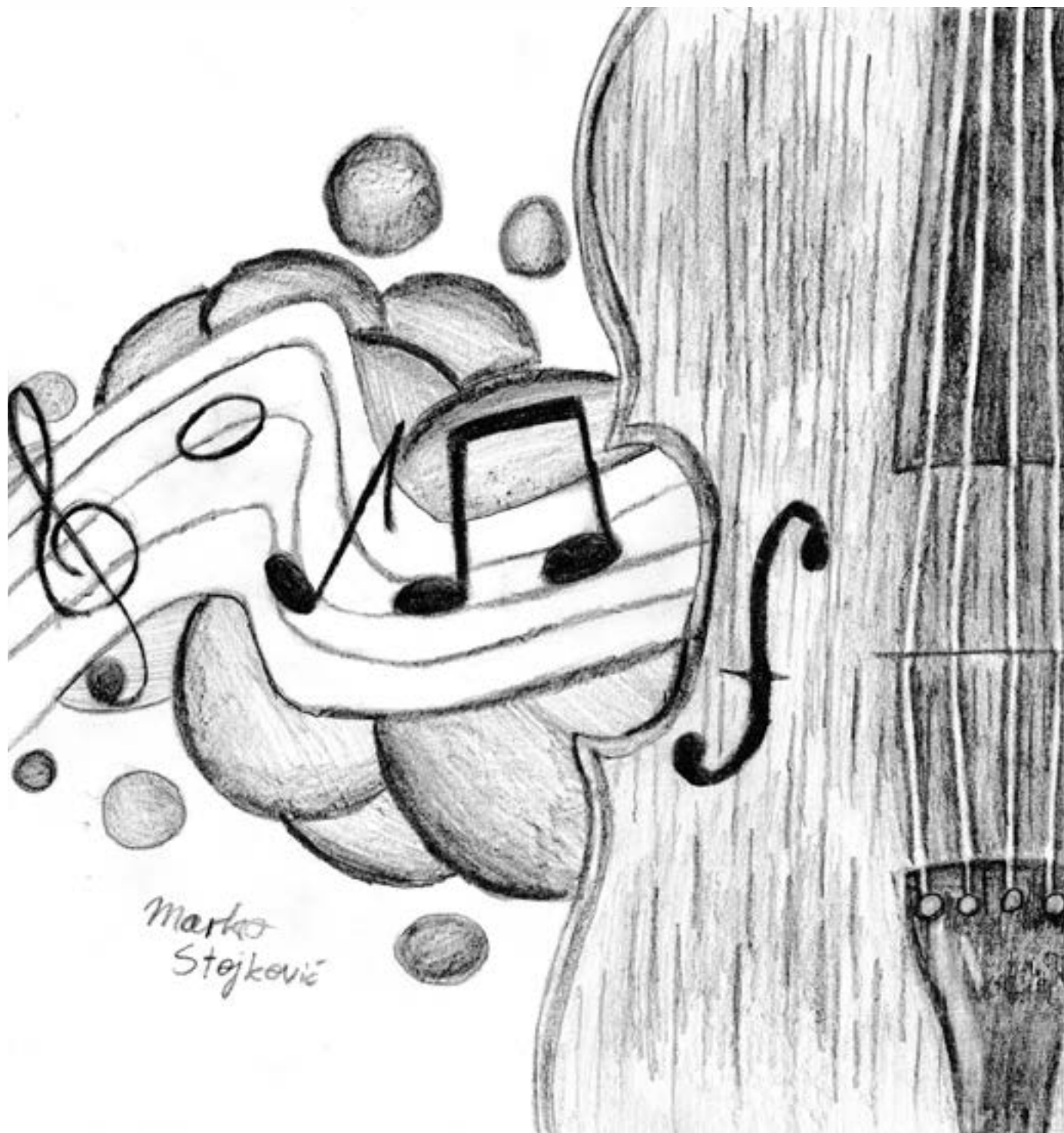


String Notes

Vol. 26, No. 2

Winter 2023–2024

The Journal of the Minnesota String and Orchestra Teachers Association



Dates and Deadlines

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

January — Nominations due for MNSOTA Board Elections

February 17 — Middle Level All-State Orchestra

Performance at MMEA Clinic; info at <https://mmea.org>

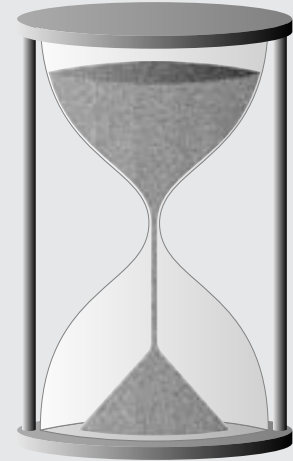
March/April — Middle Level Regional Festival

Tier 1 — March 4 - Minnetonka High School; March 5 - College of St. Benedict; March 27 - Irondale High School

State Festival Honors Concert — April 15, Orchestra Hall, Minneapolis

April 13, 2024 — Eclectic Strings Day

8:30 A.M.–3:00 P.M. — Champlin Park High School
Registration now open.



Find information for all events at www.MNSOTA.org



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String Notes

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 the Minnesota String
 and Orchestra
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 the Minnesota Chapter
 of *ASTA*

Recipient of the *ASTA*
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 2005, 2007, ... 2015, 2017

Recipient of the *ASTA*
Best Chapter Award
 2006

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On the cover...

Cover artist Marko Stojkovic is a 9th grader at Roseville Area High School. He studies viola with his father, Dragan Stojkovic, and is in the GTCYS Symphony Orchestra. Marko also plays the piano and enjoys drawing and tennis.



From the President

MNSOTA Post-Pandemic

While winter is now upon us, the school year is in full swing and our MNSOTA calendar is heating up. Events like the Middle Level Regional Orchestra Festival, Middle Level All-

State Orchestra, and Eclectic Strings Day will be here before we know it! We hope you have had an opportunity to check out and use our revitalized website and digital platform. Our new webmaster, KC Thompson, did tremendous work over the summer to bring a more modern, streamlined, and user-friendly experience to our membership.

Please continue to support our organization by participating in events, encouraging non-member colleagues to join, and consider taking a more “active” role in our ASTA chapter through volunteering on the board or helping out with one of our

many events. The strength of our chapter has always been the passion and drive of our membership; as we continue to find our way through our post-pandemic “new normal,” we are relying on the next generation of Minnesota string teachers to uphold our tradition as one of the most active and ambitious ASTA chapters in the nation. Happy New Year to all, and best of luck in your studios, classrooms, and performances this winter and spring. Keep doing the important work that you do!

Christopher Jannings

String Notes Pedagogy Archive

Pedagogy articles from *String Notes* since 1998 are available to MNSOTA members and article authors. We are revamping how to access these articles, and although direct access is not available at present, please contact StringNotes@mnsota.org for instructions on indirect access.

Once signed in you can simply scroll through the list, organized by issue, including a thumbnail of our wonderful original cover art for each issue. Or use your browser to search for title, topic, author or any other search term you would like. Shortly after each new paper issue of the magazine is mailed, the PDF of the pedagogy articles will be uploaded to the webpage.

From the Editor

With this issue of *String Notes*, I'm delighted to welcome Wes Myers as our new Orchestra Editor. Wes teaches 4th–12th grade orchestra and high school beginning guitar in Marshall. In addition, he is the assistant director for marching band, jazz band, and directs the pit orchestra for the fall musical. I hope you enjoy his article!

This winter issue features info for a few summer camps that have early registration deadlines. Our spring issue will have the traditional list of all the string camps in our 5-state area that I find out about. Please send me info about camps near you by March 15.

As MNSOTA has decided to move to a larger digital presence, the list of summer camps is growing on our MNSOTA.org website. Click on the Connect tab to find the list. Thanks go to our webmaster KC Thompson for developing the new format for the list. We hope the clickable links will be convenient for you. If you have suggestions for improvement, please let us know.

As I mentioned in my fall *From the Editor*, MNSOTA is moving towards a digital-only presence, and has long-term plans to make this magazine an on-line publication instead of print. During the fall I was in touch with editors of other state newsletters who do digital-only publication. One provides a link to a flat webpage where you just keep scrolling from one topic to the next; that publication works well on both a computer and a phone. Their recent issue was 1300 words—about the length of one

and a half pages of text in this 36-page magazine. Another state creates a 2-page PDF that is sent as an attachment in an email.



Neither of these publications has anything close to the amount of material *String Notes* provides 3 times a year. I know how to create an interactive PDF that would have hot links for the URLs and provide internal links for the “continued on...” pages. But before doing that I would need to have a photo permission form; I would appreciate someone sharing what they use at their school. I realize I need to be especially sensitive about sharing pictures of students, for instance in the Mary West Solo Competition writeup.

I also need help and guidance in developing a policy about providing ads in the online version. Currently advertisers pay for the print ad and I need help developing prices for a print-plus-digital placement, leading eventually to a digital-only placement.

If you can help clarify what *String Notes* on-line would look like, please contact me. I would like to work with someone through a transition with the plan that I will retire from *String Notes* when it goes fully digital, hopefully in the fall of 2025.

