simple, comfortable and maybe even creative!

The preset order for practice might include the following:

I. Warm-ups: This can be comprised of slow and easy repetition. Warm-ups are different from etudes or studies and serve a distinct function. To me, they are like stretching before running. No athlete would think of going at full tilt without warming up first. We are similar. We also warm up our ears. We are ready to move on when our ears hear a sound that they like. And finally, warm-ups can be like a mantra. When I hear my warm-up routine, it reels my mind in from distant places and focuses my attention to my practice. Those familiar, slow, easy repetitions say to my mind, "OK. I am practicing now."

II. New material: This is normally the time of freshest attention during practice. If you are memorizing or woodshedding a new passage, this may be the best time to approach these challenges. Very careful first readings are important because brain imprinting occurs immediately and first impressions are hard to erase. The goal is for correct notes, rhythm, fingering and dynamics. Everything done incorrectly the first time has to be unlearned before it can be relearned.

III. Review: This is the time during practice to review previously learned material. Although there are many useful techniques for confident and successful memorization, sometimes there is no substitute for repetition. The material has to be "in our fingers" as well as in our brains. Before an important performance, I set a goal of a certain number of repetitions a day. When it comes time for the performance, it gives me confidence to know that I have played this piece so many times.

IV. Repertoire: Now might be a good time to review repertoire or pieces already

learned and mastered. Unfortunately, we do not retain these pieces without practicing them consistently. And what can be more enjoyable than playing music that we know well? I encourage my students to form a "repertoire book." Watch the book grow with your sense of accomplishment.

V. Sight Reading: This is a useful skill that is often ignored but is greatly enhanced by consistent practice. Pick a simple piece and scan it for key and time changes. Identify the traps, then set the metronome and force yourself to maintain the tempo without stopping. If necessary, regroup at the first beat of the next bar.

Practice, Practice, Practice by Janet Horvath

From Winter issue 2002/2003

One would think that when we practice at home on our own, injury risk is lower because we are in total control of what we do, what we play and how we play it! Unfortunately, we tend to get so involved that we lose track of time. We are so emo-

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tionally involved that we lose awareness of what we are doing. We push ourselves into endless repetition, we try to cram, we force ourselves to stay put and get through everything. At the work place, at least break times are prescribed! First, remember these:

- Warm Up.
- Take Breaks.
- Vary Your Repertoire.
- Increase Your Practice Load Gradually
- Reduce Your Practice Intensity
- Take time to study the music away from the instrument. This is extremely effective for memorization.
- Be vigilant about your posture and your stand placement. Time must sometimes be spent in compromising positions. Be conscious of repertoire where your wrists, arms or back are very flexed. Notice any awkward stretches you do playing chords or reaching keys. Control the length of time you spend on these passages. Release often, stretch frequently and use a mirror to monitor your posture.
- Playing fast should not be your ultimate goal. We sometimes sacrifice the phrase, breath, and fluid movement for speed. According to Lyonn Lieberman, "Effort is not what it takes to play fast. It takes supreme relaxation and attention to quality of sound." Always search for the least amount of effort.
- Stop frequently for a couple of mini-breaks or a quick stretch, a glass of water and a few deep breaths. Change your position often.
- Be mindful of how your body feels. If one day you just can't stick to your plan and you need a break, take it without guilt! You will be fresher and more relaxed during the next session and accomplish more.
- Avoid erratic fluctuations in your practice schedule. Doing a consistent hour a day is more productive and safer for your body than skipping days at a time and then launching into a marathon session!

Practice Smart 30 Minutes a Day

by Ann Anderson

From Fall issue 2009

As we prepare our classes for a new year of lessons, I would like to suggest you print out a 30-minute practice routine to give to your students to help them balance their time in an efficient and profitable practice

session.

Tone Production

- 2 min: Open Strings
Bow on: Detaché, Staccato, Martelé
Bow off: Spiccato, Ricochet, Sautillé
- 2 min: Vibrato (vary the width of oscillations and the speed)
Narrow/Fast
Narrow/Slow
Wide/Slow
Wide/Fast

Intonation / Match Open Strings

- 2 min: Scales. Change keys each week 1-4 sharps and 1-4 flats. (Eventually add several keys each week.) Apply various bowings to the scales as practiced on open strings.
- 2 min: Arpeggios matching the scale keys/drill the shifts.
- 2 min: Double stops with open strings. (Eventually change to octaves, thirds and sixths.)

Technical Skills — 5 min

- One etude a week

Orchestral Literature — 5 min

- Each day

Solo Repertoire — 10 min

- Short piece memorized each month. (Select a variety of slow and fast pieces to develop phrasing)
- Concerto: one each year
- Sonata: two each year with a pianist

The Amazing List of Practice Techniques by Dr. Molly Gebrian

From Spring issue 2021

Good general practice habits:

- Create a practice routine. Try to always practice in the same place at the same time for the same length of time so it becomes part of your day.
- You should start every practice session with a clear goal or goals for what you want to accomplish and how you think you will go about accomplishing them.
- The worst possible way to practice is to play from the beginning, play until you make a mistake and then either fix the mistake and go on or start over. All this does is reinforce your mistakes. You need to locate where your trouble spots are, isolate them, and work on them using the suggestions in this list. Only once they have been perfected

in isolation can you go back and put them in context.

- Playing through your piece is a last step after weeks or months of work, only to be done when you are getting ready for a performance. If you're running through your piece everyday (and it's more than 2-3 weeks before your concert), you're not practicing well and are only reinforcing your mistakes.
- Always ask yourself, "Why am I playing this right now? What do I hope to accomplish?" If you're practicing, never just play. Always have a reason, especially if you are playing something again. Someone should be able to interrupt your practicing at any point and ask you these questions and you should have a good answer immediately. If you tend to practice mindlessly, set a timer to off every 10 minutes or so to remind yourself to ask this question.
- Keep a practice journal. Write down your goal for each practice session. Never practice without a goal!
- At the end of your practice session, write down how well you achieved your goal so you can monitor your progress. Write down what worked and what didn't in solving the problems you hear in your playing.
- Make sure you practice at least a little every day. It's much better to do 10 minutes every day than an hour once a week.
- Keep going until you have done the whole passage with no rests up to tempo.
- You can increase the number of rests in between chunks from what is written in the example, but keep the number of rests between chunks consistent for a given step of the process.
- Play last bar of the passage as clearly as possible. Back up one bar and play the last two bars as cleanly as possible. Continue.
- Use random/interleaved practice to allow your brain to practice performing.
- Use breaks strategically to allow your brain to do the necessarily reorganization it needs to in order to consolidate what you practiced in the last session.

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. ‡



CELLO

More Than Just Notes:

Teaching Artistry to Students First Learning to Play Solo Bach

by Teresa Richardson

What a poignant moment when a student in Suzuki Book 4 flips the page to finally get their first crack at the *G Major Minuets* from the Bach *Suites*! As teachers, we understand that playing one's first solo Bach is a major rite of passage. We are familiar with the nuance and finesse required to play Bach beautifully. With the bar so high, how can a teacher best incorporate these mature concepts into lessons with young students?

Before digging into the music, I give my students what I call a "Bach talk." I explain that each suite is a collection of six dances in the same key, and mention that there is no original manuscript in J.S. Bach's handwriting. I point out that manuscript copyists sometimes made mistakes, and that the bowings, often unclearly printed, differ from one edition to the next. I lead students to discover that there are no tempi or dynamics written in the music. I explain that these combined factors create a need for each cellist to shape their own artistic interpretation of the music. I like to recommend several recordings so students can observe basic differences in interpretation, like vibrato use, bowings, tempo, and whether the tempo generally remains steady or frequently changes.

Playing unaccompanied is typically new to students starting the *Minuets*. I use the mantra "no note left behind," pointing out that every note matters as there is no piano to help support the sound. Although I have stressed the importance of ringing, resonant pitches since *Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star*, I encourage my students to pay extra careful attention to resonance as they begin learning solo Bach. I challenge them to attend both to intonation and to using enough bow and weight to produce a tone with a "golden thread" (Peter Howard's term). In other words, the goal is to consistently play with a clear, supported core to the sound. I want my students to put enough spin on the string in the first three notes of *Minuet 1* that the result sounds like a G Major chord even though they are playing only one note at a time.

I bring the student's attention to the

arpeggios and bass notes which Bach has expertly placed to create harmonic context and self-accompaniment. I write in key names at cadences, and dashes under low notes that need to be slightly elongated (and, in some cases, also vibrated) to better illuminate harmonies. In addition to bass notes, I have students search for accidentals or changes of pattern in the music that could be highlighted by adding length and/or vibrato. I identify sequences and meticulously write a staccato dot over every note I want them to play short. The light, shorter articulation of the dominant-tonic tag following a resolution at a major cadence can imitate the subdued, understated response, "Yes, Mom" (like bar 8 of *Minuet 1*).

For a beginner, Bach's melodic contour at places where the largest leaps occur often sound rather choppy. If played at a steady tempo, the sudden leap to a bass note could result in a perceived disruption of the melodic line. I often like to play segments in two ways for students so that they can discern for themselves which choice seems more musically sensitive. In *Minuet 1*, I play

bars 11-12 for the student in two ways: once steadily and messily, and the second time taking care to elongate the low A to make it sound more like it belongs in the context of the phrase. I have the student vote for which version they liked better and why. That leads me to my favorite analogy for rubato in solo Bach, which has to do with Japanese gardens.

I love Japanese gardens. I highly recommend the one in Portland, Oregon, which is open all four seasons. When I went on the tour there, the guide brought my attention to the changing surfaces beneath my feet. Sometimes it was dirt, and other times it was gravel, concrete, steps, mulch, a wooden bridge, or even stepping stones over water. There were twists and turns, ups and downs. All of this is by design so that visitors take their time to mindfully navigate the terrain and acutely observe their surroundings. This mindful navigation enhances the visitor's enjoyment of the immersive experience.

When learning solo Bach, I teach my students to mindfully navigate the terrain

Minuets
from the Suite in G major, BWV 1007

Johann Sebastian Bach
(1685-1750)

The image shows a handwritten musical score for Minuet I in G major, BWV 1007. The score is written in bass clef with a 3/4 time signature. It includes several lines of music with various annotations in red ink. Key annotations include: "GM" (G Major) at the beginning; "Ring" under the first few notes; "vib." (vibrato) markings throughout; "DM" (Dominant Tonic) with "Yes, Mom!" written above it; "light" and "diminished" markings; "Bar" with an arrow pointing to a specific bar; "smooth" and "more" markings; "dark, smoky" and "least" markings; "trill stops least 2" and "small bow" markings; and "breathe" markings at the end of phrases. There are also some circled numbers like [1], [2], and [3] indicating specific techniques or fingerings.

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or a wind player might choose to breathe.

In my experience, it is most effective to detail these musical concepts with students right away as they learn the notes. I have personally found that this approach is essential when teaching music that is as expressively nuanced as Bach is. In other words, I like to add the musical ingredients to my Bach cake batter initially, so that they are baked in early, rather than added later like icing or sprinkles after the notes and rhythms have already been learned. The technical execution required to play with phrasing, rubato, articulation, and dynamics differs from the technical execution of playing without these elements. I try to be as detailed as possible with my score markings so that expectations are clearly conveyed.

Teaching Bach suites to a student who is learning them for the first time can be overwhelming. There is so much information to impart, and teaching finesse is a journey. I try to remember that, for the student, this is just the beginning of a lifetime of playing and enjoying solo Bach. I tell my students that they, too, will someday develop their own personal artistic interpretation of Bach. I am merely planting the seeds.

Acknowledgements

Special thanks to Sally Dorer for the topic idea and to Krista Broadway Swider for editing.

Teresa Richardson, cellist, is Acting Principal of the Minnesota Opera and teaches at North Star Cello Academy in Roseville. She previously taught at MacPhail Center for Music, St. Joseph's School of Music, University of St. Thomas, and University of Wisconsin-Eau Claire. Her degrees are from Indiana University in Bloomington, Indiana. †

of the melodic line. This translates to taking time at big leaps like the ones in bars 12, 14 and 23 of *Minuet 1* so that it does not sound like tripping over stepping stones. A new phrase can be likened to a different walking surface, or a path branching out and leading in a new direction. Maybe the arrival at a cadence is like arriving in front of a flower, momentarily enjoying its beauty, and taking a “sniff” (breath) before heading into a new section. One can imagine going up inclines while leading with a crescendo on ascending notes and walking a downward slope while tapering with a diminuendo on descending notes. The dynamics reflect the melodic contour.

I also like to delineate the concept of the three-tiered crescendo. Bach loves to use them, and there is a great example at the end of *Minuet 1*. I write numbers one through three in little boxes where each phrase tier begins, along with the words “least,” “more,” and “most,” explaining that the three-tiered crescendo helps to give the phrases direction and adds a natural build up to the final cadence.