Faith Farr

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Advertisers Welcome

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

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

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

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

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

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

Submissions — When & How

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

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

Address Corrections

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

2023

MNSOTA

2024

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UPPER MIDWEST STRING CAMP 1979–2022

by Faith Farr with assistance from

Mark Kausch, Paul Kosower, Mark Gitch, Nick Gaudette, Hannah Schendel and others

Early Years at Mankato State University 1979–1988

In July 1979, Mankato State University hosted the first Upper Midwest Summer String and Chamber Music Conference—a week of lectures, clinics, recitals, chamber music playing and recreation—with both undergraduate and graduate credits available—under the direction of camp founder and visionary Norman Selness. Marilyn Bos (Mankato State) and Mark Bjork (MacPhail Center) taught violin techniques, Charles Hott (Hurley College, Shreveport LA) taught viola techniques, and Camilla Heller (Macalester and Gustavus Colleges) taught cello techniques.

In July 1980, the second annual conference featured internationally known lecturer Dr. Samuel Applebaum, as well as Marilyn Bos (violin, Mankato State), Abigail Riley (viola, Bemidji State), Patrick Riley (cello, Bemidji State) and James Clute (bass, Minnesota Orchestra). In addition to technique sessions and a seminar *Organizing and Developing Orchestra Programs in the Public Schools* for teachers, there was a 3-day youth orchestra session conducted by James Berg and a chamber music seminar with Dr. Applebaum for school chamber groups.

Organized chamber music was introduced in 1982, and throughout the 1980s Shirley Thompson Santoro was the chamber music coordinator. Cellist Paul Kosower taught at the camp for at least 15 years from the early 1980s and performed a cello recital each time he taught there.

In 1986, Dr. Donald Portnoy (violin, West Virginia University) was the principal lecturer for the teacher training sessions, and the Minnesota String Task Force conducted a panel discussion on *The Ethics in Music Education*. By this time, the student component had expanded significantly to include two levels of orchestra that had sectionals as well as full rehearsals.

In 1988, Dr. Harry Dunscombe became cello professor and director of orchestras at Mankato State. For Upper Midwest's tenth anniversary that summer, Harry presented a series of lectures on basic cello techniques, conducted the adult orchestra, and provided conducting experience for adult participants. Dr. Gerald Fischbach was the guest clinician. Ed Schlueter conducted the two youth orchestras and Shirley Thomson Santoro again served as coordinator and principal coach for student chamber music.

Additional faculty acting as section leaders and coaches during the 1980s included Michael Crary, Dean Dainsberg, Jon Cooper and John Pickart. In 1993, Norman Selness received the MN ASTA Community Service Award for founding the Upper Midwest String and Chamber Music Conference.

Harry Dunscombe at Mankato State 1988–2006

Harry Dunscombe's duties at Mankato State included directing Upper Midwest and under his leadership until his retirement in 2006, the camp grew and thrived.

In 1993 Géza and Csaba Szilvay presented their *Colourstrings Method* to the

teacher attendees. Faculty for the student portion of Upper Midwest included Phil Burkhart and Mark Gitch, youth orchestras; Mary Horozaniecki and Sue Radloff, violins; Stella Anderson, viola; Paul Kosower, cello, and Karyn Quinn, bass. Faith Farr was added to the faculty to make the chamber music offerings more systematic for all student attendees; all students were placed in a chamber group and all groups performed at the final recital. A few years later, Mark Kausch, bass, made an additional chamber music enhancement with the launch of a bass ensemble which allowed student bassists, as well as interns with bass skills, to perform chamber music arranged for between three and eight basses.



Mark Kausch leads students, interns and counselors in *Bydlo* 2012

Through the mid-1990s, the teacher training component of Upper Midwest evolved from a teacher conference to an intern/mentor program under the direction of Mary Horozaniecki and Sarah Hersh. Instead of lectures and seminars for teachers, around eight college interns each year received a stipend to assist in the student technique classes and sectionals, and coach student chamber ensembles. By 2000, Upper Midwest had in place the curriculum that it sustained for decades.

Upper Midwest always accepted all students who applied. On Sunday afternoon, everyone played a placement audition consisting of a scale, a piece of their choice and some sight-reading for a faculty

Continued on page 8



Dr. David Arnott leads Chamber Orchestra rehearsal 2009.

Upper Midwest String Camp 1979–2022

Continued from page 6

member. By Sunday dinner time, faculty had consulted to place students into one of two orchestras, and the orchestra conductors were combing the music they had brought to select suitable pieces. By Sunday bedtime, faculty had placed all students into chamber groups—as many standard quartets as could be accommodated, and then other ensembles such as trios, quintets, cello choir or bass choir, according to the enrollment—and music had been chosen.

Monday morning was especially busy for the Chamber Music Coordinator: music was copied; folders were prepared. And a schedule was drawn up for rooms and coaches for the chamber music sessions that took place 2:00–4:00 each day.

On Monday morning, students began the usual morning routine: the first orchestra rehearsed 8:00–9:30 while the second orchestra had a 30-minute technique class and a 60-minute orchestra sectional. From 9:30–11:00 the second orchestra rehearsed while the first orchestra had technique class and sectional coaching. Interns observed and assisted at the technique classes and sectionals.

11:00 on Monday and Tuesday were special classes that varied each year. 11:00 on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday were chamber music master classes, coached by faculty.

The afternoon schedule for students was 1:00 orchestra rehearsal, and chamber music 2:00–4:00. For many years, the 1:00 hour for interns was shared pedagogy, where faculty presented short conference-style sessions. Later, individual mentoring took place.

During the chamber music period, each student group was coached half the time by a faculty coach, and half the time by an intern. Faculty and interns had two chamber groups each. 4:00 was recreation time for the students, and mentoring time for faculty and

interns to discuss together the chamber groups they shared.

Over the years, interns reported that coaching chamber music was a particularly valuable training opportunity. For some interns, it was their first experience with school-age students who were still developing a sense of steady pulse and rhythm, refining concepts of pitch and learning for the first time to watch, listen, signal and match strokes as chamber musicians.

Upper Midwest always included a number of performances. Monday was a student solo recital by students who had brought a fully prepared piece. Tuesday was often a faculty recital or performance by outside artists. Thursday became memorable as a Talent Show showcasing “alternative” skills of students, interns, dorm counselors and sometimes faculty. (One student played her violin while riding a unicycle on stage!) The week culminated in all students playing in a chamber music concert and an orchestra concert for family and friends.

Additional faculty who taught at Upper Midwest during the Mankato years, included Katherine Wolfe violin and viola, Karen Moon chamber music, and Jennifer Arco Bellefeuille and Gerard Jones orchestra.



Chamber music master class with Sarah Hersh 2016.

David Arnott at the College of St. Benedict 2007–2022

In 2006, Harry Dunscombe retired from Mankato State, and the University decided to stop hosting Upper Midwest. A search for a new location came up trumps when David Arnott took over as Upper Midwest Director at the College of St. Benedict.

Under David’s leadership, the basic curriculum of the camp was maintained, with orchestra and chamber music for students, and mentored coaching for interns. With David’s interest in Celtic music, a traditional component was introduced, with students learning a fiddle tune by ear. With the move to the College of St.

Continued on page 12

Pedagogy Topics Presented at the “Conference Style” Sessions

- “Big Bach” or “Baroque Bach”? Adapting the modern instrument to Baroque style
- Renaissance instruments—the viol
- Our Inspirational Heritage—Artists from the Past (videos and discussion of master classes presented by Gingold, Casals and others)
- Rhythmic-ship and Muscle-ship for Musicanship (from the Baroque to Jazz)
- All about Beginners—basic set-up for violin, viola, cello and bass. Common principles and differences; coaching instruments you don’t play
- Tuning—how to do it on instruments you don’t play; how to teach it
- Classroom Management Techniques
- Preparing to teach all the elements of a studio lesson: warm-ups, scales, etudes, repertoire
- Wiggles and Pings (vibrato)
- Developing core bow strokes into musical motions
- Sequenced steps towards artistry with the instrument
- Matching repertoire to student knowledge, skills and interests
- Accessories: choosing and fitting a chin rest and shoulder pad
- Pedagogy resources: texts, magazines, conferences, associations
- The French and German bow hold
- How to coach chamber music
- Inspiration—how to find it
- Etude books—overview and suggested order
- Shifting
- Finger patterns and finger angles
- strategies to overcome performance anxiety
- String duos as a teaching tool—overview and analysis

Faculty Stories

by Mark Gitch

From many recollections, I have two strong memories. Having been a student of Mary Horozaniecki, I of course had her on a certain pedestal in my mind. The first morning of the first day I began my time as a camp conductor, I emerged from my dorm room to head to the shower and there was Mary, coming down the hallway, toiletry-caddy in hand, fuzzy pink slippers on her feet, wild bed hair—looking not at all like the teacher I had come to revere! This crossing of paths in the hallway became a daily ritual across many summers. Aside from the time Mary put me in a broom closet at the old MacPhail building to practice my scales, she and her pink slippers are my favorite way to remember her.

Memory #2: One afternoon I was walking by the auditorium and heard amazing violin sounds coming from the stage. I assumed it was one of the faculty members, so I poked my head in to say hello. Instead, it was Peter McGuire, a Mankato native and eventually a violinist with the Minnesota Orchestra, who was then a camper at Upper Midwest. This was in the mid-90s, I think. I stood silently just out of view for a few minutes and simply listened to Peter play. I think he was the first student of that caliber that I had really heard, and to catch him in this moment and remember the awe that I felt still brings a smile to my face.

Finally, I was still somewhat inexperienced when I joined the conducting faculty. Showing promise, perhaps, but far from accomplished. To be trusted to teach alongside the remarkable team of people I looked up to—people who became lifelong friends and colleagues—was a remarkable experience. While I may have been on faculty, my Midwest years were more about what I learned.

Mark Gitch teaches at Wayzata High School

by Jane Capistran

I was so honored to be asked by my former teacher, Mary Budd Horozaniecki, to be part of the faculty. It was very special to have several of my college students serve as interns, and now they have gone on to be successful string teachers in the state and Midwest.

Jane Capistran is Fargo Moorhead Symphony Orchestra: Associate Conductor/Principal Second Violin, and Assistant Professor Emerita at Concordia College, Moorhead

by Nick Gaudette

My formative youthful orchestra experiences happened at

Upper Midwest Music Camp, which ignited my love of teaching. The exceptional faculty, many now cherished colleagues, profoundly shaped who I am today.

In my early years, Mark Gitch and Phil Burkhart led the orchestra groups. Their artful directing and adventurous programming showed me the director's immense influence. I recall Mark Gitch impressing us all by tossing his keys in the air behind his body, and then snapping his fingers at the exact moment they hit the ground. All of us kids were amazed at his musical magic! I remember my first experience playing the Barber *Adagio* was with Phil Burkhart who programmed the piece after the death of camp founder Norm Selness. I don't know if we played it totally in tune, but I remember falling in love with performance each time we rehearsed, even with a very minimal bass part. I also remember being the lone bass player in the advanced group and playing Tchaik *Serenade*, Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* (played by Johnathan Magness, now of the MN Orch), and then being in a chamber group with my siblings who played the *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*. Our group name was the "Messed Up Mozarts!"

In 2006, while back from college during the summer, Harry Dunscombe hired me as the activities director. At this particular camp year, I met violinist Zack Kline (attended as an intern), who I instantly clicked with musically. Our impromptu fiddle duet at the faculty concert planted the creative spark for our ensemble, the Orange Mighty Trio. 15 years later, we still perform and record together. This was also Harry's last year at camp and I was assisting him while clearing out his office. He graciously bequeathed his extensive mini score library to me, a priceless gift which I currently store in my music office to this day.

Returning as faculty under the direction of Arnott, I relished reuniting with beloved former teachers and mentors like the late Mrs. H., Mark Kausch, Faith Farr, Dr. Hersh and Karen Moon, whom I now address as colleagues. The cyclical nature of passing knowledge between generations at Upper Midwest fills me with gratitude. Without those formative summer weeks as a camper, as a counselor activities director, and as a faculty member, I doubt I'd be the devoted educator I am today. When I lead young players, I channel the humanity, passion and care of my own mentors who so enriched my journey.

Nick Gaudette teaches at Edina High School, and performs on bass with The Orange Mighty Trio and other ensembles.



"Waiting for the Tooth Fairy" — All 86 campers on stage 2018

Interns

Each year, 6–8 students in college or at the beginning of their teaching career assisted at Upper Midwest; their current career position is listed where known. (Our apologies to those we inadvertently omitted.) It is a testament to the strength of the program that almost half of the interns returned for multiple years.

At Mankato State University 1994–2006

Carolyn Anderson
Britta Blodgett, private studio
Nathan Cohen, Rockport MA Public Schools
Natalie Dimberg
Joseph Dolson
Mary Dougherty
Kate Ecklein
Nicholas Gaudette, Edina Public Schools
Krista Halvorson, Aurora IL schools
Adam Hanson
Cassandra Herold, Stillwater Area Schools
Callie Hutchison, Cochise County Youth Orchestra, Tucson, AZ
Ericka Jackson
Zachary Kline, violinist, composer, Minneapolis
Stephanie Kobbe
Karen Krueger Kozak, FiddleintheMiddle, St. Paul
Miya Kunin, private studio Minneapolis
Di Li
Andrew Marine
Nora Martin
Brianna Massey
Laura Monfrooe
Nina Mukherji
Kathleen Murphy, Robbinsdale Area Schools
Wes Myers, Marshall Public Schools
Rachel Peale
John Roberts
Noah Rogoff, Professor Music, University of Nebraska, Kearney
Yuka Roth, private studio, Eagan
Kate Saylor
Gene Schott, Austin Public Schools
Tyler Sieh, Louisiana Philharmonic, New Orleans
David Strassberg, private studio, Concord Mills NC
Katherine Thornburg
Lauren Trolley, Iowa City Community School District, IA
Ryan Walker
Kate Wolf
Stephanie Young
Miriam Zien

At the College of St. Benedict 2007–2022

Tim Apolloni
Collin Arneson
Maria Claudia Benaros, private studio, Minneapolis
Lauren Benish, Stillwater Area Public Schools
Joe Berns, Aberdeen School District, SD
Alex Bischoff
JoAnna Cochenet, conductor, Nevada Chamber Opera
Levi Comstock, Anoka-Hennepin School District
Jacob Crosby, Austin Public Schools
Natalie Dimberg
Katie Douglass

Anthony Eddleston, Moorhead Area Public Schools
Sadie Ellingson Eddleston, West Fargo Public Schools, ND
Mattie Ernst
David Espinoza
Makayla Ferraro
Hannah Field
Heather Frank
Spencer Frie, Joseph Sears School, Kenilworth, IL
Mary Goedtke
Martin Granick
Megumi Hine
AJ Mandy Isaacson-Zvidzwa, composer/historian
Ilan Klages-Mundt, 9 Mile Brewing Co, (craft beers),
Bloomington
Byron Klimek, University of Wisconsin Superior Conservatory
Stephanie Knapper, private studio, St. Paul
Stephanie Kobbe
Kaela Kopp
Stacey Kurtz
Bethany Landby
Michal Lang, Davies High School, Fargo ND
Allysa Larson Hurley, Dawson-Boyd School District
Christopher Laue
Jeff Maneval
Andrew Mueller
Kathleen Murphy, Robbinsdale Area Schools
Emily Nieves
Heather Olivier, Northfield School District
Amanda Olsen
Allysa Olson
Anna Olson
Rachel Osterhouse, Indianapolis Suzuki Academy, IN
Michael Peiffer
Kari Peterson Slominsky, private studio, Hudson, WI
Xin Piao
Becky Plachy, White Bear Lake Area Schools
Caleb Polashek
Jamie Reynolds
Mara Rogers
Colleen Schaeffe Cook, Northeast College Prep, Minneapolis
Hannah Schendel, conductor Wayzata Symphony Orchestra
Jocelyn Schendel, Anchorage Symphony Orchestra, AK
Kara Schillerstrom Mather, Johnson School District, Des
Moines IA
Kim Schmitt
Rachel Steenson Menzel
Carlin Stiles, St. Cloud Area School District
Eric Uzelac
Anastasia Verdoljak, Robbinsdale Area Schools
Cara Weggler
Anna Wigtil
Paul Wolfram

Intern Stories

by **Carlin Stiles**

My first year at UMSC was 2008 and I was a HS “gopher” and did anything that anyone needed. Over the years I was a violin, viola, cello and bass intern as well as activities director. I transitioned to completing many of the pre-camp administrative tasks including advertisement, communication with students, families, and staff. During the week of camp, I was in charge of the day-to-day tasks and activities. I was involved with UMSC for over a decade.

Carlin Stiles teaches in the St. Cloud Area School District

Kara Mather

Kara (Schillerstrom) Mather was a founder/director of the Monticello Community Strings Orchestra from 2001–2022, for which she was a co-recipient of the 2020 MNSOTA Community Service Award. In 2009 she had just started teaching orchestra in the public schools (Tech High School in St. Cloud) and David Arnott asked if she would be interested in helping out with the camp.

Kara writes, “Being an intern was a great way for me to meet more string teachers from across the state and learn more about the camp. Although I am currently teaching choir in the Johnston School District in the Des Moines, Iowa area ... my heart is in string orchestras. Part of my passion for that was solidified every time I helped with the Upper Midwest Camp, attended one of their concerts, sent students to it, or heard stories from Arnott about all the fun that was had!”

Kara Mather teaches in Des Moines IA

by **Hannah Schendel**

After hearing about the great experience my cello playing sister, Jocelyn, had as an intern at the Upper Midwest Music Camp, I decided to apply as an intern in 2013 and 2014. I wasn't really sure what to expect other than that I was warned that David Arnott would probably play fiddle tunes in a kilt and would make us all learn fiddle tunes. The experience turned out to be a fantastic opportunity to not only develop my own skills, but also to apply the skills and teach some of the students who attended, and to develop a rapport with the faculty members, many of whom were my own teachers and are now my colleagues.