When talking about phrasing, my favorite approach is to compare the piece to a jumble of words on a page. The words form sentence fragments or full sentences, which end in “punctuation.” A phrase ending in the dominant could sound like it ends with a question mark, and a phrase ending in the tonic could sound like it ends with a period, or an exclamation mark in forte! I like to have students determine phrase lengths and experiment to decide where each phrase leads and resolves. Together, the student and I locate the phrases with the loudest “peaks” and the softest “valleys,” so the dynamic framework is established. I always emphasize the importance of breath when playing Bach, since it helps both the performer and listener understand where major phrases and sections begin and end. It helps to think about where in the music a singer

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BASS

An End to a Great Summer

by Tom Pieper

Time is flying as I share a couple of resources for your consideration.

Eddie Gomez — *We Will Meet Again* (For Harry)

Eddie Gomez has always been a bassist, band leader, and composer who has inspired fellow musicians and audiences across the globe. After emigrating from Puerto Rico to New York City he began playing bass at age 11, and graduated from Juilliard in 1963. Eddie's career took off when he began working with pianist Bill Evans in 1966 and continued this partnership for 11 more years.

Here is his solo on *We will meet again* (For Harry) on the Bill Evans' *You Must Believe in Spring* LP from 1977. This tune is a great platform to showcase Eddie's fluency and mastery of soloing in the upper registers, and his imaginative phrasing and rhythmic execution. I extended the transcription for one chorus to illustrate how Eddie Gomes masterfully presents the multidimensional role of a bass player in the modern jazz setting: an inventive solo performance, and a supportive bass accompaniment. This chorus is basic yet nuanced with his choice of notes and deliberate use of ties, pedal notes, and hemiolas both subtle and powerful.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=e95cTQUZGrc>

Tchaikovsky — *Danse Trepak*

Here are two bass excerpts that popped up for me in the past few months that I think will be useful for future practice and performances. First off, Instagram is now inundated by many videos and stories, and many musicians are now posting great clips and recordings to demonstrate some incredible playing. Here are two by Blake Hilley (current Juilliard graduate)—check these out before they disappear as the clock is TikTok-ing!

Tchaikovsky's *Danse Russe Trepak* from the *Nutcracker* is an excerpt that you will certainly come across in your future, and probably more than once. And even more important than this excerpt is asked

for on auditions, it is really fun to play. Tchaikovsky knew how to orchestrate and required all bass players to join the party in many of his works. Here is a link that showcases the excerpt. Notice he plays this with the German bow, and listen to how great his articulation is as he produces an incredibly precise and clear tone. Different opinions are offered on the value of the two different bows, but when you can make either bow work it really does not matter what you play. I have included fingerings, but I believe his

position and choices of string crossings are even more valuable to consider and adhere to. Follow these suggestions and you will be ready when this comes up. Play the first 3 bars starting on G string and bar 5 & 6 shifting up the D string. Bars 13 and 14 are again on the D string with a string crossing to the G string in measure 15. I like how he includes the conclusion as it reminds us that excerpts often return to bass lines that are more supportive—similar to the role of Eddie Gomez above!

Bill Evans
Solo: Eddie Gomez

For Harry

For Harry (cont)

Handwritten musical score for 'For Harry (cont)'. The score is written on ten staves. The first six staves are in treble clef, and the last four are in bass clef. The key signature is B-flat major (two flats). The score includes various guitar chords such as A^bΔ, G7, C-, A-7 b5, D7 #9, D-7 b5, G7, C-, D-7 b5, G7, C-, A^bΔ 4:3, G7 4:3, C-, A-7 b5, D7 #9, D-7 b5, G7 #13, C-, F-, D-7 b5, G7 #13, C-, A^bΔ7, G7 #11, C- 9, A-7 b5, D7 #9, D-7 b5, G7 #9, and C-. There are also some rhythmic markings like '3' and '4:3'.

Trepak

Handwritten musical score for 'Trepak'. The score is written on six staves in bass clef. It includes a series of notes with fingering (n, v) and rhythmic markings (4, 2, 9, 1, -4, 1, 2, 2, 1, 2, 0, 9, 1, -2, -2, 9, 4, -1, 4, 1, 4, 2, 4, -2, 4, -1, -2, v, 4, 1, 4, -4, 4). The key signature is B-flat major.

<https://www.youtube.com/shorts/9howIAC8QHU>

Gershwin — Rhapsody in Blue

George Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* is also a great piece to play and be familiar with. There are many sections of this piece requiring you to be alert and deliberate as you provide support in your ensemble, and occasional soli sections with the brass. Because of the fast tempo, this excerpt can be challenging if you're not ready for it. The fingerings and string crossings are the most important strategy to help get you through. Remember you are also doubling with the brass so be kind as to not drown them out.

I spent some time debating about fingerings but do like playing most of the excerpt on the G and D string while shifting with the first finger leading the way. The string crossings are honoring the "going to the lower string with an up-bow rule" which keeps the bow on one balance point instead of two points.

Try playing on the A string in bar 7 as another option and staying in III, II, and IV position across strings as it limits your horizontal length of shifting. Depending on your preferences you may have better success, although I found the G and D string option to work the best as I play on two strings regardless of the distance.

<https://youtube.com/shorts/wMmGEDJJGv0?si=E7Kpi0YG6IIPBBBu>

Steve Wonder *I Wish* Bass line

I always think another part of my mission is to make everyone remember all the great bass lines that have been recorded over the years. This one is especially cool because you have two riffs that alternate during the tune and allow you lock-in to the groove. It works on both electric and upright bass and will make you the hit of your section or any party event you have coming up. The bass player on the original tunes his E string down to low E^b so if you want, play that note up the octave. For all of you with new chromatic extensions you can open the first closer and then have the open E flat ready to go. The second part of this tune outlines the chord changes with some extra chromatic notes for smoothing out the line. Again, this is super fun to play!

<https://youtu.be/hYKYka-PNt0?si=YvjH23wzJu5nP-Og>

Arpeggios — D major and F# melodic minor:

Lately I have been redoing my work with

Rhapsody in Blue

36

A part

B part

I WISH

Melodic Minor Scale

- F# minor #7 — The Tonic minor I Chord. F#- Δ7 — Melodic Minor Ascending
- G# minor 7 — Dorian b2
- A major 7 #5 — a III chord with Major 7th, raised 5th, and also raised 4th.
- A Δ7 #5 — Lydian Augmented
- B7 #11 — a IV Dominant Scale with raised 4 — Lydian Dominant
- C# 7 — Mixolydian b6
- D# minor 7 flat 5 — VI Chord in minor key has a 9th a whole step higher than tonic. Locrian Natural 2
- E#-7 b5 — altered or diminished whole tone scale

This is a good key because it stretches my brain to think about all these sharps. First of all, remember that any parent scale can be rethought as different modes, i.e., same collection of notes but starting from a different scale degree. As long as you keep the seven notes in mind, what you might call each mode is less important, except people do use these names to help communicate and navigate chord changes. In melodic minor you will find two obvious Dominant 7 chords (R, major 3, minor 7th) on degree IV and V, and one hidden or subtle Dominant 7 chord on degree VII. The VII contains this hidden Dominant because of the diminished 4th note above the root.

arpeggios and find these two applications to be helpful. I am playing the R_{3,5,7,9} on all the diatonic chords in different scales, for example. I like how this helps open up the chord to higher extensions and helps bass players to move away from the lower part of the chord while soloing. A jazz improviser is always trying to choose a scale that works best with the chord provided. When you extend the chord even further, R_{3,5,7,9,11,13}, you will have all the notes of the scale corresponding to the chord. Typically, you do not notate all the extensions, usually just up to a melodic note required. Bassists have two personalities, and we always want to consider ways to stretch out our understanding of the harmonies away from the root to other options in any tune. I start with the familiar key of D major and continue to something more challenging, the key of F# melodic minor ascending. Diatonic chords are labeled above and in D major will be familiar. When using F# melodic minor ascending, less familiar chords are found, however these are common in the jazz repertoire.

D major chords

- D major 7 — Major Scale
- E minor 7 — Dorian Mode
- F# minor 7 — Phrygian Mode
- G major 7 — Lydian Mode
- A 7 — Mixolydian Mode
- B minor 7 — Aeolian Mode
- C# minor 7 b5 — Locrian Mode

This note is heard as the Major 3 above the tonic and with the minor 7 forms the distinct tritone sound of a Dominant 7 chord. The true 2nd and 3rd are heard as the b9 & #9 and the 5th & 6th are heard as the b5 and b13. Jazz musicians especially find this chord useful because if you take the 5th and make that the root of a chord you create a tritone substitution.

E# A D# = E#7 ... Flip root to B (tritone away) and you get B A D#

$$R\ 3\ 7 \dots R\ 7\ 3 = B7$$

Practice these now and get comfortable with the sound and when

D arpeggios

Play in Common and cut time

you see or hear them in music or a score you will be prepared. As always, pick one or two to practice for a day or so and then pick another key.

I also like to vary the bowing, and you could choose to try as many different bowings as you like. When you become familiar with these keys you can make your next project to be going around the cycle of 4ths (counterclockwise on the circle of 5ths) so you can become acquainted with all keys.

A bonus for you from Jason Heath on bass extensions:
<https://youtu.be/1JU1VIHyTMA?si=kH5YhJ4CCaaOIGaU>

Enjoy the last few weeks and have a great year ahead. Back to practicing for me!!

Tom Pieper teaches middle school orchestra at Central Middle School in Wayzata, and bass students privately and at MacPhail Center for Music. You can reach him at thomas.pieper@wayzataschools.org, Pieper.thomas@MacPhail.org, Thomas.pieper@yoga@gmail.com. ♪

F# arpeggios

The image shows a series of musical staves for F# arpeggios. The first seven staves are in bass clef with a key signature of two sharps (F# and C#) and a 4/4 time signature. The chords and their corresponding notes are: F# minor #7 (F#, C#, G#, A), G#-7 (G#, C#, F#, A), A major 7 #5 (A, C#, E, G#, F#, A), B7 (B, D#, F#, A), C#7 (C#, E, G#, B), D#-7#5 (D#, F#, A, C#, B, D#), and F# minor #7 (F#, C#, G#, A). The eighth staff shows a guitar chord diagram for F# minor #7 with fret numbers 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 7. The ninth staff shows a guitar chord diagram for B7 with fret numbers 2, 3, 4, 5, 7, 7.

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BYLAWS OF MNSOTA

(Adopted September 2007)

[Amendments proposed October 2024 — old wording to be removed is **struck-out**; new wording to be added is **bold**]

ARTICLE 1 — Offices

MNSOTA, The Minnesota String & Orchestra Teachers Association, (herein the "Corporation") shall have and continuously maintain in the State of Minnesota a registered office, which currently is at ~~2360 Hillview Road~~ **546 W Kinne St**, located in the City of ~~Mounds View~~ **Ellsworth WI**, and a registered agent, ~~Lorie Hippen-Becky Plachy Resch~~, whose office is identical to such registered office, and may change such registered office and/or registered agent, and have other offices within or without the State of Minnesota, as the Board of Directors may from time to time determine.

ARTICLE 2 — Members

2.1) **QUALIFICATION AND SELECTION OF MEMBERS.** Membership in the Corporation shall be open only to members of American String Teachers Association (herein "ASTA"), in which the Corporation is a state chapter. Classifications, privileges, and responsibilities of ASTA members shall continue in effect in the Corporation and apply to the Corporation's members as they apply to such members as ASTA members. Members must have paid annual dues to ASTA in order to be a member in good standing in the Corporation. The rights, qualifications and privileges of membership may be amended from time to time by amendment of these Bylaws.

2.2) **VOTING RIGHTS.** Each member in good standing in the Corporation shall be entitled to one (1) vote on each matter submitted to a vote of the members. Voting shall not be cumulative. Except as specifically set forth by statute, in the Articles of Incorporation or these Bylaws to the contrary, all matters submitted to the members for vote shall require a majority vote of the members then present and voting at a meeting where a quorum exists. Members in the Corporation who are classified as "National Student Members" by ASTA are neither entitled to vote on any matter submitted to a vote of the members of the Corporation nor hold office in the Corporation.

2.3) **RIGHTS, LIMITATIONS AND RESTRICTIONS.** No member shall have the right to transfer, involuntarily or voluntarily, their membership or any of their rights or privileges of membership, or to substitute another as a member in their place (provided that nothing contained in this Section 2.3 shall be construed as prohibiting the limited right to proxy their vote as described in Section 3.7 of these Bylaws). Any attempted transfer or substitution shall be void and without any legal effect. Any person (including any association, corporation, partnership, company, entity or other organization) ceasing to be a member, whether voluntarily, by death (in the case of a natural person), or by removal, shall immediately forfeit all rights and privileges of membership in the Corporation.