I remember observing how Mary Budd Horozaniecki could coach a string quartet with such love and patience yet was able to demand very high standards; skills that I continue to use today. I learned many neat teaching tricks in all of the technique classes, and loved hearing how much progress the students were able to make in such a short period of time. Interns were able to take a couple of classes with faculty members, and I enjoyed cello technique lessons from Faith Farr, and took bass lessons with Mark Kausch. I was so excited about bass lessons that by the end of the camp, I volunteered myself to play the *Twinkle Variations* at the talent show. In our free time, we interns sang Christmas carols in July, organized epic games of freeze tag for the students, and worked really hard to perfect our own “cover” of *Let It Go* for the talent show—I was even elected to conduct it! I'm grateful to have had such wonderful experiences and to have met so many wonderful mentors.

Hannah Schendel is Music Director of the Wayzata Symphony Orchestra, and Visiting Orchestra Director at Carleton College



Intern Kate Wolf helps student with bow hold 2001.



Chamber music coaching with intern Jacob Crosby, 2015



Nick Gaudette teaching bass lines for a Scottish fiddle tune 2016



Orchestra rehearsal with Nick Gaudette, 2015

Upper Midwest String Camp 1979–2022

Continued from page 8

Benedict, and at the urging of several string camp interns, beginning viola da gamba sessions were added to the range of intern learning opportunities—an addition that quickly led to the formation of a consort of viols at CSB/SJU. When bassist, improviser, composer, conductor Nick Gaudette was added to the faculty the eclectic component expanded. The 2016 concert inaugurated a new tradition: all (89) campers on stage performing compositions by their two conductors!

Additional faculty who taught at Upper Midwest, CSB, included violinists Jane Capistran, Elizabeth York and Stephanie Shogren, violists Jim Bartsch, Justin Knoepfel and Chuck Krenner, cellists Lucia Magny and Daniel Ericksen, bassists Mike White and Josh Schwalbach, and orchestra directors Mary Sorlie and Lucas Shogren. In addition to the long tenure of camp directors Harry Dunscombe and David Arnott, faculty members Mary Horozaniecki, Sarah Hersh, Faith Farr, Mark Kausch and Karen



Chamber music masterclass with Daniel Ericksen, 2015

Moon each taught 20 years or more at Upper Midwest's two locations. Their consistency contributed to the program's success.

Covid canceled Camp in 2020 and 2021 but July 2022 saw a successful reboot of this extraordinary curriculum, with slightly smaller enrollment as everyone was re-emerging after the pandemic isolation. David Arnott retired from the College of St. Benedict in

August 2022 and a search was again underway for a new host.

Sunset 2023

Alas, the world is different post-pandemic. A college campus is the



DAVID ARNOTT CONDUCTS THE CHAMBER ORCHESTRA, 2012

ideal location to provide rehearsal spaces, dorms and cafeteria food, but most institutions are now more cautious and restrictive about having guests on campus. MNSOTA's biggest stumbling block came when ASTA decided that the liability insurance umbrella they provide to state chapters would no longer cover over-night events.

The curriculum is a wonderful template that we hope someone will someday use again, but for now we regret that Upper Midwest has sunset. The memories of many remarkable successes remain. We are proud of over a thousand students and over a hundred intern who have developed into fine performers, teachers and music lovers, partly due to their experience at Upper Midwest String Camp.

References:

- MN ASTA *Strings 'n' Stuff* 1979 #2; 1980 #1; 1986 #1; 1988 #2; February 1993; February 1994; Fall 1996; Fall 1997
- MNSOTA *String Notes*, Fall issues 2000 through 2017
- MNSOTA *Handbook* 2000–2001 through 2022–2023

Personal recollections by Faith Farr and others. Apologies go to the faculty who contributed to the success of Upper Midwest over the years but were not mentioned in this article. †

Final Concert of 2014 !!! DO NOT BE ALARMED !!!

Due to construction in the main concert hall at the College of St. Benedict, the 2014 final orchestra concert was scheduled in a different building. Students were assembled on stage; parents were waiting in the audience. Not everything was set as expected and Dr. Arnott was on the phone.

A cellist motioned to me and said, “The light for the fire alarm on the wall is blinking. At my school that means we need to get out.” I said I’d check. Arnott said he was working on it. The orchestra waited; the audience waited.

Then the alarm started to beep at a nice steady ♩=120, loud but not deafening: beep, beep, beep, rest; beep, beep, beep, rest. Obviously a false alarm. Mary Sorlie called to the orchestra players, “B natural” and a few at a time students joined in playing B natural on their instrument. Then a bassist realized that a nice

G-D-G-D bass line would be a great harmonic support for that B-B-B rest. Gradually a walking bass-line emerged. The audience clapped the off-beats. Other audience members made a conga line. The *Fire Alarm Jam* drowned out the alarm itself and was highly entertaining.

Meanwhile Dr. Arnott had rallied the interns to prepare chairs and stands at the outdoor amphitheater. Eight minutes after the decision to move, the downbeat in the amphitheater happened.

Comments from Facebook:

So, you know you're an orchadork when the fire alarm goes off and everyone starts to play the note, a cha cha line forms and everyone starts to clap!!

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Who:

Clinicians:

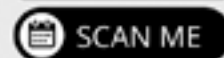
Greg Byers, cello, bass
Levi Comstock, viola,
and
Ernest Bisong, violin



Register Here:

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

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





ORCHESTRA

Surviving and Thriving Through the Winter Doldrums

by Wes Myers

The world is awash in greys and browns. Some places may have snow on the ground, icy and cold. The lights of the holiday season have faded into memory. New Year's resolutions may be holding strong, but the hardest part of the year is fast approaching.

The months of January and February can be the hardest part of the teaching calendar. The bitter cold and lack of sunlight can wear on us and the students. However, there are some clever ways to fight the malaise and revive our orchestra classrooms. None of these ideas are perfect solutions to these trying times but give one of them a try and you might find the time passes a little more easily. Perhaps your students will even find renewed energy and effort.

Warm up!

The winter months can be particularly difficult with long stretches of sub-zero temperatures. This can be a perfect time to vary your warmup routine, dive into a method book, or focus on a particular skill.

I like to vary my usual warmup of scales with some variations: thirds, playing in a round, adding the arpeggio, etc. For a focus

on intonation, I like to add a drone. You can use a pitch source or have a student or section take turns acting as the drone. Perhaps it's even time to add a new scale or play that scale in a new part of the instrument. If the violins have been playing the A major scale on their two highest strings, they can learn the lower octave and join their fellow violinists in using the high third finger.

You may also find that this is a good opportunity to focus on skill building. Playing in position by using a method book or some shifting exercises might be appropriate. Perhaps the next literature you'll be programming has skills you'd like to refine. That can be done within a warmup setting. The key is to be creative and varied. Students may not be motivated to engage in these activities so come prepared with energy or prep them ahead of time with the "why" behind what they will be doing.

Change Things Up

Like the vast, empty whiteness of winter, our days may begin to blend together. Constantly following the rehearsal formula can leave students going through the motions.

It's a perfect time to have a "one off" day. You don't have to completely shift how you teach during the winter months, but a single day here and there can get us away from the routine in a refreshing way.

Put those instruments away for a day! How often do we find opportunities to hit those other standards? Responding, Connecting, and Creating can be left out of our curriculum when we always rehearse. Watch a performance and take some time to let students respond verbally or in writing. I often have students watch professional performances of the music we are preparing, but it doesn't have to be connected to our literature. If there's a great concerto performance you love, share it with your students. Take time to have them experience other music from Lindsay Sterling, Two Cellos, or other non-traditional ensembles. Have them learn some music history or find connections between music and their daily lives. Try some composing or improvisation activity you've investigated. It's ok if it's not a big hit. Just give it a try once.

My big idea for this year is to have a "Rest Awareness Day." Students often struggle more counting the silences in their music than the notes themselves. Taking a whole day to focus on counting rests, or whatever concept you feel deserves attention, can be a good way to break the cycle of rehearsal and emphasize something important.

Short Term Goals

One of the things that can make this time of year difficult is the lack of proximity to performance. Students find motivation in preparing for concerts, but the next one might be months away. Creating some short-term goals can help students find their direction in the classroom. I've found students are particularly motivated by competition or rewards. While I try to foster intrinsic motivation most often, it can help to provide some external encouragement.

Consider creating a practice minutes challenge where students add up their col-

Continued on page 33

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BAROQUE PRACTICE

Putting Your Own “Spin” on Strings

by Charles Asch

I recently learned that the early strings used in tennis were nearly the same as the gut strings used for string instruments well until the late 1800s! From the website of Babolat, the French racquet sports manufacturer, comes the following quote on the origin of the famous Babolat tennis gut strings:

“1875: Babolat enters the fray

A specialist in processing natural gut for sausages, surgical thread, harmonic music strings, and archery, Babolat & Monnier, under the direction of Pierre Babolat, invents the first natural gut strings for racquets, one year after Walter Clopton Wingfield devised the rules of lawn tennis, and not long after producing its first badminton strings.”

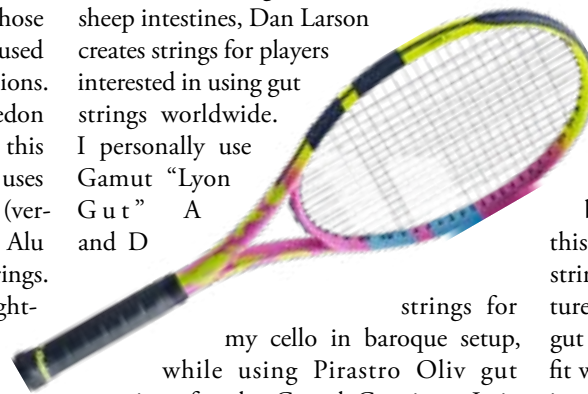
Converting part of their production from the manufacture of musical strings, Pierre Babolat decided to embrace the growing sport of “lawn tennis.” The first Lawn Tennis Championship was held at Wimbledon, England, in 1877 using those Babolat strings, which continue to be used to this day in tennis racquets of champions. Novak Djokovic, seven-time Wimbledon Men’s Singles Champion, including this year’s 2023 win over Carlos Alcaraz, uses Babolat VS Natural Gut in his main (vertical) strings, and polyester Luxilon Alu Power rough strings in the cross strings. Roger Federer, a recently retired eight-time Wimbledon Champion, also used Wilson Natural Gut strings in his vertical strings, with Luxilon Alu Power in the cross strings. Rising star Carlos Alcaraz does not use gut strings, and simply uses Babolat’s more modern “RPM Blast” polyester strings. Some pros use both gut and polyester; others only use polyester strings.

This mixture of gut and polyester strings is today called a “hybrid” setup, using the flexibility, touch and power of the gut strings in conjunction with the stiffer, snappier qualities of the modern polyester strings. This is perhaps not unlike many modern instrument strings being

manufactured today, many of which, such as the “Passione” line by Pirastro, employ a modern silver or aluminum coating to a natural gut interior, bringing together qualities of both steel and gut strings. Recently a student of mine switched her strings to a full set of Passione, and has found her cello to have a warmer, more responsive quality, while keeping the power associated with steel strings. Companies such as Warchal have their “Amber” line, which was “developed with the aim of achieving the sound quality of the best gut strings without any tuning instabilities.” D’Addario Strings has started manufacturing a string called “Pro-Arté,” which contains a synthetic core, which is said to offer more flexibility and elasticity than one might find in the steel strings developed since the 1960s by companies such as Jargar and Larsen strings of Denmark.

In our very own state of Minnesota, based in Duluth, Gamut Strings are amongst the best gut strings manufactured in the world. Using beef serosa and sheep intestines, Dan Larson creates strings for players interested in using gut strings worldwide.

I personally use Gamut “Lyon Gut” A and D



strings for my cello in baroque setup, while using Pirastro Oliv gut strings for the G and C strings. It is interesting to note that “Lyon” strings refers to the city in France where Pierre Babolat was based, where he made his fateful switch from primarily being a manufacturer of musical strings to producing for the tennis market.

I would describe the feeling of gut tennis strings to be very akin to gut musical strings, in terms of elasticity and touch. One is able to get the feeling of “sinking” more into the string bed on gut strings, in a similar way to how gut tennis strings enable greater feel for the ball. One difference is

that while the high impact and tension of tennis racquets translates into more power at impact using gut strings, gut strings on musical instruments do not result in a louder sound than steel strings. However, as a professional musician, I have found that making the switch in tennis to gut strings on the mains and polyester strings on the crosses has resulted in a reduction of wrist and arm pain/impact, in addition to a greater sense of touch and easy power. An intense spring season of playing tennis on exclusively polyester strings resulted in wrist pain by the summertime! Since making the switch to hybrid setup, there has been no issue going back and forth between the cello and the tennis racquet.

I sometimes wonder if I could string my tennis racquet with cello strings, or vice versa, string my cello with gut tennis strings. When I look at my 17-gauge gut strings, I see astonishing similarities to the cello D and A strings. This is an experiment which I would love to try sometime, and I certainly encourage interested musicians to experiment with different string combinations to find what they are looking for in their instrument. (Just a note: on modern setup string instruments, pure gut strings would be placed at a higher angle and tension than with baroque setup with a lower bridge, so this would affect tonal adjustment and string selection—please ask the manufacturer or your luthier for information. Pure gut strings are also typically not meant to fit without some “finagling” into the housing of a modern tailpiece and may require an increase in the width of the bridge and saddle notches.)

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. He 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. †

MARY WEST SOLO COMPETITION 2023

by Daniel Keeler and Faith Farr

On Saturday November 11, 2023, 37 violin, viola and cello students representing 20 teachers from across Minnesota competed in four age categories in the MNSOTA Mary West Solo Competition. (No bass, guitar or harp students participated this year.) Nine students were chosen to participate in the Winners Recital that took place on Sunday, November 12 at Lloyd Ultan Hall, University of Minnesota School of Music. Four additional students were awarded

cello student of Mina Fisher, Elgar, *Concerto in e minor, IV. Allegro*. Givens Violins Grand Prize—Celine Bares, viola student of Aaron Janse, Hindemith, *Der Schwanendreher, I. Zwischen Berg und tiefem Tal*.

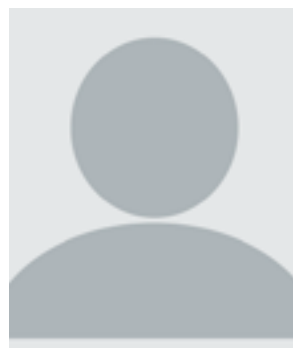
We are fortunate to have the sponsorship of Givens Violins and the Bloomington Symphony. The Grand Prize was provided by Givens Violins (a \$250 cash



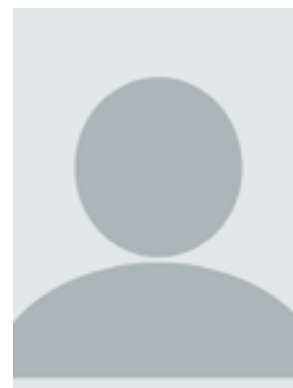
Givens Prize:
Anita Matsuura



Givens Prize:
Aeon Bashir

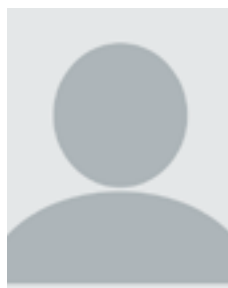


Givens Prize:
Emily Alexander

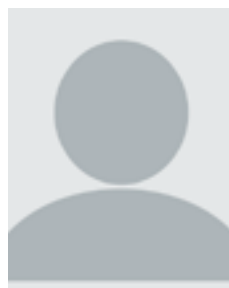


Grand Prize:
Celine Bares

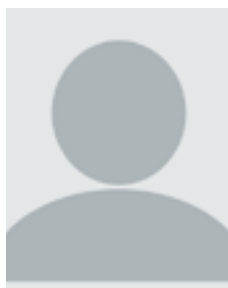
Performance Awards



Ellen Vigne



Henry Childs



Lorelei Schoenhard



Rebecca Hall



Vladimir Tsiper

Honorable Mention.

The Winners Recital program was:

Honorable Mention Awards—Elementary Division: Arthur Scott, violin student of Lucinda Marvin. Intermediate Division: Evelyn Chow, violin student of Nancy Lokken. Junior Division: Franklin Watkins, cello student of Teresa Richardson. Senior Division: Jennifer Lee, violin student of Sally O'Reilly.

Performance Awards—Elementary Division: Ellen Vigne, violin student of Nancy Lokken, Seitz, *Violin Concerto No. 2 in G Major, III. Allegretto moderato*. Intermediate Division: Lorelei Schoenhard, violin student of Marion Judish, Mendelssohn, *Violin Concerto in E minor, I. Allegro molto appassionato*. Henry Childs, cello student of Mina Fisher, Saint-Saëns, *Cello Concerto No. 1 in A minor, I. Allegro non troppo*. Junior Division: Rebecca Hall, violin student of Ian Snyder, Bach, *Sonata No.1 in g minor, I. Adagio*. Vladimir Tsiper, violin student of Lucinda Marvin, Wieniawski, *Variations on an Original Theme*.

Claire Givens Gift Certificate Prizes—Elementary Division: Anita Matsuura, cello student of David Carter, *Saint-Saëns Cello Concerto No. 1 in A minor, I. Allegro non troppo*. Intermediate Division: Anahit (Aeon) Bashir, cello student of David Holmes, Elgar, *Concerto in e minor, IV. Allegro*. Junior Division: Emily Alexander,

prize) and the Bloomington Symphony (a concerto performance this coming April). In addition, Givens Violins donated three \$75 gift certificates to winners in different age categories. Thank you Givens Violins and Bloomington Symphony, who have both been long-time sponsors of our competition.!

The concerto performance with the Bloomington Symphony will take place on Sunday, April 21, 2024 at 3:00 p.m. at Gideon Ives Auditorium, Masonic Heritage Center, 11411 Masonic Home Drive, Bloomington. Celine Bares will perform Hindemith's *Der Schwanendreher, I. Zwischen Berg und tiefem Tal*. Tickets are \$15 for

Continued on page 30

Honorable Mention



Arthur Scott



Evie Chow



Franklin Watkins

Carolyn Liptak — Master Teacher: Studio

Carolyn Liptak receives the **Master Teacher: Studio** award. For nearly 45 years,



Carolyn has been changing lives as a violin/viola teacher. With studios in both the north and south metro, she brings joy and humor to every lesson while challenging her students to be their very best. Carolyn teaches a wide range of ages: as young as five years old to adult aged students. She is a member of the Northern Lights String Quartet and has been a member of the Savannah Symphony. Carolyn has been a teacher for the MacPhail Center of Music's school string program, served on the GTCYS Teachers Advisory Board, coached GTCYS sectionals, and acted as a solo and ensemble judge. We congratulate Carolyn on this well-deserved award!