2.4) **TERMINATION OF MEMBERSHIP.** Any member may resign their membership in the Corporation at any given time. A member may be removed by two-thirds affirmative vote of the entire membership at a special meeting called for that purpose and requires at least fifteen (15) days' prior written notice of the removal and the reasons therefore and an opportunity for the member to be heard at least five (5) days before the effective date of the removal. In the event a member does not pay annual dues to ASTA, such member shall not be in good standing in the Corporation. Upon ASTA's notification of a member's failure to pay annual dues to ASTA, such member's membership in the Corporation shall immediately terminate unless a two-thirds affirmative vote of the entire membership decides otherwise.

ARTICLE 3 — Meetings of Members

3.1) **ANNUAL MEETING.** An annual meeting of the members shall be held as determined from time to time by the President. At the meeting, the President and Treasurer of the Corporation shall report on the activities and financial condition of the Corporation and the members shall transact any other business as may come before the meeting, as determined by the Executive Board and executed by the President with the aid of any special committee or committees appointed for this purpose.

3.2) **SPECIAL MEETING.** Special meetings of the members may be called by the President, the Board of Directors or a majority of the members of the Corporation

3.3) **PLACE OF MEETING.** The Board of Directors may designate any place,

either within or without the State of Minnesota as the place of meeting for any annual meeting or for any special meeting called by the Board of Directors. If no designation is made or if a special meeting be otherwise called, the place of meeting shall be at the registered office of the Corporation in the State of Minnesota, provided, however, that if all of the members shall meet at any time and place either within or without the State of Minnesota, and consent to the holding of a meeting, such meeting shall be valid without call or notice, and at such meeting any corporate action may be taken.

3.4) **NOTICE OF MEETINGS.** Written or printed notice stating the place, day and hour of any meeting of members shall be delivered, either personally or by mail, to each member entitled to vote at such meeting, at least thirty (30) days before the date of such meeting, by or at the direction of the President, or the Secretary, or the officers or persons calling the meeting. Notice of such meetings may also be given by a form of electronic transmission consented to by the member to whom the notice is given. In case of a special meeting or when required by statute or by these Bylaws, the purposes for which the meeting is called shall be stated in the notice. If mailed, the notice of a meeting shall be deemed delivered when deposited in the United States mail addressed to the member at his/her address as it appears on the records of the Corporation, with postage thereon prepaid.

3.5) **WRITTEN ACTION BY MEMBERS.** Any action to be taken at a meeting of the members of the Corporation may be taken without a meeting if a written action shall be signed by the number of members that would be required to take the same action at a meeting of the member at which all members were present; provided, that all of the members must be notified promptly thereafter of the content and effective date.

3.6) **QUORUM.** At each meeting of the members, a majority of the members present in person or by proxy shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business, except where a greater percentage may be required by law; provided, however, that such number of members constituting a quorum shall never be less than ten (10). If a quorum is not present at any meeting of members, a majority of the members present may adjourn the meeting from time to time without further notice.

3.7) **PROXIES.** At any meeting of members, a member entitled to vote may vote either in person or by proxy executed in writing by the member or by his duly authorized attorney-in-fact provided that the proxy must be given to another member and will be invalid if granted to a nonmember. No proxy shall be valid after eleven (11) months from the date of its execution unless otherwise provided in the proxy.

ARTICLE 4 — Board of Directors

4.1) **GENERAL POWERS.** The affairs of the Corporation shall be managed by its Board of Directors who are referred to herein as the Board of Directors.

4.2) **NUMBER, TENURE, AND QUALIFICATION.** The Board of Directors shall consist of an Executive Board and certain officers appointed to the Board of Directors pursuant to this Section 4.2. The Executive Board (the "Executive Board") shall consist of the persons filling the elected officer positions of President, President-Elect, ~~Past-President~~, Treasurer, and Secretary. The officers appointed to the Board of Directors shall be Newsletter Editor and Membership Chairperson. Appointments of officers to the Board as described in this Section 4.2 shall be made by the President with the majority consent of the Executive Board. Additional Board members may be appointed at the discretion of the Executive Board. The Board of Directors shall reflect a balance of the particular interests of school string and orchestra teachers, studio teachers, and college and university teachers.

Each member of the Board of Directors shall serve for a two-year term coinciding with the term of their elected or appointed office and until his or her successor shall have been duly elected and qualified, or until the earlier death, resignation, removal, or disqualification of such director.

4.3) **REGULAR MEETINGS.** The Board of Directors shall meet no less than three (3) times annually at a time and place determined by the President and approved by the Board of Directors. No further notice is required for regular meetings.

4.4) **SPECIAL MEETINGS.** Special meetings of the Board of Directors may be called by or at the request of the President or the Directors constituting no less than fifteen percent (15%) of the Directors then in office. The person or persons authorized to call special meetings of the Board may fix any place, either within or without the State of Minnesota, as the place for holding any special meeting of the Board called by them.

4.5) **NOTICE.** Notice of any special meeting of the Board of Directors shall be given at least two (2) days previous thereto by written notice delivered personally or sent by mail or telegram to each Director at his/her address as shown by the records of the Corporation. Notice of such meetings may also be given by a form of electronic transmission consented to by the Director to whom the notice is given. If mailed, such notice shall be deemed to be delivered when deposited in the United States mail in a sealed envelope so addressed, with postage thereon prepaid. Any Directors may waive notice of any meeting. The attendance of a Director at any meeting shall constitute a waiver of notice of such meeting, except where a Director attends a meeting for the express purpose of objecting to the transaction of any business because the meeting is not lawfully called or convened. Neither the business to be transacted at, nor the purpose of, any regular or special meeting of the Board need be specified in the notice or waiver of notice of such meeting, unless specifically required by law or by these Bylaws.

4.6) **QUORUM; VOTING.** A majority of the Directors then in office shall constitute a quorum for the transaction of business at any meeting of the Board, provided that if less than a majority of the Directors are present at said meeting, a majority of the Directors present may adjourn the meeting from time to time without further notice. If a quorum is present when a duly called or held meeting is convened, the Directors present may continue to transact business until adjournment even though the withdrawal of a number of Directors originally present leaves less than the number otherwise required for a quorum.

4.7) **MANNER OF ACTING.** The act of a majority of the Directors present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the Board of Directors, except where otherwise provided by law or by the Articles of Incorporation or by these Bylaws.

4.8) **VACANCIES.** Any vacancy occurring in the Board of Directors or any Directorship, to be filled by reason of an increase in the number of Directors, shall be filled by the Board of Directors. A Director elected to fill a vacancy shall be elected for the unexpired term of his predecessor in office.

4.9) **WRITTEN ACTION BY DIRECTORS.** Any action to be taken at a meeting of the Board of Directors of the Corporation may be taken without a meeting if a consent in writing, setting forth the action so taken, shall be signed by all of the members of the Board of Directors with respect to the subject matter thereof.

4.10) **REMOVAL.** Directors may be removed by majority vote of the members at any duly called meeting of the members. Removal shall be effective upon the mailing of a written notice to the director who is removed.

4.11) **RESIGNATION.** Any Director may resign at any time by giving written notice to the Secretary. Such resignation shall take effect without acceptance upon receipt of the notice, unless a later date is specified in the notice.

ARTICLE 5 — Elected Officers

5.1) **ELECTED OFFICERS.** The elected officers of the Corporation shall be a President, a President-Elect, ~~a Past-President~~, a Secretary, and a Treasurer, each of whom shall be elected by the members of the Corporation. Any two or more offices may be held by the same person, except the offices of President and Secretary. The business of the Corporation shall be carried out by its elected and appointed officers and the Corporation's Board of Directors, which shall be responsible for carrying out the policies of the Corporation in the interim between meetings of the entire membership.

5.2) **ELECTION AND TERM OF OFFICE.** Elections shall be held in even numbered years, and shall conform to all guidelines contained in the Constitution and Bylaws of ASTA. ~~The elections shall be by ballot mailed to each member in good standing in the spring of election years. The elections shall be held via secure electronic ballots in the spring of election years. Members in good standing will be eligible to vote.~~

In the fall preceding elections, the President shall appoint a nominating committee of at least three members who shall designate a ballot of candidates for the offices to be vacated. A current or former elected officer shall be appointed to serve as chair. The names of the candidates selected shall be submitted to the Executive Board for approval.

Ballots are to be counted within ~~60 days of mailing~~ **30 days of the electronic distribution**. Results will be announced at a meeting of the membership of the Corporation and in a major periodical of the Corporation. The candidate receiving the greatest number of votes for each office shall be declared elected. Vacancies may be filled or new offices created and filled at any meeting of the Board of Directors. Each officer shall hold office until his/her successor shall have been duly elected and shall have qualified.

Newly elected officers shall begin their terms of office on May 15 following their election. The President-Elect, Treasurer and Secretary shall be elected to two-year terms. Officers are encouraged to serve ex-officio from May 15 to September 1 following their term to assist the newly elected officers. The President-Elect automatically becomes President after two years. ~~The President automatically becomes Past-President after two years.~~ The President may not serve two consecutive terms as President.

Appointed officers shall serve at the discretion of the elected Executive Board, for terms not to exceed two years, but may be reappointed for successive terms. The appointed officers shall begin their terms of office within thirty days of their appointment.

5.3) **REMOVAL.** Any officer or agent elected or appointed by the Board of Directors may be removed by the Board of Directors whenever in its judgment the best interests of the Corporation would be served thereby, but such removal shall be without prejudice to the contract rights, if any, of the person so removed.

5.4) **VACANCIES.** A vacancy in any office because of death, resignation, removal, disqualification or otherwise may be filled by the Board of Directors for the unexpired portion of the term.

In the event that the office of President becomes vacant during the President's term in office, the President-Elect shall complete the unexpired term of the President as well as the elected term of office, and shall appoint a member in good standing to serve on the Executive Board until the next regularly scheduled election.

In the event that the office of President-Elect becomes vacant due to any circumstance, a special election shall be held by **mail vote secure electronic ballots** within 90 days. Ballots will be counted 30 days after **mailing electronic distribution** and the newly-elected President-Elect will begin the term of office immediately thereafter.

In the event of the vacancy of any office other than that of President or President-Elect, the President, with the majority consent of the Executive Board, shall appoint a member in good standing to complete that officer's unexpired term.

5.5) **CHAIRPERSON OF THE BOARD.** The President shall be deemed the Chairperson of the Board and shall preside at all meetings of the members and of the Board of Directors and shall see that orders and resolutions of the Board of Directors are carried into effect. The Chairperson of the Board shall have the power to execute, on behalf of the Corporation, bonds, mortgages and all other contracts and documents, whether or not under the seal of the Corporation, except in cases where the signing and execution thereof shall be expressly delegated by law, by the Board of Directors or by these Bylaws to some other officer or agent of the Corporation. The Chairperson of the Board shall have general powers of supervision and management of the business of the Corporation and shall be the final arbiter of all differences between officers of the Corporation and his/her decision as to any matter affecting the Corporation shall be final and binding as between the officers of the Corporation, subject only to the Board of Directors of the Corporation.

5.6) **PRESIDENT.** The President shall be the chief executive officer of the Corporation. Within the policies and objectives prescribed by the Board of Directors and under the general supervision of the Board, the President shall establish operating procedures for, and administer and direct, all aspects of the Corporation's operating activities. The President shall have the power to execute documents where by law the signature of the President is required. In general, the President shall have all powers and shall perform all duties usually vested in the office of the President of a corporation, subject to the right of the Board of Directors to delegate powers to other officers or committees of the Corporation, except those powers which may be exclusively conferred by law upon the office of the President. The President shall issue to the national President-Elect by June 1st of each year a report of the annual meeting of the Corporation and of other State Chapter activities. In the absence of the Secretary, the President shall appoint someone to keep minutes of the meeting.

5.7) **PRESIDENT-ELECT.** In the absence of the President or in the event of

his/her inability or refusal to act, the President-Elect shall perform the duties of the President, and when so acting, shall have all the powers of and be subject to all the restrictions upon the President. The President-Elect shall perform such other duties as from time to time may be assigned to them by the President or the Board of Directors.

5.8) **TREASURER.** If required by the Board of Directors, the Treasurer shall give a bond for faithful discharge of his/her duties in such sum and with such surety or sureties as the Board of Directors shall determine. The Treasurer shall have charge and custody of and be responsible for all funds and securities of the Corporation; receive and give receipts for moneys due and payable to the Corporation from any source whatsoever, and deposit all such moneys in the name of the Corporation in such banks, trust companies, or other depositories as shall be selected by the Board; and in general perform all the duties incident to the offices of Treasurer and such other duties as from time to time may be assigned to him/her by the President or by the Board of Directors.