Carolyn says:

Thank you for this lovely award. It is my delight and passion to teach my children. They are the new light of the world and I find so much joy seeing that in their eyes. I can't imagine a job for myself that would bring me more happiness. ♪



Owatonna Public Schools — Meritorious Orchestra Program

In 1988, **Owatonna Public Schools** became the second ever program to be awarded the MNSOTA award for **Meritorious Orchestra Program**. Thirty-five years later, MNSOTA is pleased to recognize Owatonna Public Schools again for this award. Few

programs in Minnesota, let alone the entire nation, have enjoyed as long a tradition of excellence and positive impact in the community as the Owatonna orchestra program. Students from the district have been frequent participants in the MNSOTA Middle Level Orchestra Festival, MNSOTA Middle Level Honors

Orchestra, and the MMEA All-State Orchestra. With a passionate and dedicated staff of string educators currently at the helm, there is no doubt that Owatonna will continue to provide students with high-quality orchestral opportunities and experiences for years to come.

On behalf of the Owatonna Schools String Staff, Lisa Revier writes:

We would like to thank MNSOTA for awarding Owatonna the Meritorious Orchestra Program Award for 2023. It is with great pride that we accept this honor. We feel privileged to work in a community that is so supportive of music; we have had important

support systems that are unique to Owatonna:

- We have Wenger Corporation headquartered in our community, with the founder, Harry Wenger, having been a music teacher in our district.
- We have also had the influence of the Meisel family, providing our school district and students with outstanding string instruments throughout the years.
- And of course, the impact of former Owatonna Orchestra director, Arnold Kruger.



Owatonna School District Orchestra Faculty
Sandra Justice, Lisa Revier, Jen Bellefeuille

Sandra, Jen and I have all been able to work with Arnold in different ways and experience his strong influence. Arnold's dedication, persistence, and passion for orchestra is really what established our path for success, and we are all very aware of this. Arnold has always had a metaphor for the orchestra program,

referring to it as a "rose garden:"

- Not everyone has a rose garden.
- Rose gardens are special gardens that require meticulous work. Roses are difficult to grow and require constant maintenance. The roots, especially, require delicate attention for the health and abundance of beautiful flowers.

Thank you, Arnold, for all that you have done for the orchestra program and helping us to be dedicated, persistent, and passionate gardeners. ♪

Sarah Finn-Sommerfeld — Master Teacher: Orchestra

MNSOTA is pleased to award **Sarah Finn-Sommerfeld** with the **Master Teacher: Orchestra** award. After beginning her teaching career in Wisconsin, Sarah has been with Minnetonka Public Schools nearly two decades. In 2016, Sarah received the Minnetonka School District's Celebration of Excellence Award for Child Centered Teaching. In nominating Sarah for the award, colleague

Michael Janning had this to say:

“Every student feels welcome in her classroom. She is passionate about providing the best experience for every student and sharing her love for music with the community. There are always new resources and areas



of music she is exploring with her students. She has strong connections with other educators in the state and communicates with them often. In the district, she is trusted and serves as a leader amongst her colleagues. She has mentored many new teachers

and is always working hard to make sure everyone, students and staff, feels valued.”

Sarah says:

I am incredibly grateful to be honored with this award. I would like to say thank you to my colleagues both current and former. They have supported me, allowed me opportunities, encouraged me, and provided me with inspiration. Thank you to Dan Mollick, Michael Janning, and Daniel Ericksen for being the orchestra teachers who worked most closely with me for the past several years.

I would like to thank my family for all of their love and support. And I would also like to thank my students and their families over the past two decades. I love teaching, and I love the connections I have been able to make with those students over the years. This is the reason I love what I do.

Thank you to MNSOTA for presenting me with this award. It means so much to me! †

Schmitt Music — Community Service Award

The **Community Service Award** is presented this year to **Schmitt Music**. Founded in 1896, the store has grown to provide an invaluable service for music programs across Minnesota. They opened their violin shop in 2017 and opened the new Bloomington flagship store in 2022 with specialty shops that include woodwinds, brass, strings and pianos. Their Schmitt Music road reps are a friendly, weekly presence in the schools as they pick up and drop off instruments and bring needed supplies to teachers. Schmitt Music continues to support music education through sponsorships of music events, including the MNSOTA All-State Teachers Workshop and the Middle Level All-State Orchestra. Thank you, Schmitt Music for your continued support of string education!

Dr. Niloofar Sohi, Director of String Sales writes:

The Paul A. Schmitt Violin Shop and the Schmitt Music Company are deeply honored to receive this recognition and the Community Service Award from the reputable Minnesota String and Orchestra Teachers Association. It's moments like these that reaffirm our commitment to the musical community we hold dear.

While our name may be on this award, it stands as a testament to the collaborative efforts and trust placed in us by educators, musicians, and students alike. Without your unwavering support and belief in our mission, this achievement would remain out of reach.

We recognize that our role goes beyond providing instruments and services; it's about fostering connections, nurturing talent,



Schmitt Music String Specialists
Josh Peterson, Niloofar Sohi, Dave Strong

and contributing to the rich musical landscape of our community. This award serves as a beacon, illuminating the path we've forged together and inspiring us to continue serving our community and striving for excellence every day.

A heartfelt thank you to Christopher Jannings, the president, and the board of directors of MNSOTA for this recognition. We extend our deepest gratitude to the educators who inspire and shape young minds, the musicians who bring life to our instruments, and the students who embody the future of music.

Once again, thank you for your continued support and trust in the Paul A. Schmitt Violin Shop and the Schmitt Music Company. †



VIOLIN

“You can’t phrase with your neck.”

Why energy is for export only.

by Ian Snyder

During my early years as a violin student, I felt as though there was a great deal of conflicting information about physical energy and movement while playing. My teachers seemed generally to discourage it, some diplomatically, while one told my mother she must be giving me too many vitamins. Titans of the past like Menuhin and Oistrakh played with mesmerizing expression while appearing like statues. But on the other hand, I would see string quartets and the violin sections of the Berlin Philharmonic sharing an embodiment of the pulse and musical direction. Some voices seemed to moderate the range of possibilities. In the Nadja Solerno Sonnenberg documentary, *Speaking in Strings*, Dorothy DeLay explains that she tries to reduce extraneous

motion in her students but that in the case of Nadja, her level of physical engagement felt authentic. As I matured, I began to feel as though we weren’t always observing the same thing. There is the charlatanism of the Lindsey Stirlings (if you haven’t seen TwoSet’s parody, “Lindsey Stirling in Public,” I highly recommend it). And there is the functional physical communication of ensemble playing. But for students and professionals who have sincerely-felt musical excitement, and who are aware of the need to generate enough energy to create musical apexes and project over orchestras, there comes the question of how to honor those goals without becoming tense or exhausting ourselves.

I had two experiences in particular

which made me ponder what might be going on and what the reconciliation might be. First, a violist friend of mine shared a story from a lesson with Carol Rodland. She told him, in good humor, “You know, you can’t phrase with your neck!” As the musical energy picked up, he had begun to hold on to increasing tension in his neck, which was visible to Ms. Rodland, but wasn’t generating any musical difference. A couple years later, I saw a colleague’s student performing a showpiece and noticed that his tone was actually biggest when he meant to play piano, and when the music called for forte, he would visibly squeeze every involved muscle group and pull his posture in toward his sternum, and the resulting

Continued on page 32

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FALL CLINIC 2023

by Christopher Jannings

MNSOTA hosted the annual Fall Clinic and Awards at the University of Northwestern-St. Paul in the Instrumental Music Room on October 19, 2023. Around twenty-five string educators joined us in discussions and workshops led by Mary Sorlie/Ingrid Koeller and Dr. Kirk D. Moss. We'd like to extend a special thank you to House of Note for sponsoring the clinic and allowing us to offer it to participants at a reduced rate. In addition, we'd like to thank Northwestern for hosting the event.

Mary Sorlie and Ingrid Koeller shared their work on a new warm-up method for young string players. Clinic participants were able to try some of the original concepts and exercises and give feedback on what they liked and what might be improved. Mary and Ingrid brought their usual fun and creativity to the session, and it was great to see a warm-up method developed specifically for younger players!

Kirk Moss presented concepts from the *Sound Innovations for*

String Orchestra: Sound Development series, publications (Alfred) which he co-wrote with Bob Phillips. The series focuses on playing with a beautiful, characteristic tone through warm-up exercises geared towards intermediate and advanced orchestra students. Kirk also shared a number of the multimedia resources that have been developed alongside the books to give teachers additional tools.

Following the clinic sessions, MNSOTA celebrated our annual award winners. We are very proud to recognize this year's recipients:

- Master Teacher: Studio — Carolyn Liptak
- Master Teacher: School Orchestra — Sarah Finn Sommerfeld
- Meritorious Orchestra Program — Owatonna Public Schools
- Community Service — Schmitt Music Co.