5.9) **SECRETARY.** The Secretary shall keep minutes of the meetings of the members of the Board of Directors in one or more books provided for the purpose; see that all notices are duly given in accordance with the provisions of these Bylaws or as required by law; be custodian of the corporate records; keep a register of the post office address of each member which shall be furnished to the Secretary by such member; and in general perform all duties incident to the office of Secretary and such other duties as from time to time may be assigned to him/her by the President or by the Board of Directors.

5.10) ~~Past President. The Past President, in general, shall perform such duties as shall be assigned to him or her by the President or the Board of Directors.~~

5.11) **COMPENSATION.** No officer shall receive compensation, either directly or indirectly, for their services as directors of the Corporation without the approval of the membership of the Corporation.

ARTICLE 6 — Interested Directors & Officers

The Corporation shall not enter into contracts or transactions between the Corporation or a related corporation and a director of the Corporation or between the Corporation and an organization in which a director of the Corporation is a director, officer or legal representative or has a material financial interest, except in accordance with the provisions of Minnesota Statutes, Section 317A.255, as now enacted or hereafter amended, and in accordance with the Corporation's conflict of interest policy in effect and as amended from time to time.

ARTICLE 7 — Indemnification of Directors & Officers

The Corporation shall indemnify such persons, for such expenses and liabilities, in such manner, under such circumstances, and to such extent, as permitted by Minnesota Statutes, Section 317A.521, as now enacted or hereafter amended.

Article 8 — Contracts, Checks, Deposits Funds

8.1) **CONTRACTS.** The Board of Directors may authorize any officer or officers, agent or agents of the Corporation, in addition to the officers so authorized by these Bylaws, to enter into any contract or execute and deliver any instrument in the name of and on behalf of the Corporation, and such authority may be general or confined to specific instances.

8.2) **CHECKS, DRAFTS, ETC.** All checks, drafts or other orders for the payment of money, notes or other evidences of indebtedness issued in the name of the Corporation, shall be signed by such officer or officers, agent or agents of the Corporation and in such manner, as shall from time to time be determined by resolution of the Board of Directors. In the absence of such determination by the Board of Directors, such instruments shall be signed by the Treasurer or an assistant treasurer and countersigned by the President, ~~Past-President~~, or President-Elect of the Corporation.

8.3) **DEPOSITS.** All funds of the Corporation shall be deposited from time to time to the credit of the Corporation in such banks, trust companies or other depositories as the Board of Directors may select.

8.4) **GIFTS.** The Board of Directors or the President may accept on behalf of the Corporation any contribution, gift, bequest or devise for the general purposes or for any special purpose of the Corporation.

Article 9 — Books and Records

The Corporation shall keep correct and complete books and records of account and shall also keep minutes of the Proceedings of its members and Board of Directors, and shall keep at the registered or principal office a record giving the names and addresses of the members entitled

to vote. All books and records of the Corporation may be inspected by any member or his agent or attorney for any proper purpose at any reasonable time.

Article 10 — Fiscal Year

The fiscal year of the Corporation shall end on the last day of June in each year.

Article 11 — Seal

The Board of Directors may provide a corporate seal which, if adopted, shall be in the form of a circle and shall have inscribed thereon the name of the Corporation and the words "Corporate Seal."

Article 12 — Waiver of Notice

Whenever any notice whatever is required to be given under the provisions of the applicable nonprofit corporation act for the State of Minnesota or under the provisions of the Articles of Incorporation or by the Bylaws of the Corporation, a waiver thereof in writing signed by the person or persons entitled to such notice, whether before or after the time stated therein, shall be deemed equivalent to the giving of such notice.

Article 13 — Committees

13.1) **COMMITTEES OF DIRECTORS.** The Board of Directors, by resolution adopted by a majority of the Directors in office, may designate one or more committees, each of which shall consist of two or more Directors, which committees, to the extent provided in said resolution and not restricted by law, shall have and exercise the authority of the Board of Directors in the management of the Corporation; but the designation of such committees and the delegation there to of authority shall not operate to relieve the Board of Directors, or any individual Director, of any responsibility imposed upon it or her/him by law. All special Committees and all standing Committees shall be appointed by the President.

13.2) **OTHER COMMITTEES.** Other committees not having and exercising the authority of the Board of Directors in the Corporation may be designated by a resolution adopted by a majority vote of the Directors present at a meeting at which a quorum is present. Except as otherwise provided in such resolution, members of each such committee need not be members of the Corporation, the President shall appoint the members thereof, and each such committee shall have at least one member who is either a Director or officer of the Corporation. Any member thereof may be removed by the person or persons authorized to appoint such member whenever in their judgment the best interests of the Corporation shall be served by such removal. All special Committees and all standing Committees shall be appointed by the President.

13.3) **TERM OF OFFICE.** Each member of a committee shall continue as such until the next annual meeting of the members of the Corporation and until his/her successor is appointed, unless the committee shall be sooner terminated, or unless such member be removed from such committee, or unless such member shall cease to qualify as a member thereof. Notwithstanding anything to the contrary herein, the President may terminate a committee upon the completion of a committee's actions or the completion or other cessation of a committee's purpose.

13.4) **CHAIRPERSON.** At the discretion of the President, one member of each committee shall be appointed chairperson.

13.5) **VACANCIES.** Vacancies in the membership of any committee may be filled by appointments made in the same manner as provided in the case of the original appointments.

13.6) **QUORUM.** Unless otherwise provided in the resolution of the Directors designating a committee, a majority of the whole committee shall constitute a quorum and the act of a majority of the members present at a meeting at which a quorum is present shall be the act of the committee.

13.7) **RULES.** Each committee may adopt rules for its own government not inconsistent with these Bylaws or with rules adopted by the Board of Directors.

Article 14 — Amendments

These Bylaws may be altered, amended or repealed and new bylaws may be adopted by a majority of the members present at the annual meeting, provided that at least ten (10) days written notice is given of intention to alter, amend or repeal or to adopt new bylaws at such meeting.

Certification

The Minnesota String & Orchestra Teachers Association hereby certifies that the foregoing Bylaws were adopted as the complete Bylaws of the Corporation by the Board on ~~September 22, 2007~~ **October 17, 2024.** □

Proposed Bylaw Changes

Special Election for President-Elect

The Fall Clinic & Awards, scheduled for Thursday, October 17th, 2024 at the University of Northwestern, will also host MNSOTA's Annual Meeting this year. As the Bylaws have not been updated since 2007, we thought this would be a good opportunity to propose changes to the Bylaws for the structure of the executive committee, procedures around MNSOTA elections, and refreshing the language around our Bylaws. The complete text, with proposed changes, is found on pages 20–22. The principle changes are:

Proposed Bylaw Change: Removal of Past-President Position

The MNSOTA Board of Directors understands that the six-year cycle for the executive position can be difficult to commit to. As such, we propose an amendment to our organizational Bylaws that will structure our organization with a President-Elect and President, but not a Past-President. This would mean a four-year commitment rather than six years. After a President's term expires, they will be invited to serve on the board as an at-large member if they are interested in continuing to serve in the organization.

Proposed Bylaw Change: Electronic Voting (instead of previously mailed ballots)

MNSOTA would move to an electronic voting process, using a secure voting site. Using an election site will save MNSOTA the cost of postage and we predict that it will increase voter responses, and will make elections (especially for special elections) an easier and faster process.

Special Election for President-Elect

When we held our regular election last spring, we did not have a candidate for President-Elect for 2024-2026. We are delighted that Jacob Crosby has accepted the nomination.

Jacob Crosby graduated from the University of Northwestern, St. Paul in 2016. He received a degree in Music Education and a degree in Music Composition.

Jacob worked for three years in Robbinsdale School District, ISD 281 as an Elementary Orchestra and Band teacher. In 2019, he moved to his hometown of Austin Minnesota and accepted a job teaching 7th and 8th Grade Orchestra. In addition to teaching Public School Orchestra, Jacob teaches individual viola and violin lessons both privately and for the MacPhail Center for Music in Austin, MN.

Jacob has played the viola since 2004, and participates in performances around Southern MN and the Twin Cities. He is the Principal violist of the Austin Symphony Orchestra, and is part of the newly-formed "Austin Symphony String Quartet." He has also

performed in the Dakota Valley Symphony, and the Bloomington Chorale. Some of Jacob's other playing opportunities include: the annual "Minnesota Adult and Teen Challenge Christmas Concert" in Eden Prairie, MN, and the annual "Messiah Sing-Along" in Winona, MN.

Since graduating high school, Jacob has had many unique teaching opportunities. Jacob is honored to have worked and taught at the Upper Midwest String Camp, as well as an Austin-born string camp, formerly known as the "Seven Springs String Camp," now run by MacPhail in Austin. In addition, he has taught students ages 3-18 years at his local church's Youth Group, and in Vacation Bible School.

Jacob is thrilled to be nominated for the "President-Elect" position for MNSOTA.

If you are unable to attend the Clinic to vote in person, please vote by mail by filling out the ballot below, removing the page from the magazine, folding, adding a stamp and mailing to the address on the other side. Postmark deadline is October 17, 2024.

Only MNSOTA members can vote. If you are not a member, please go to astastrings.org and become a member!

BALLOT

I Certify I am a MNSOTA Member

I approve the proposed Bylaw Changes
 yes no

Vote for President-Elect
Jacob Crosby _____
Write-in _____

Detach, fold, and mail

Fill out reverse side; fold; fasten; stamp; mail. Thank you!

postage
required

Bylaw Change
Election Reply

MNSOTA Bylaw and Special Election
Becky Plachy Resch
546 W Kinne St
Ellsworth, WI 54011

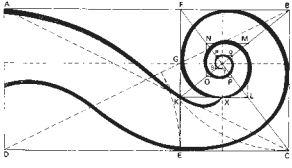
Fill out reverse side; fold; fasten; stamp; mail. Thank you!

Detach, fold, and mail

Detach, fold, and mail

Detach, fold, and mail

Detach, fold, and mail



MAKER'S BENCH

A Labor of Love at First Sight

by Angela Thompson

When I was in the eighth grade, I remember the day my mom took me to our local violin shop so I could pick out my very first violin. I gazed across the violins hanging on the wall and knew which one I wanted within seconds, before I even put it under my chin and drew the bow. What attracted me to this particular fiddle? The varnish.

I think many players have a similar experience at some point in their lives. Varnish is arguably the first thing that our eyes are drawn to when looking at an instrument. It may be the color or the way it has been antiqued. When I was younger, I loved the look of dark varnish. The violin I chose was a deep, almost purplish red, if you can imagine. I thought it was so beautiful and while I liked how it sounded, I loved how it looked.

In May, I finished my second violin. I am so proud of the hard work I put into every step of the construction process; it was difficult and very time consuming and I enjoyed tackling all the new challenges. But, to my surprise, the greatest challenge of all was varnishing. I have been reflecting on the details over the summer and would like to share what I learned.

There are two types of varnish: oil and spirit. Spirit varnish is generally alcohol and lac based and oil varnish is made from resin and linseed oil. I used oil varnish for my violin. We actually make our own oil varnish at the shop, which consists of cooking down a larch turpentine until it becomes hard and then combining it with hot linseed oil until it has the desirable consistency. The intensity of color is determined by how long and at what temperature you cook the resin, but slowly (about 20 hours) and at a moderate temperature (220-240 degrees Celsius) tends to yield a nice medium golden color. Cooking the resin longer will result in a darker color.

Before beginning the varnishing process, I let my violin sit in the light box to tan for several weeks. It darkens the wood a little, so it doesn't look too bright under the varnish. We also applied a coat of potassium nitrite that darkened the wood even more so overnight.

One of the most crucial steps of varnishing is the first coat of what is called the "ground." The ground is what you often see most in antiqued instruments—it is the golden areas where varnish has been wiped away to create patina. The ground is the oil varnish we made thinned out with a mineral spirit—in this case we used Gamsol. The ground seals the wood to protect any varnish from seeping in and "burning," which looks exactly as it sounds—a dark blemish that appears as if the wood was scorched. It



Angela's Violin

is also possible to cause burning from the ground, so the procedure involves wetting the wood with Gamsol before applying the ground, and wiping it off after so none is left sitting on the surface.

What makes this step so tricky is knowing which areas are most susceptible to burning and making sure to not leave any excess, ensuring it looks even without obvious dark or light spots. The areas that needed the most attention and care were the top, top edges and anywhere with endgrain, where potential bad split and endgrain are

very absorptive. I ultimately applied four coats of ground, each taking approximately 1.5 to 2 hours to complete. With each subsequent coat I worked out any unevenness.

The color of varnish you see on any particular violin is a result of the varnish itself and what, if any, pigments are mixed into the varnish. There are premade varnishes you can buy from suppliers that have various colors such as amber, golden brown, dark brown, golden yellow, among others. When you make the oil varnish yourself, you have some idea of whether it will be light or dark based on how long you cook the resin, but I am learning that no two varnishes cooked at the same temperature and for the same time will look the same. In order to achieve the color you want, you can add pigments to the varnish. I mixed a few different lake pigments: golden yellow, brown-red and black. There was no set method in creating the color that I wanted. I mixed the pigments into the varnish and applied a small amount on my violin to check. When it wasn't quite right, I simply adjusted the color with more pigment. When I liked the overall color but wanted it to be darker, I added a little more black for intensity.