Christopher Jannings is MNSOTA's President. He is Director of Orchestras and Guitar Studies at Roseville Area High School. †

One-Minute Warmups

presented by Ingrid Koller and Mary Sorlie — reported by Faith Farr

Mary Sorlie and Ingrid Koller began their presentation on warmups for beginning ensembles by asking the clinic attendees questions:

- As a teacher, what is it that makes a beginning orchestra fun? We said: watching light bulbs come on; the first time doing a round; putting the first piece together.
- As a teacher, what is it that prevents or hinders a beginning orchestra from being fun? We said: chaos; some are ready to move on and others are lost.
- As a student, what is it that makes a beginning orchestra fun? We said: connecting with the teacher; playing the instrument (not learning theory!)
- As a student, what is it that prevents or hinders beginning orchestra from being fun? We said: not getting success immediately; the teacher is too talky; no connection with friends or to teacher.
- Every teacher's dream is for students to have a solid technical and musical foundation. What does your dream orchestra look like? Sound like? Participants showed a wonderful ready position—everyone sitting up straight, balanced, alert, watching the conductor.
- What is does your reality orchestra look like? Sound like? Participants showed a great variety of slouchy positions, not ready to play.

Mary reminded us that students do *not* go to orchestra to improve their test scores or to get into college. Students want to make music and have fun with their friends. She asked what our experience with orchestra warmups had been and teacher participants suggested: open strings; a scale with different bowings written on the board; "I play / you play" with no talking. One suggestion was "I play / you play" only backwards! Or if I play forte, you play piano. Or you play, but leave out the F#.

Mary explained that the average human attention span is only 8.25 seconds(!) and the ability to focus (different from attention span) is about 2 minutes. *One-Minute Warmups* are designed to

focus on one specific technical or musical element, with the least amount of instruction given. For instance, if you are rehearsing Richard Meyer's *Dragonhunter* and the ♪♪♪ rhythm is new, you'll need a rhythm warmup. If you're rehearsing a piece where high C# is problematic, you'll need a pitch warmup. These warmups appeal to a variety of learning styles and are designed to be fun. Fun does not mean chaos. If students understand the goal, they will succeed.

In addition to playing, the warmups include singing, call and response, body awareness (students bump into things; they need to develop awareness of space) and spoken word. The topics covered in *One-Minute Warmups* are Posture; Bow direction; Dynamics;

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Teaching String Techniques has Never been so Easy!

presented by Kirk Moss — reported by Faith Farr

In his clinic presentation, Kirk Moss gave us a thorough overview of the *Sound Innovations* series published by Alfred:

- *Sound Innovations: Sound Development: Warm-up Exercises for Tone and Technique — Intermediate String Orchestra* (green book), is co-authored by Bob Phillips and Kirk Moss
- *Sound Innovations: Sound Development: Warm-up Exercises for Tone and Technique — Advanced String Orchestra* (purple book), is co-authored by Bob Phillips and Kirk Moss
- *Sound Innovations: Creative Warm-ups: Exercises for Intonation, Rhythm, Bowing, and Creativity — Intermediate String Orchestra* (gold book), is co-authored by Bob Phillips, Kirk Moss, Matt Turner and Stephen Benham

Books are available both physically and digitally. Through SI Online, teachers, students and parents can access multimedia resources including play-along tracks (for every line of music in the green

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CELLO

Chopping Online

by Faith Farr

Last May I had an 8th grade student finishing up Rick Mooney's *Thumb Position* books. When we played the *Boil Them Cabbage Down* duet, I commented that cellists who knew how to chop would be adding that to the off-beat accompaniment. My student said, "I'm interested in that." For his next lesson I dug out a 2-page handout from Renata Bratt's presentation on chopping at the Suzuki Conference in 2010. I understand how to get 3- and 4-note chords under my hand reading a chord chart, but my chopping skills are minimal. This student also plays saxophone in the jazz band and has improv skills that I don't. It occurred to me that somewhere on YouTube someone must have a demo on how to chop on cello that would help my student. A google search came up gold.

I found cellist Mike Block teaching how to chop on two free YouTube videos: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=QvSdj2Qmh74> for basic chop and <https://www.youtube.com/>

[watch?v=UjA3n8rTXTw](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=UjA3n8rTXTw) for more advanced patterns. I also discovered Mike Block gives online tutorials at <https://artistworks.com/cello-lessons-mike-block>. You can sign up for 3, 6 or 12 months of unlimited access to his website for the nominal prices \$105 / \$179 / \$279, but there seem to be frequent "deals." Last summer, my student didn't want to attend a music camp, so we made a pact to do our own "stay at home" summer camp by signing up for 3 months of access. With the Memorial Day "deal" we each paid only \$55.99 and the summer adventure began.

Mike Block divides his material into beginner, intermediate, advanced, bluegrass, jazz, classical, rhythmic & chordal playing, 30-day challenge, contemporary cello etudes, cello reference topics and VIP bonus content. Each area has many (20 or more) lessons. And each lesson has two or three videos where Mike demonstrates the skill and gives clear practicing assignments—

e.g. chop on an open string, then on a scale, then on a I-IV-I-V chord progression. Each lesson video is shot from two camera angles—straight on / the normal audience view of a performance, and overhead / straight down. For me, the overhead view is the first genius feature of Block's material. I found it exceptionally valuable as I worked on chopping, because the overhead view makes really clear the change in contact point from fairly close to the fingerboard for normal / sideways / horizontal / down-bow, up-bow strokes, and the new-to-me vertical / forward / scrape motion towards the bridge that is 90° to the sideways stroke. The subtle change in angle of the bow is also really apparent in the overhead video—use a straight bow for the pitched notes, but the bow tip angles towards your shoulder on the chops.

Chopping

In the basic chop video, Mike explains that

SUMMER STRING PROGRAMS—INFO NEEDED



March 15 Deadline for Spring Issue



Our spring issue will include summaries of string camps in our 5-state region. If you know of a summer program in your area, please send the advance information by March 15 to Faith Farr, *String Notes* editor, StringNotes@mnsota.org. These programs have early deadlines:

Madeline Island Chamber Music: Madeline Is, WI. Chamber Music for Strings for college and advanced high school students, age 14–24: June 23–July 14. App fee \$100 + \$4,200 incl R&B. Financial aid available. Fellowship String Quartet program for advanced college and graduate students: June 23–July 28. App fee \$100 + \$800 incl R&B. Deadline February 15. Study with members of the American String Quartet and artist faculty. Lessons, coaching, master classes, and concerts weekly. Contact MICM—A Program of MacPhail, 501 S 2nd St, Minneapolis, MN 55401, 612-321-0100, info@micm.org, <https://www.micm.org>

Interlochen Arts Camp: Interlochen, MI. June 15–August 4. Tuition includes R&B. 2 wks for Gr 3–6 \$4510; 4 wks for Gr 3–6 \$7775; 3 wks for Gr 6–12 \$6765; 6 wks

for Gr 3–12 \$10,080; 1 wk intensive for high school violin, viola, cello, bass, classical guitar \$1830. Orchestra, chamber music, lessons, enrichment classes. Priority deadline Jan 15. Contact: Admissions Office, 4000 J Maddy Pkwy, Interlochen, MI 49643, 231-276-7200, admission@interlochen.org, www.interlochen.org

St. Paul Chamber Music Institute: St. Paul MN. June 23–29. Fees for 2024 not available at press time. For strings and piano. Gr 7–12, college, graduate. Immersive chamber music program; daily coachings, lessons, solo and chamber music concerts. Deadline Feb 15. Contact: Tom Rosenberg, St. Paul Conservatory of Music, 651-224-2205, <https://thespcm.org/spcmi>

Jacobs School of Music 2024 Retreat for Violin and Viola Teachers: Indiana University, July 6–12. Pedagogy workshop incorporating the philosophies of Shinichi Suzuki, Paul Rolland and Mimi Zweig. Limited to 30 participants. Deadline March 1. Apply: <https://jacobsacademy.indiana.edu/descriptions/summer-string-retreat.html>. Questions? Brenda Brenner bbrenner@indiana.edu 📧

a chop is sometimes thought of as a violent attack of the bow on the string to create a non-pitched, percussive sound. But he prefers to think of a chop as “a sophisticated physical movement that allows you to activate a range of textures in your percussive and chordal playing.” Drop your armweight towards the string, and allow the bow to do a very small scrape at the moment of impact, and you have a chop. We’re trying to create a sound like a snare drum in a drum set, and the chop is almost always on the back beat. Separating the forward / scrape motion from the sideways / horizontal bow stroke motion is important. If you have a scrape with some horizontal motion, you’ll get a crunch. “A crunch is cool, but it’s not a chop.” You need to chop very close to the frog (under the finger of your right hand / under the wire on the bow). If you try chopping at the balance point or towards the middle, you’ll likely get a bounce / rebound from the bow. “A bounce is cool too; but it’s not a chop.”

Chopping also involves putting the left-hand fingers lightly on the strings to dampen the strings to ensure the chop is a non-pitched sound. So chopping on an open string involves lifting the fingers to play open, and then dampening the string on the chop, and lifting the fingers again for the pitched notes.

The first chop patterns were “Note, Chop, Note, Chop” and “Down-Up, Chop-Up, Down-Up, Chop-Up.”