Applying the varnish was fun and exciting. I used a combination of brushes, prosthetic sponges and the palm of my hand, being mindful of how much I was applying and making sure it wasn't pooling anywhere. It was especially satisfying varnishing the top and back. I smeared the varnish all over and patted it out evenly with my hands. Once the entire violin was covered, I put it in the light box for a day or two to dry completely before applying the next coat. Overall, I applied six coats. Four were over the entire instrument, and two were partial coats on the ribs and scroll where it was lighter and needed more color to catch up.

After achieving the perfect color for my violin, there were several steps I learned to do for the first time. The following steps helped create depth and interest to the varnish. First, I did some shading by wiping the whole instrument down with alcohol



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(the solvent for varnish) to tone down the glossy look and lighten the edges and areas that naturally get worn. Next, I airbrushed onto the entire instrument a mixture of gum arabic and water in order to create what is called "crackle." The gum arabic is lightly and slowly sprayed onto the instrument and then dried with a hair dryer. With heat, the gum arabic reacts with the varnish, creating texture. What I was looking for was a slight puckering, or tiny craters and peaks. Some instruments have a very dramatic and obvious crackle, but I was going for a more subtle look on my violin. This was important for the next step.

My favorite, and perhaps most perplexing, task was developing the patina. In this step, I had to make "schmutz." The schmutz is a mixture of black, dark green and yellow oil colors with linseed oil. The significance of adding schmutz is to create an understated dirty look. Essentially, I smeared black paint all over my violin. The paint settled into the grain lines and those low spots formed from the gum arabic. I wiped it over the violin evenly, let it sit in the lightbox overnight, and finished removing the excess the following day. It took a lot of attention to detail, making sure grain lines in the top weren't too dark or too light. I used a pointed stick wrapped in a paper towel so that I could remove the dirt with precision. I even touched up the lighter grain lines by painting them darker to match. It added such a beautiful quality to the look of the varnish and of all the details,

I love it the most.

At this point, the overall look of the instrument is finished. From here I just had to spray on shellac to protect the varnish and build a base for French polishing. French polishing has a learning curve. The goal was to polish out most of the corduroy on the top and smooth and shine the rest of the violin. I had learned how to do this in school but was quickly reminded how tricky and laborious it is to do it right. You take a cloth with built up shellac and benzoin, add just the right amount of alcohol and oil so that the cloth glides across the surface without tugging. Ideally, it moves the shellac around until you reach the desired smoothness. This final step was completed over multiple days because the alcohol added to the cloth softens the varnish as you polish. I could only polish in one area

for so long before needing to give it time to harden again. By the end, my violin glimmered beautifully.

I learned considerably more about varnishing for my second violin than my first. All of the steps after applying the colored coats were new to me this time around, and it made a world of a difference. Not only did I feel I achieved an attractive color, but everything I did after varnishing created a finished look that far exceeded my expectations. Altogether, I spent about a month from the time I started the ground and finished polishing, although, naturally there were days I was unable to work on it. I am incredibly grateful to my teacher, David Folland, who took countless hours of his valuable time to show me all these specific procedures in fine detail. And there is so much more detail I just couldn't fit into this article. There have been entire books written on varnishing techniques and luthiers continue to study the art and find innovations.

I know my tastes in varnish have evolved since I was a young girl picking out my first violin, but I'm confident that one day (and hopefully soon!) someone will look at my violin with the same excitement and awe and know that it's the violin for them.

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. †



BAROQUE PRACTICE

19th-Century Performance Traditions of the Bach Cello Suites

by Charles Asch

Prominent German cellist Friedrich Grützmacher made an edition of the Bach Suites in 1866, No. 238b for CF Peters, which is heavily reharmonized and re-arranged, with numerous additions to Bach's writing and alterations of notes. The first image is Grützmacher's "performers edition" of 1866, compared to Grützmacher's more conservative edition of 1867.

SUITE II.
Violoncello.

Allegro moderato.

Prélude. *f* molto marc. *dimin.* J. S. Bach.

SUITE II.

PRÉLUDE.
Allegro moderato.

f molto marc. *dimin.*

The Bach *Cello Suites* were performed throughout the 1800s by numerous cellists, with performances throughout the 1860s by Grützmacher, found in concert reviews in German newspapers of the time. It is often unclear from the review if the *Suite* was performed in its entirety, or if only selected movements were performed. Regardless, this puts to rest the popular myth that Pablo Casals was the cellist to have "rediscovered" the Bach *Suites* in public performances of the early 1900s.

There are also concert reviews of Alfredo Piatti, noted Italian cellist, performing from the Bach *Cello Suites* throughout the late 1800s. Piatti even wrote an edition of the *Suites* with optional piano accompaniment, and with bowings more similar to the older

manuscripts of the *Suites*. Stylistically, Piatti would have differed considerably from Grützmacher, with Piatti's interpretations known for their purity and sparing use of vibrato.

Agustín Rubio gave a concert performing Bach's *Sixth Suite*, *Sarabande* and *Gavottes* in 1889 in Madrid, with violinist Enrique Arbós performing violin solo works by Bach in the same program. Ferdinand David, who played in a quartet with Grützmacher, came out with an edition of Bach's *Solo Sonatas and Partitas* for violin in 1843, upon Mendelssohn's founding of the Leipzig Conservatory. Numerous violinists came out with editions of both Bach's *Sonatas for Violin* and his *Partitas*, including Karol Lipinski in 1841 of the *Sonatas BWV*

1014-19, followed by editions by Leonard, Hubay, and Auer.

The first cellist to complete a recording of a *Cello Suite* by Bach was Guilhermina Suggia for HMV in England between 1923-1927. She recorded both *Suite No. 1 in G major* and *Suite No. 3 in C major*. These recordings are not publicly available, and are held in the British libraries as part of the Centre for History and Analysis of Recorded Music (<https://charm.rhul.ac.uk/>). Pablo Casals, with whom Suggia had a romantic relationship with from 1906-1913, finally decided to record the complete *Six Cello Suites* in 1936 when he was 60 years old, with these recordings appearing from 1938-1939.

Naturally, Pablo Casals recordings are groundbreaking in their completeness and relative fidelity to Bach's text. The performance traditions from Pablo Casals' interpretations of the Bach *Suites* are still quite strong today, with numerous cellists tracing their teaching lineage to his students. Many modern interpretations are based on the performance traditions of the early 1900s, related to Pablo Casals' popularizing and recording the complete *Cello Suites*.

For the modern performer, looking beyond Casals to earlier editions and performance styles from the 1800s could give inspiration. From the extant materials, there is a vast stylistic output of different methods and approaches to the *Suites* already from the mid-1800s. While this topic can be explored more in a future article, there are numerous manuscript copies and editions including those by Anna Magdalena and Peter Kellner, to the editions in use at Paris Conservatory, Berlin Conservatory and Vienna Conservatory in the first part of the 1800s. Already in these editions, one can see the increasing use of legato slurs by the editor, as opposed to the more sparing use of slurs in the manuscript copies by A.M. Bach and Peter Kellner. Fundamentally, the stylistic conventions of the bowing during the 1800s favored different slurring and articulation patterns than those which were prevalent during the time J.S. Bach wrote the *Cello Suites*. To a certain extent,

the recordings made by Casals and his contemporaries, basing their performances from these performance traditions of the 1800s, likely using editions by Grützmacher and his contemporaries, tend to push this stylistic morphing further in a direction of alterations in legato bow articulations from the original manuscript copies of A.M. Bach (manuscript copy from c. 1727-31) and Peter Kellner (manuscript copy from c. 1726).

Dr. Charles Asch performs on both a baroque and modern cello. On the baroque cello he has performed with Lyra Baroque Orchestra, Bach Society of Minnesota and Bach Roots Festival, as well as participating in chamber music programs featuring music of the baroque and early classical throughout the Twin Cities. Dr. Asch completed his D.M.A. at University of Minnesota, his M.M. at Juilliard, and his B.M. at Northwestern University. He has studied with Tanya Remenikova, Hans Jørgen Jensen, Richard Aaron and Jaap ter Linden. His doctoral thesis at UMN was focused on researching one of the first cellists in the latter part of the 19th century to exclusively perform with an endpin, Karl Davydov. ♪



Suite II Prelude — Anna Magdalena manuscript



Suite II Prelude — Kellner manuscript

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Award Nominations



Honor a Colleague!

Nomination Deadline: September 18

Award Presentations: October 17 at the Clinic

MNSOTA seeks to honor educators and organizations that have made a significant contribution to string music in our state.

The **Master Teacher: Studio** award is presented to a meritorious teacher from a private lesson studio or college.

The **Master Teacher: School Orchestra** award is presented to a meritorious teacher from a school program.

The **Meritorious Orchestra Program** award is a general award given to an entire school district's orchestra program or to a youth orchestra program or to a college or university orchestra program.

The **Community Service** award recognizes other individuals and organizations who have made significant contributions to string education in the state.

Nomination rules:

- Nominations must show evidence of the person's or organization's outstanding contributions.
- Nominees for Master Teacher: Studio and Master Teacher: School Orchestra must be MNSOTA members or be willing

to become MNSOTA members to accept the award. At least one teacher in the Meritorious Orchestra program must be a MNSOTA member or willing to become a member.

- Elected officers of the MNSOTA board (President, President-Elect, Past-President, Secretary, Treasurer) are not eligible to receive awards.
- The MNSOTA board will determine the winners.

To nominate a person or program complete and submit the online nomination form found at www.MNSOTA.org, or send a letter or the form below to Becky Plachy Resch, 546 W Kinne St, Ellsworth, WI 54011, president@mnsota.org. Include in your letter your nominee's name and complete mailing address, the title of the award you are suggesting and a brief explanation of why your nominee merits this award.

The deadline for nominations is September 18, 2024. Winners will be announced by email after the fall Board meeting.

Awards will be presented during the MNSOTA Fall Clinic on October 17, 2024 at a the University of Northwestern-St. Paul.

2024 MNSOTA AWARD NOMINATIONS

Nominee's Name _____

Nominee's Address _____

Phone _____

Suggested Award _____

Describe the achievements of your nominee:

Signed _____

UNLOCKING THE STRENGTHS OF NEURODIVERGENT LEARNERS

TAMARA GONZALEZ

Drawing on current scientific research and the presenter’s personal experiences as teacher and parent of neurodiverse children, this session will educate attendees about several commonly diagnosed conditions, focusing on Autism Spectrum Disorder, ADD/ADHD, Dyspraxia, and Dyslexia. We will explore the mechanisms of each diagnosis, the challenges that arise, and most importantly, the inherent strengths of brains that work differently. Tamara will share and exchange best practices on leveraging these strengths to maximize learning potential.

Tamara Gonzalez fell in love with orchestral music as a first grader in the D.C. Youth Orchestra Program. Continually seeking out orchestral experiences, she began score study and conducting lessons at age 14. Tamara made her conducting



debut at age 16 directing her colleagues in the Puerto Rico Conservatory of Music Symphony Orchestra in a performance of *Die Meistersinger* in Sala Sanromá, in San Juan. She holds a B.M. with honors and M.M. with high honors in violin performance from DePaul University, and is a fully trained Suzuki violin and viola instructor. She has maintained a large Suzuki violin and viola studio at MacPhail Center for Music since moving to Minneapolis in 2014. She is a sought-after Suzuki and orchestra clinician, has been invited to teach and conduct throughout Minnesota and in Colorado, South Dakota, Madison, Memphis, Kansas City, and Puerto Rico, and is currently the conductor of the GTCYS Concertino East orchestra. Tamara lives in North Minneapolis and is a Suzuki mom to her two sons.

LECTURE DEMO: MANAGING DOUBLE BASSISTS IN THE ORCHESTRAL CLASSROOM

MARK KAUSCH

Bring a bass!

This double bass lecture demo will provide string educators seeking greater depth of knowledge about the double bass with ideas on how to provide good guidance and musical challenges to young bassists in an orchestral setting. Also on the agenda will be how to provide more advanced young bass players with the right level of challenge in orchestra and chamber music settings.

Mark Kausch is a graduate of St. Olaf College and the Peabody Institute of The Johns Hopkins University. Mark teaches viola da gamba, cello and double bass from his home in Minneapolis and at Hamline, Augsburg, Normandale Community College, and Bethel Universities. His previous work at the College of Saint Benedict-Saint John’s University included serving as founding director for the



CSB-SJU Consort of Viols.

He has performed on double bass, violone, and viola da gamba with ensembles including the Hanover Band of London, the Smithsonian Chamber Orchestra, the Philadelphia Bach Society and the Grande Bande of New York. In the Twin Cities he has performed with the National Lutheran Choir, Lyra Baroque Orchestra, the Rose Ensemble, the Minnesota Opera and Vocal Essence, among many others.

Mark divides his professional time between teaching and performing and additional consultative work as a public media content strategist. As a member of Public Radio International’s (“PRI”) content development and strategy team, his work included the launch of programs such as *Schickele Mix* and *From the Top*.

Fall Clinic & Awards

Thursday, October 17, 2024

- 8:00–8:15 A.M. **Registration/Coffee and Conversation** (bring your own coffee!)
- 8:15–8:45 A.M. **MNSOTA Annual Meeting** (Vote on new Bylaws and special election)
- 8:45–10:15 A.M. **Unlocking the Strengths of Neurodivergent Learners**
Tamara Gonzalez
- 10:30–noon **Lecture Demo: Managing Double Bassists in the Orchestral Classroom**
Mark Kausch **BRING A BASS IF YOU CAN!**
- noon–12:30 P.M. **Annual MNSOTA Awards Presentation**
-

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3003 Snelling Ave N., Roseville, 55113 — Choir Room in Totino Fine Arts Center
Follow the signs for workshop parking

Registration will open in September on www.MNSOTA.org. Walk-in registrations will also be available.
Look for more event information in our weekly email updates and on the website.

RESERVE ON-LINE AT www.MNSOTA.org

DEADLINE — OCTOBER 15

Clinic sessions, Awards and Meeting in person.

Registration also available at the door

For more info, contact: Becky Plachy Resch, president@mnsota.org

Event Cancellation Policy

Since events cannot be rescheduled, MNSOTA is committed to holding all events as planned. MNSOTA will cancel an event only in cases of a safety emergency (e.g. road conditions/weather), based on state advisories. If an event is cancelled, at the discretion of the board, a partial refund to participants may be considered after expenses have been paid.

2024 MIDDLE LEVEL ALL-STATE ORCHESTRA

by Daniel Ericksen

The 22nd annual MNSOTA Middle Level All-State Orchestra, which includes 7th–9th grade string players from throughout Minnesota, performed on February 17th at the MMEA Convention. This year's orchestra was directed by Lucas Shogren.

Lucas Shogren is a multifaceted musician whose style and energy has been sought after across the United States. He is currently the Orchestra Director at Mounds View High School in Arden Hills, Minnesota, where he teaches over 250 students in 6 different ensembles. In 2022, he was appointed as the conductor for the Repertory Orchestra with Minnesota Youth Symphonies. Shogren has been a guest clinician and conductor for several national and state level festivals and conferences. In 2019, he was the recipient of The Master Teacher: School Orchestra Award from MNSOTA. He received a Bachelor of Music in Cello Performance degree and a Bachelor of Music in Music Education degree from the University of Minnesota–Twin Cities and a Master of Music–Conducting Specialization degree from Colorado State University.

The program included a wide variety of pieces that invited the students to explore a host of different sounds and styles. Arrangements of *March Slav* by Pytor Tchaikovsky (arr. Carrie Lane Gruselle) and *New World Symphony* (mvt IV) by Antonin Dvorak (arr. Deborah Baker Monday) gave students experience on classical masterpieces. *Lullaby to the Moon* by Brian Balmages and *Primrose Hill* by Alan Lee Silva provided lyrical pieces for students to show off their tone and phrasing. *Epic Adventures* by Kathryn Griesinger along with Lucas Shogren's own composition *The Dark Rebellion* provided intense upbeat styles for the students to enjoy.

This year's ensemble was a focused and hard-working group of students. They showed enthusiasm and work ethic even after a very long day of rehearsing. Under Lucas Shogren's direction they focused on the details in the music and watching and reacting to his conducting.

As always, we are indebted to the University of Northwestern - St. Paul for hosting us without charge, as well as to their food service who provided wonderful meals that were mindful of the allergies and sensitivities of our students.

We would also like to thank Brian Cole for his help with event coordination. Thanks to Groth Music for donating the repertoire. Thanks also to our hard-working audition judges and section coaches: Jennifer Bellefeuille, David Kozamchak, Mary Sorlie, Ed Schaeffe, Stacy Aldrich, Carolyn Liptak, Eric Graf, Daryl Carlson, Ruth Marshall and Mark Kausch.

Middle Level Honors Orchestra is an annual MNSOTA event. 7th–9th grade students submit an online audition consisting of a brief solo, required excerpt and scale. Plan on having your students apply this fall!

Congratulations to the directors whose students participated in this year's ensemble:

- Francesca Anderegg, St. Olaf College Department of Music
- Paula Anderson, New Ulm Suzuki School of Music
- Rosa Arnold, Irondale High School
- Jennifer Bellefeuille, Owatonna Middle School
- Colleen Bertsch, Parkview Center School
- Kathryn Christie, private teacher

- Max Clifford, Cannon Valley Youth Orchestra
- Rebekah Crissinger, Albert Lea High School
- Geoffrey Dean, Parnassus Preparatory School
- Madeline Eicher, Buffalo Community Middle School
- Jeff Engholm, St. John's Prep
- Daniel Ericksen, Minnetonka Middle School East
- Sarah Finn-Sommerfeld, Minnetonka High School
- Mary Flanagan, The Mankato School of Music
- Tamara Gonzalez, MacPhail Center for Music
- Michael Janning, Minnetonka Middle School West
- Aaron Janse, private teacher
- Valerie Johnson, Kennedy Secondary School
- Zane Kaiser, Justice Page Middle School
- Mark Kausch, private teacher
- Brad Lambrecht, Alexandria Area High School
- Katie Manley, White Bear Lake Area High School
- Ruth Marshall, private teacher
- Carlin Mayhew, South Junior High
- Wes Myers, Marshall Public Schools
- Thomas O'Keefe, Northfield High School
- Samson Obel, private teacher
- Heather Olivier, Northfield Middle School
- Craig Peterson, Fergus Falls Public Schools
- Gene Schott, Austin High School
- Lucas Shogren, Mounds View High School
- Michelle Suter, Willmar Middle School
- Allison Swiggum, Hopkins High School
- KC Thompson, Moorhead High School

Daniel Ericksen has been teaching middle school orchestra in the Minnetonka Public Schools for 10 years. With Brian Cole, he was the coordinator for MNSOTA's 2024 Middle Level All-State Orchestra. He received his Bachelor's Degree in Music Education at Indiana University as well as a Master's Degree in Differentiated Instruction from Concordia St Paul. Daniel is also the Associate Principal Cellist of the Bloomington Symphony Orchestra. He serves as Member-at-Large on MNSOTA's Board. †

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
December 15 is the next deadline!

2025 Middle Level All-State Orchestra

February 14-15, 2025

Friday, February 14, 2025 - Rehearsals at the University of Northwestern – St. Paul

Saturday, February 15, 2025 - 11:30 A.M. performance at the Minnesota Music Educators Association Midwinter Clinic (Ballroom)

Apply online at <https://app.GetAcceptd.com/MNSOTA>

1. Friday Oct 11, 2024 — GetAcceptd Opens

a. Complete application b. Submit payment c. Upload audio files

2. 9:00 PM CST Friday November 8, 2024 — GetAcceptd Closes

This deadline is firm with no exceptions!

Please visit www.MNSOTA.org for additional information and event rules/regulations.

Conductor

Angelique Rowell is a dedicated music educator and accomplished violist who brings her love for orchestral music to the next generation of musicians. As the Orchestra Director at Eden Prairie High School in Minnesota, she inspires over 200 students across five orchestras, fostering their musical growth and passion.

Angelique's musical journey is anchored in classical training, with a Bachelor of Music in Viola Performance from Lawrence Conservatory of Music and a Master of Music in the same field from the University of Washington. Her professional career showcases her expertise, having held orchestra positions including Principal and Assistant Principal Violist with several Seattle-area symphonies, and Associate Principal Violist with the South Dakota Symphony. Angelique's artistic range shines through her collaborations with diverse musical groups, spanning from the contemporary Seattle New Music Ensemble to the rock-orchestral fusion of the Trans-Siberian Orchestra.



2025 Middle Level All-State Orchestra Conductor - Angelique Rowell

Recognizing the transformative power of music education, Angelique pursued a Teaching License in Music Education from the University of Minnesota. Her commitment to nurturing young talent extends beyond the classroom, as she serves as a private instructor, clinician, and youth symphony coach. Driven by her desire to make orchestral music more accessible, Angelique founded the West Metro String Orchestra. This ensemble provides a free

opportunity for students to participate in the orchestra experience who might not otherwise have the chance to do so, broadening the reach of classical music and inspiring new listeners.

When not immersed in the world of music, Angelique cherishes outdoor adventures with her family, balancing her artistic pursuits with a love for nature.

Eligibility

All students must be string players in grades 7 through 9 during the 2024-2025 school year.

A student participating in the Middle Level All-State Orchestra must be enrolled in their school orchestra, if one exists. They must be enrolled in and a member in good standing from the time of the audition through the following February rehearsals and performance in order to be eligible for participation in the ensemble.

Participation is limited to those students whose sponsoring teacher is a current member in good standing of both MNSOTA/ASTA and MMEA/NAfME at the time of the student's audition and continues to be a member of both MNSOTA and MMEA through the February rehearsal and performance period. The sponsoring teacher must be currently teaching the student at the time of the student's audition, and must continue as a teacher for that student through the February rehearsal and performance period. Examples of sponsoring teachers are school ensemble directors, studio teachers/instructors for private lessons, and individuals conducting a community youth ensemble.

General Information

Student members will be chosen by score, with ties going to students in rural areas with fewer opportunities than those in the metro area.

Teachers and students will receive practice copies of music by email. Students will receive performance parts at the first rehearsal.

All chosen students must attend all scheduled rehearsals and activities. A participation fee of \$80.00 per student will cover all

expenses of the rehearsals and performance including the cost of two meals.

Guardians will be responsible for transportation, lodging and supervision when the students are not in rehearsal or performance.

Online Audition Process

Upload the student's recording files, payment and contact information.

- Either the student/guardian OR the sponsoring teacher/director can complete the application. MNSOTA recommends that an adult take this responsibility.

How to check on the status of your application:

- If the Status is Continue some application information, upload files, or payment are still incomplete.
- If the Status is Submitted, all applications materials are complete.

If your student is accepted into the MLA0 there is one final step: All emails entered into the GetAcceptd application will receive a link for the student's school principal (or homeschool equivalent) to fill out. The principal's digital signature is required for all students participating in the event. The principal will only sign if the student is in good standing with the school. No student will be allowed to attend the event if their principal's digital signature is missing.

ALL OF THE APPLICATION INFORMATION, MUST BE RECEIVED BY 9:00 P.M., FRIDAY, NOVEMBER 8th, 2024. Incomplete or late entries will not be considered.

Audition and Upload Requirements

1. Students/guardians OR sponsoring teachers/directors may complete the necessary application information and upload the audition files using the Acceptd website: <https://app.GetAcceptd.com/MNSOTA>. All personal information entered into GetAcceptd will be hidden from the judges to allow for anonymous judging.
2. Each student must upload four separate audio files into his/her Acceptd user profile. Each file should be named according to the title of the submission (e.g. "G major scale" or "Vivaldi Concerto"). Please do not include any information that could identify the applicant in file names.
3. All scales are to be played two octaves ascending and descend-

ing at $\text{♩} = 80$ (or faster) with the rhythm



A metronome must *not* be used during recording. Audition scores will be docked points for incorrect rhythm or slow tempo of scales.

- a. File 1 – The specified major scale for their instrument, recorded *without* metronome and with the tempo and rhythm above.
Violin: D Major
Viola: G Major
Cello: G Major
Bass: G Major
- b. File 2 – The specified minor scale for their instrument, recorded without metronome and with the tempo and rhythm above.
Violin: E Melodic Minor
Viola: A Melodic Minor
Cello: A Melodic Minor
Bass: E Melodic Minor
- c. File 3 – The specified excerpt for their instrument, recorded without accompaniment.
Violin: Third movement of *Concerto in A Minor* by Vivaldi (Suzuki, Vol. 4), beginning to beat 1 of measure 50
Viola: First movement of *Concerto No. 5* by F. Seitz (Suzuki, Vol. 4), first 45 measures, not counting piano intro
Cello: *La Cinquantaine* (Suzuki, Vol. 3), measures 17–40
Bass: *Introduction and Dance* by L. Scarmolin (Ludwig), measures 9–51
- d. File 4 – A short piece, excerpt or etude of their own choosing not to exceed 2 minutes in length. This selection must be recorded without accompaniment, and must be of equivalent or greater difficulty to the required piece. Pop tunes and novelty pieces are not appropriate. Please indicate the title of your choice piece in the file name using composer last name and piece title.

For event questions, contact Daniel Ericksen HonorsOrchestra@mnsota.org.

For GetAcceptd questions, contact <https://app.getacceptd.com/MNSOTA>. ☛

Member Updates

MNSOTA members are ASTA members who live in Minnesota.
ASTA keeps complete contact information for all members at astastrings.org.
Join or renew at <https://www.astastrings.org/site/membership>.

Welcome New and Renewing Members!

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Scott Kosloski, Saint Louis Park, Percussion
Brianna Palm, Coon Rapids, Cello
Janice Land, Woodbury
Larysa Giesen, Waconia, Violin, Viola, Studio Teacher
Itasca Orchestra & Strings Program, Grand Rapids

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 President, Becky Plachy Resch,
president@mnsota.org

Mary West Solo Competition

Apply on-line at www.MNSOTA.org — Deadline October 29, 2024

November 16, 12:00–6:00 P.M. — First & Second Rounds — Bethel University

November 17, 7:00 P.M. — Winners Recital — Lloyd Ultan Recital Hall, UMN School of Music

Feb 9, 2025 — Grand Prize Concerto Performance with the Bloomington (MN) Symphony

Eligibility

The Mary West Solo Competition is held annually each fall for students of the violin, viola, cello, bass, harp and classical guitar. Participants must be MNSOTA members or students of MNSOTA members. Participants must live or study in Minnesota.

Students are eligible to win the Givens Violins Grand Prize once in their career. Students are eligible to win the Division Prizes once in each age category. Previous prize winners are always welcome to participate for consideration for the Winners Recital.

Age and Requirements

Elementary Division (age 11 and under) and Intermediate Division (age 12–14) students prepare one piece. Junior Division

(age 15–18) and Senior Division (age 19–25) students prepare two pieces in contrasting styles by different composers. (*Determine your student's age as of January 1, 2025.* Students whose birthday is on January 1 should compete in the younger category.)

Students are required to play all works by memory, except Classical, Romantic or Modern sonatas.

Students must prepare complete works or complete single movements; cuts are encouraged in piano tutti sections. Because the audition time may be shorter than the entire length of the piece(s), teachers should suggest appropriate cuts for the audition presentation. However, students are expected to prepare the entire piece(s), and the judges may ask for any portion

outside of the cuts the teacher suggests.

Elementary and Intermediate level students are scheduled in 6-minute audition slots to play a maximum of 4 minutes of music from one piece. Junior and Senior level students are scheduled in 10-minute audition slots to play a maximum of 8 minutes of music from two contrasting pieces. There is no penalty for short pieces that take less than the maximum time. The competition timer will ensure no-one goes over the maximum time by starting timing when the audition performance begins, and stopping students at the conclusion of their 4 or 8 minute time limit. Tuning to the piano prior to a performance is not included in the playing time limits, but any transition time needed between the two pieces for Junior

Mary West 1909-2007

In her 50 years of violin teaching, Mary West set consistently high standards. She said she didn't expect all her students to become professional violinists; she just expected them to play like professionals. And they did. Mary West's students routinely won competitions at all levels. They entered prestigious music schools and universities and now have performing and teaching careers, from local freelancers to orchestras as far away as Australia. And those who have careers outside music still value the life skills Mary taught them — anything is possible if you practice, practice, practice.

Mary's genius was her knowledge of student personalities that allowed her to challenge without overwhelming, her strategies for helping students practice effectively, and her mastery at finding the technical problem that was preventing the student from playing better.



© Kris Drake Photography

After study at the Kansas City Conservatory and The Juilliard School, Mary had a successful performing and touring

career on the east coast in the 1930s. Mary and her sister Virginia performed for President Roosevelt in the White House in 1938. Mary was emeritus Professor of Violin at the University of Minnesota and taught at MacPhail Center for Music for over 30 years. She received the Outstanding Teacher of the Year Award from the Schubert Club, the Special Service Award from MacPhail, and the Master Teacher Award from MN ASTA. In 2006, ASTA presented Mary with the Marvin J. Rabin Community Service Award for her "significant contribution to the community through teaching and leadership."

MNSOTA is proud to name our state Solo Competition in Mary West's honor.

and Senior level students is counted, as the clock only stops at the end of the maximum allotted playing time. The remaining two minutes of each audition slot allows for passing time between students, tuning of the next student, and for judges to finalize their feedback in written comments.

Accompanists

Students must provide their own accompanist. To aid the flow of the competition we request that accompanists schedule themselves for no more than 3 hours of music. Please contact your chosen accompanist early — before they commit to other students.

MNSOTA recognizes that e-editions of accompaniment parts are becoming more commonplace. However, ASTA has advised MNSOTA that we should follow the copyright laws strictly. As it is awkward to confirm that an e-part is legally published, MNSOTA recommends that accompanists work from traditionally published editions.

Accompanists will not perform at the Second Round. **Students should ensure that their accompanist will be available to perform with them at the Winners Recital, if they are selected.**

Application and Deadline

Register on-line at www.MNSOTA.org. Registration deadline is October 29.

Information you will need to register:

- personal information including email
- expiration date of teacher's ASTA membership; teacher's email
- complete program information for your piece(s)
- length of piece(s)
- whether your piece is a concerto / concert piece suitable for performing with the Bloomington Symphony
- accompanist's name & email
- your brief (100 word) bio to be used in the program if you are selected for the Winners Recital
- your credit-card payment (\$70 Senior and Junior; \$55 Intermediate and Elementary)

Incomplete applications will be returned without consideration; email is required.

Scheduling and Second Round

Please plan on being available for the entire afternoon of the competition: 12:00–4:30 P.M. for the First Round, and 4:30–6:00

P.M. Second Round if you are playing a concerto/concert piece suitable for performance as a solo with the Bloomington Symphony.

The purpose of the First Round of judging is to choose 1–3 performers from each age group to perform in the Winners Recital. The First Round will be held in several rooms early in the afternoon. Because judges must hear students in the same age group in a block, we can accommodate special scheduling requests only within that block. If you have any special scheduling requests, you must indicate that on the application form. Scheduling will be adjusted to give accompanists playing for many students a sensible schedule, especially if they need to switch rooms for different age groups. If it makes sense, younger age groups will be earlier in the afternoon, as they are less likely to be involved with the Second Round for consideration for the Givens Violins Grand Prize.

Please bring a legally published copy (not a photocopy) of your music for the judges. If you are using a printout of downloaded music (e.g. from IMSLP.org or an e-purchase) you should include verification that the download is legally published (e.g. a screen shot of the IMSLP window that verifies your piece is public domain in the U.S. or a verification of your e-purchase). While there is no penalty for not having music for the judge, it is a common courtesy that we want to encourage.

The music you give the judges should have all your cuts clearly marked, e.g. with post-its for start/stop and paperclips to facilitate page turns for the judges. When you enter the audition room, have your music open for the judges, with the first piece on top if you are playing two pieces.

The purpose of the Second Round of judging is to choose the Claire Givens Grand Prize winner from students in all age categories who present a concerto/concert piece suitable for performance with the Bloomington Symphony. Students selected for the Second Round will be asked to play their concerto/concert piece (without accompanist) at around 4:30–6:00 for the full panel of judges. These call-backs will be announced soon after the end of the First Round, when the judges have made a thoughtful decision. Students should be prepared to play their entire piece, or a maximum of 8 minutes of music in a 10-minute Second Round slot. If the piece is over 8 minutes, the judges have the option of requesting a specific section for you to play.

We regret that it is a long day for students involved in the Second Round. We appreciate good humor from parents and students to help make the day go smoothly for everyone. If you are playing a concerto/concert piece and are assigned an early First Round time, please plan on filling the time until the Second Round is announced. Bring a book or your homework; go to nearby restaurants.

Winners Recital

Students chosen for the Winners Recital should represent all age groups competing. **Students can be invited to play on the Winners Recital even if they are not involved in the Second Round.**

Notification

Students selected for the Winners Recital and the Givens Violins Grand Prize Winner will be announced in person at the end of the Second Round of judging. In addition, all entrants will receive an email on the evening of the competition with the list of prize-winners and performers on the Winners Recital. Students in the Junior and Senior Divisions selected for the Winners Recital will be told which of their 2 pieces they should play; the Grand Prize Winner will perform their concerto at the Winners Recital. *Please add competition coordinator Daniel Keeler SoloCompetition@mnsota.org to your address book to ensure that you receive all competition communications.* All entrants and their teachers will receive an email a few days after the competition containing their comment sheets.

Prizes

Prizes for the Mary West competition are:

- *\$350 cash prize from Claire Givens Violins, Inc.* and a *concerto performance with the Bloomington (MN) Symphony* — awarded to one over-all winner. (Rehearsals with the Bloomington Symphony will be on February 2 (evening) and February 8 (afternoon); performance February 9, 2025, 3:00 P.M.)

- *Division Prizes from Claire Givens Violins, Inc* — three gift certificates of \$100 each to be awarded to winners in different age groups

- *Performance Awards* — performance on the Winners Recital awarded to 8–10 contestants selected from all divisions

For more information about the Mary West Solo Competition, contact Daniel Keeler, SoloCompetition@mnsota.org. ☞

Mary West Solo Competition

Apply on-line at www.MNSOTA.org

Application Deadline October 29, 2024

Competition November 16, 2024, noon–6:00 p.m.

Winners Recital November 17, 2024, 7:00 p.m.

Concerto Performance February 9, 2025, 3:00 p.m.

(concerto rehearsals February 2 and 8, 2025)

PRIZES! PRIZES! PRIZES!

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awarded to one over-all winner:
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and

a **concerto performance** with the Bloomington MN Symphony

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Nov 16, 12:00-6:00

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Clauson Center**

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Parking information

<https://www.bethel.edu/about/maps-directions/>

Winners Recital

Nov 17, 7:00 P.M.

free admission

**Lloyd Ultan Recital Hall,
UMN School of Music**

**Ferguson Hall, 2106 4th St.
South, Minneapolis**

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Event Cancellation/Refund Policy

Since events cannot be rescheduled, MNSOTA is committed to holding all events as planned and will cancel an event only in cases of a safety emergency (e.g. road conditions/weather), based on state advisories. If an event is cancelled, at the discretion of the board, a partial refund of participant fees may be considered after expenses have been paid.

MIDDLE LEVEL REGIONAL FESTIVAL 2024

by Dan Mollick

Congratulations to everyone on a successful Middle Level Festival last spring! We had 28 orchestras from around the state participate. Dan Mollick coordinated the Festival this year.

A huge thank you goes to our site hosts for all the extra work they put in to provide a wonderful and welcoming venue for orchestras to listen, learn and perform:

- Minnetonka High School: Dan Ericksen, Michael Janning and Sarah Finn-Sommerfeld
- College of Saint Benedict: Andrew Towsey-Grishaw
- Irondale High School: Rosa Glade Arnold

Thanks go to judges Emily Heuschele and Gary Wolfman and to clinicians Jim Bartsch, Laura Hebert, Pat Kelly, Mary Sorlie and Andrew Towsey-Grishaw for their comments and insight.

We would also like to thank the staff and musicians of the Minnesota Orchestra for hosting the Middle Level Festival Honors Concert at Orchestra Hall in downtown Minneapolis. A special thank you goes to staff members Sarah Flake and Jessica Lowry who worked to make sure the daytime activities and evening performance ran smoothly. Congratulations to the orchestras who qualified and performed in the Honors Concert at Orchestra Hall on Monday, April 15:

- Buffalo High School Repertory Orchestra, Kristine Wiese
- Chippewa Middle School 8th Grade Orchestra, Brian Larson
- Minnetonka High School String Orchestra, Sarah Finn-Sommerfeld
- Minnetonka Philharmonic, Dan Ericksen
- Moorhead Middle School 9th Grade Orchestra, Brian Cole and Josh Biles

- Oak-Land Middle School 8th Grade Orchestra, Julie Vanderstappen
- Owatonna Middle School 8th Grade Orchestra, Jennifer Bellefeuille
- Ordean East Middle School Advanced Orchestra, Laura Kimmes

We hope that if you haven't participated in the Festival before, you will consider bringing your students to this fun and educational event! In addition to a performance, students listen to other orchestras perform and work with a guest clinician. You can choose to play for a score or just play for comments. We look forward to another successful event in 2025!

Dan Mollick has taught orchestra in Minneapolis, Bloomington, Manhattan Beach (California), Minnetonka, and Edina. He is the Concertino West conductor and Community Engagement Liaison for the Greater Twin Cities Youth Symphonies. †

Middle Level Regional Festival 2025

- * Three sites anticipated (two in the metro and one in greater-Minnesota).
- * Includes a performance, written and recorded comments by judges, working with a clinician, and listening to other participating orchestras.
- * You can choose to perform for a score or for comments only.

Registration will open in October — fee \$200 per ensemble

Middle Level Festival Honors Concert

Monday, April 7, 2025 at Orchestra Hall in Minneapolis

Qualifying orchestras participating in the Regional Festival will be invited to perform.

Please visit www.MNSOTA.org for additional information and event rules/regulations.

ECLECTIC STRINGS DAY 2024

by Levi Comstock

What does it take to get young musicians to really jam? To play straight from the heart, with freedom and attitude? To improvise, harmonize, and groove without second-guessing themselves?

As a musician and an educator, I chase that vibe the way storm chasers follow twisters: fascinated, mystified, awed, but never quite able to pin it down. It takes a group momentum to make people feel safe to take risks. It takes the right balance of structure and freedom, guidance and encouragement, seeing and doing.

For a lot of folks, it takes an event like Eclectic Strings Day. For the last twelve years (COVID excluded), students like yours, absolute beginners through All-State level high schoolers have gathered annually to learn from creative musicians of all different styles, from jazz to old-time, pop

to Celtic, learning everything from funk grooves to middle eastern Taqsim. In one



25 students had a fun & exciting time at Eclectic Strings Day, April 13 at Champlin High School

action-packed day, students are exposed to new skills and sounds, and learn how to jam together. A kid you never thought would voluntarily play by themselves will raise their hand to take their first improv solo in front of a bunch of strangers. Kids who complain about all the repetition in the cello part find themselves bopping and grooving as they vamp a progression over and over, feeling the waves as their friends trade bars.

This April, we gathered at Champlin

Park High School with clinicians Ernest Bisong, Greg Byers, and myself (Levi Comstock). Students rocked out to tunes like *C Jam Blues*, *Sweet Home Alabama*, and *We Will Rock You*. They got to try out electric instruments and eat pizza together.

Past clinicians have included Randy Sabien (original founder of Eclectic Strings Day), Matt Turner, Deana Bistodeau, and Cristina Seaborn (a long-time coordinator of the event). The MNSOTA board has graciously supported this event in recent years, and our hope is to see it continue to grow. We hope you can join us for the next one!

Levi Comstock teaches orchestra at Champlin Park HS. He graduated from St. Olaf College and received his Masters in Differentiated Instruction from Concordia University. †

ECLECTIC STRINGS DAY HISTORY

by Cristina Seaborn

I have been organizing Eclectic Strings Day for quite a few years, which has included many great clinicians: Randy Sabien, Matt Turner, Deana Bistodeau, Greg Byers, Ernest Bisong, Levi Comstock, and myself. Graciously, Levi Comstock has accepted a position on the MNSOTA board as the new Eclectic Styles Chair and he will be the new organizer for Eclectic Strings Day starting in 2025.

Each year we have had between 30-50 students join together for morning classes, lunch, and a jam session concert. A fun part of the middle of the day has been the electric instrument petting zoo, where students

get to try out electric instruments, mandolin, ukulele, banjo, and even a 5-string violin or cello.

Our clinicians have been innovative, with Matt Turner suggesting students improvise making the sound of a rainforest, the ocean, or a storm; Randy Sabine gives the students ample time to improvise so that they start to feel comfortable with exploring; Deana Bistodeau taught the Nashville number system; Greg Byers brought in a pop tune by Stevie Wonder and shared a music app he had created; Ernest Bisong teaches jazz and one year taught an African piece with a cool rhythm; Levi Comstock

helps students at all levels to have fun learning to play by ear and to improvise, while I brought in music from the folk music traditions of Scandinavia, Ireland, and the U.S.

Students enjoy the day and have learned in a different way, by ear instead of by reading. Our hope is that a new world of music is opened up to the students.

Expert at fiddling and jazz improvisation, Cristina Seaborn holds a Bachelor of Music Degree in jazz violin performance from Berklee College of Music in Boston, and a Masters in Conducting for Orchestra from St. Cloud State University. †

Join us April 2025 for the next Eclectic Strings Day!

More info at mnsota.org

SOMETHING NEW IN THE SOUTH

by Jacob Crosby

On April 13th, 2024, something new was happening in Southern Minnesota. On this unassuming Saturday, Albert Lea High School was full of activity. From 8:00 in the morning until 4:00 in the afternoon, middle school orchestra students from southern Minnesota and northern Iowa were seen in auditions, sectionals, and rehearsals, preparing for an Honors Orchestra Concert. Why all the excitement? This was the first-ever offering of a Southeast Minnesota Honors Orchestra event to take place during the school year. We call it the “Excel Honors Orchestra.”

Eight different schools participated, plus a handful of private students from MacPhail Center for music in Austin, MN. In total, 78 Students from grades 6 through 8 were seen hard at work around the Music Department, practicing large ensemble music and working with instrumental coaches made up of string teachers from around southern Minnesota. At 3:00, a concert was given featuring arrangements of *The Ash Grove*, *Orpheus in the Underworld*, *Beethoven 5: Finale*, *Jupiter*, *Chorale from the Planets*, and a piece by Richard Meyer, called *G-Force*. Given the cheers and congratulations from parents and music teachers in the audience, it’s safe to say the day was a success, and made a great impact in

the lives of these students and their families.

The idea for this “Honors Orchestra” has been long in coming. Indeed, the Southeast Minnesota Band Directors have had a Middle-Level Honor Band for the past 26 years. Southeast Minnesota is home to many small, rural communities. For 26 years, the Southeast Minnesota Middle-Level Honor Band has operated each year with participation from an average of 20 small school districts from all over southern Minnesota. The success of the Honor Band was a big factor in the creation of an Honors Orchestra.

Another contributing factor for us in the Southeast has been the renewed interest in participation in Solo/Ensemble festivals. Since 2021—the year when many school districts across Minnesota were in a Hybrid online/in-person schedule—Austin and Owatonna have collaborated on a combined Solo/Ensemble festival for middle school students. For these past three years Austin (and eventually Owatonna) orchestra students, grades 6–8 have shared a Solo/Ensemble festival with the MBDA Mid-level Solo/Ensemble Festival in Owatonna Middle School. Ever since the effects of Covid have been receding, and programs have been attempting to return to activities previously held before Covid, the timing

seemed right to start something new.

The idea for this Excel Honors Orchestra was a shared dream held by orchestra directors and private teachers in southeast Minnesota. In fact, the Board of Directors for the Excel Orchestra is made up of current and former string orchestra teachers, and music appreciators from the area. The Board organized over the summer of 2023 to begin discussing how the Festival would be run, what the date/timing should be, and how wide a net to cast in the surrounding area to find interest. As the school year began in September, the Board sent letters to schools all over Southern Minnesota inviting them to nominate students for a brand-new Honors Orchestra, which was set to take place in April of 2024.

One of the challenges of finding interest is the fact that small schools don’t always contain all three music offerings—band, orchestra and choir. In fact, several small rural school districts only offer one of the three. A sad fact that we must recognize is that, if a school district only offers two music choices, it is often orchestra that is left out. For example, in Mower County (bordering Albert Lea/Freeborn County on the east), there are five school districts. Of those five school districts, only Austin, MN offers 5-12 orchestra, whereas all five Mower County school districts offer band programs. That means when the Excel Orchestra Board considered how far we should send letters to schools, we had to acknowledge the fact that we would simply have fewer schools who could participate than the band program, in a similar radius.

Nevertheless, by the close of the year, we had 8 school districts interested, plus private teachers in the area who wanted to nominate students for the event. We ended up with nearly 90 nominations to work through. As a result, the Excel Orchestra Board moved forward with the plans for our first all-day Honors Orchestra Festival.

With the help of our band colleagues, we structured our day-schedule to include three periods of large group rehearsal, one period of sectional work, a performance from a local string trio, and of course, lunchtime and snack time. The conductor for the first Excel Honors Orchestra was Mark Gitch, orchestra teacher at Wayzata High School. Students were given seating

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based on feedback from their directors. However, like All-State and Big 9 Music Festivals, the first 8 students in every section were given the opportunity to audition for their seats.

When the day was over, the Excel Board heard many compliments. Parents loved having the opportunity to send their students to a rigorous Honors Orchestra festival. Students loved preparing difficult repertoire and working with other string teachers (and our wonderful guest conductor) and talented students. Mark Gitch commented that the music seemed like it was at just the right level for the students, and was able to get all five of the selections up to performance standards in just three and a half hours. All in all, the day was a smashing success, and deeply impactful to everyone involved. As you may expect, the Excel Board is already making plans for the second annual Southeast Minnesota Excel Honors Orchestra.

The 2nd Annual Excel Honors Orchestra Festival will be held on April 5th, 2025, at Albert Lea High School. We hope to find more interested Southeast MN schools to join us for the day. Contact Jacob Crosby jacob.crosby@austin.k12.mn.us for more info.

Jacob Crosby serves on the EXCEL Orchestra Board. He graduated from the University of Northwestern-St. Paul in 2016 where he received a degree in Music Education and a degree in Music Composition. He worked for three years in Robbinsdale School District before moving to his hometown of Austin MN to teach 7th and 8th Grade Orchestra. In addition, Jacob teaches individual viola and violin lessons both privately and for MacPhail Center for Music in Austin. Jacob joins the MNSOTA Board as President-Elect in the fall of 2024. †

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DEMYSTIFYING THE SIGHT-READING PROCESS by Timothy Kaiser – University of Arizona Tucson

Do daily sight-reading, as if you are preparing for a sightreading contest where there are penalties for chit-chat (students sharing difficulties). There should be “One voice in the room”—only the director talks. “Heads move vertically”—students look at the music or the director—not at a friend.

Before the first play-through, scan and finger practice—students look at music and finger silently. High school can do this, but younger students need to be taught how. Students need to “bring something” to the music. The director can offer explanation if the music warrants it. E.g. notice key changes / meter changes. The director can snap for meter. Students should continue to do finger practice throughout the direc-

tor explanation—so students are reacting to what the director says. E.g. explain title, composer—maybe they’ve seen something like this before.

When ready for the first play-through, students should have now finger practiced at least twice through the entire piece. Say “We’re not sight reading any more. We’ve already been through all the things.”

Do a silent count off—a silent full bar prep by director to reinforce the tempo.

Perform confidently—remind students that they know the techniques the piece needs.

From a presentation at the SDMEA workshop in 2020. †

Orchestra Teaching Jobs in Minnesota

Our MNSOTA.org website Resources tab keeps a list of job postings via ASTA and job postings via Google.

Visit often to find the most up-to-date listings!

Job postings via Google at press time:

- Musical Orchestra Director: Spring Lake Park High School, Spring Lake Park, MN
- Full time: Orchestra Teacher: Hastings High School and Hastings Middle School, Hastings, MN
- Part time: High School Teacher—Orchestra: Alexandria Schools, Alexandria, MN
- Full time, tenure track: Assistant professor of Music: Education: University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN
- Full time: Band, Orchestra Teacher: Eagle Ridge Academy Charter School, Minnetonka, MN
- Full time: Adjunct Instructors - Music: St. Cloud State University, St. Cloud, MN
- Full time: Music Lesson Instructor: Wayzata Schools, Wayzata, MN

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Fiddle Column and Chamber Music writers needed

Currently no-one is overseeing the Fiddle Column or Chamber Music Column of this magazine on a regular basis. The Fiddle Column can be anything to do with playing / teaching eclectic styles. The Chamber Music Column can be anything to do with playing / teaching chamber music.

If you are interested in contributing, please contact Faith Farr StringNotes@mnsota.org. *String Notes* is published 3 times a year. Submission windows are November 15 – December 15, February 15 – March 15, July 15 – August 15.

WHAT DOES QUALITY SCHOOL MUSIC LOOK LIKE?

Music supports: Whole Learners — Whole Communities — Whole-Life Benefits

Every child can reap the benefits of music when communities and schools support a complete music learning framework.

Who

- Every student participates in and has access to music classes.
- Music classes are led by teachers specialized and licensed in music education.
- Community musicians and ensembles enhance student learning through in-school performances and coaching, school trips to educational concerts, and teaching artists.

What

- Music instruction each year is based on the prior year's learning.
- A variety of music classes meet students' educational needs and interests.

When

- Music is taught from kindergarten to graduation, throughout the year.
- Music is offered during the school day, when all students can participate.
- Music opportunities outside of the school day through community organizations, schools and arts

organizations enrich a child's life and music learning.

Where

- Music classrooms are designed to meet the acoustical, space, storage, and movement needs specific to music learning.
- Instruments, music technology, and supplies are available and maintained so every student can actively participate in music-making.
- The "textbook" for the music class – the music library – is regularly updated.

Why

- Music provides a way for students to express themselves and explore creativity.
- Music learning supports brain development, student engagement in schools, academic achievement, and the skills sought after in workplaces of teamwork, communication, and problem-solving.

Excerpted from "Music Makes Us Whole" 2017. Contact your local school principal or superintendent and ask how music is doing in your school district.

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