Strum Bowing

As my student was exploring the chopping lessons, I went back to Mike Block’s more basic “Strum Bowing” lessons. In developing the skills to play rhythmic accompaniment, it is important to develop the steady down-up motion of continuous notes where, like a player strumming a guitar, the motion is always back and forth, but the notes have different accents. Mike Block recommends always practicing with a metronome; he appears to have a click track in his ear on his performances. He challenges us to be as picky and precise with our rhythm as we are with our pitch.

The first groove was really comfortable to my classical bow arm.

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

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by Faith Farr



The second groove was pretty comfortable too, because I know that bluegrass music needs the kick on the off-beat.



The third groove (3+3+2) was more challenging at first to play at a quick tempo.



As the “strum” lessons continued, Mike introduced the idea of a ghost note—your bow moves (up bow or down bow) but you don’t play a note. The “air bowing” helps you keep your place in the rhythm. I can play this rhythm leaving my bow on the

string in the rests; I’m working on the skill to keep my down-up going continuously in the air.



As I worked through the Strum Bowing material, I came across the second genius aspect of Mike Block’s website—Video Exchanges. When you sign up for the program, you are allowed to upload a video of yourself up to 5 times in the session. Mike takes time about once a month to comment on the videos. The student submissions and Mike’s comments are part of the wealth of material that is available. A few of the students who have submitted videos are school age, but most are accomplished adult performers and teachers who are expanding their skills. Like every masterclass, it is so

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BASS

Winter Time Bass—Keep at it!

by Tom Pieper

This has been the absolute best year spent on reviewing old music, learning some new excerpts, and stretching my performance opportunities. I decided to refresh my practicing, learn new music in several different genres, and play in as many different musical situations as possible. I just need to continue the process into 2024! As someone who started later on the bass, I missed a lot of initial chances to develop in a traditional way of playing in a school orchestra so I am always trying to reinvent my practice. After 4 months of playing, I realized I needed more help from a teacher who knew more about playing with the bow, so I started with a classical teacher while starting a jazz performance degree. Simandl was by far the most popular method at time and while it helped explain how to navigate through the range of the bass, it was not as enjoyable for others to listen to, and was lacking in solo pieces to perform. One of the best ways to learn is with a combination of personal experience, and the shared group experience found in an orchestra. This can even be better if you can play with a community of musicians whose skills are just a little better than your own. With this in mind, I want to review:

George Vance's *Progressive Repertoire for the Double Bass, Vol. 2.*

Title: *Progressive Repertoire for the Double Bass, Volumes 1-3*

Instrumentation: Bass. Piano accompaniments sold separately. Includes some pieces for two basses.

Author: George Vance and Annette Costanzi

Publisher: Carl Fischer

Size: 9" x 12". Vol 1: 37 pages

Includes online access to demonstration tracks performed by Francois Rabbath.

I bought the three-volume set for the second time last year. My son went through them in the early 2000s and I always remembered some great song choices. For me, I was also exposed to these volumes because several of my students needed to play pieces beyond what they played in

school to audition for other groups with more players and more challenging repertoire. I thought this would be as good a time as any to dive in. Really, Francois Rabbath was not too well-known in the late 70s early 80s—he was more of a rumor! Same thing with Edgar Meyer who was whispered about in music schools. Now these and

many others on bass are well known. In the forward of George Vance's book, Rabbath states how this series is a good introduction to his bass method entitled:

Title: *A New Method for Double Bass, Books 1-5*

Also known as: *Nouvelle Technique de la Contrebasse*

Capuzzi Bass Concerto, mvt 2 — Lorraine Campet

Solo Double Bass

Instrumentation: Bass (with some pieces for bass and piano)

Composer: Francois Rabbath

Publisher: Alphonse Leduc

So let's work with *Progressive Repertoire* as a bridge to prepare for any and all methods raising your performance to a higher level. I am certainly not a Suzuki or Rabbath trained bassist; however I use these books and have found the music enjoyable and the techniques presented insightful. As always, everything is always worth my attempts. Like the rumors above, in the 70s, pivot shifting was muttered about and was akin to wearing sandals with socks—thought to be ridiculous and impractical. None of us had seen it used before, so we were sometimes unable to see the value in

this new way to problem-solve on the bass. After seeing people use this technique it made a lot of sense but past reservations and prior training still created roadblocks. A key thought is to try it out and see what works and what you can use to keep improving. The layout of the Vance books is very useful and easy to follow. A concept is introduced, there may or not be a warm-up technique, and the positions and goal is stated. The alternate position numbers can be confusing but like many things, you can learn to use multiple labels for the notes. Book 3 (Vol.2) continues with skills previewed in Volume 1 but challenges students to transition up the neck and includes longer selections, some with duet options too. My goal was to review this book and play everything

at tempo with a consistently better sound. Highlights in this volume are *Rigaudon*, *Impertinence*, and *Scherzo* among others.

Bassist Jason Heath's website, called double bass headquarters (<https://double-basshq.com/>), is very helpful for diving deeper into this method and almost any topic about the double bass. I took time to learn some of the pieces from watching his performances. Because I am comfortable reading music, it is a nice change to spend time learning songs by ear before looking at the printed notes. This is just the step I am on at this time, but you may also benefit from developing multiple ways to learn new information. The front part of the volume usually has the song in the lower positions and these same melodies appear later in thumb position. I made it a practice to also transpose songs to a few different keys. Try this and see how you like another sound, and notice how it feels to play on thinner or thicker strings. Everything you spend time on will enrich your playing and help you feel successful. Working with these melodies allows you to step out of the background and feel more confident putting your sound out to an audience.

Capuzzi Bass Concerto

As George Vance states, his *Progressive Repertoire* is a bridge to more challenging pieces. The *Capuzzi Bass Concerto* is a standard starting piece and I want to include the second movement in this space. I find Lorraine Campet's version of this valuable as she has many changes to the published bowing that help bring out the cantabile style of this second movement. Noticing as a bass player over a period of time, finally many more editions are available to review and you can view many performances online.

In the opening phrase she decides to start down bow and breaks the slurs in measures 18 and 20 and especially in m.23 she will continue with a hooked bow and break slurs often during the middle of the measure. In this way, she moves to the other end of her bow and draws more sound out of the middle of the measure. Again the changes of slurs in m.26 and m.28 improve the string crossings and help create a clearer articulation. Lorraine's left hand fluctuates between a standard shifting approach as in m.23 and m.34 to keep all her fingers together and sometimes using the closest finger available as in m.60. I like how she changes the bowing on the arpeggios start-

Continued on page 26

The image shows a page of handwritten musical notation for a solo double bass. The title "Solo Double Bass" is written at the top. The score consists of seven staves of music, numbered 59 through 90. Each staff contains a bass clef, a key signature of one flat (B-flat), and a 4/4 time signature. The notation includes various rhythmic values, slurs, and dynamic markings such as "cresc.", "poco", "mf", "f", and "p". Handwritten annotations in pencil or light ink are present throughout, including fingering numbers (e.g., 4 1, 2 2 0 2 2, 1 0 2 0, 4 1-12, 1 2 4 1 2, 4, 2 4 5, 9-2, 2, 1 2 4 1 2, -4, 1-4-1 4, 2 1, 2 4 1 4, 2 6, 4, 2-4-3, 5 4-4 1, 4, 1, 2 1 9, 0 4 1 9 0, 4 1 4-4 2, 4-2 1 0, 0 4 1, 0 1 0, 1 0 4 2) and other performance instructions. The handwriting is clear and legible, with some corrections and additions visible.

Winter Time Bass—Keep at it! *Continued from page 25*

ing in m.41 by connecting the chord across the beats and using more detaché bowings in the middle of the gesture. I think of it as bowing that helps bring out the harmony as it accommodates the string crossings of arpeggios. The line here is the most important musical element and she brings this across throughout the movement.

Check out m.66–73 as a good example of changing the bowing for bow distribution and to bring out a crescendo. Finally starting in m.78, she often plays two slurred and two separate bows leaving alternate down beats on opposite bows. The ending is perfectly articulated with the up bow on m.93 and two up bows in m.94.

Capuzzi — Double Bass Concerto (F major), Played by Lorraine Campet, Double Bass. Part 2 of 3. https://youtu.be/eizUZoRErTI?si=46sV72p6x_eFQK5I

Quia, fecit mihi magna from Bach's *Magnificat*

Next, I have included #5 (*Quia, fecit mihi magna*) of the Bach *Magnificat in D major*. This is a bass vocal solo accompanied by the continuo, but it is very fun to play and could easily be added to your repertoire of things to promote the bass to the non-playing public. With both parts in the score try it as a duo for two basses or a bass and another bass clef instrument. Another great reason to play this piece is how it is placed in the whole piece as it follows a very intense section in F# minor. The return to A major is particularly relaxing and beautiful. Solo vocal pieces help us improve our phrasing and the interaction of the two “voices” is handled as only a master could. I try to remember to discover and include music that is pleasing to hear and perform into

my life! This recording is especially fun to hear with the Violone played by Nathaniel Chase. Period instruments ensembles strive to play music in ways resembling the era of conception so you may notice the key is lower for this performance and sounds in A flat +.05 cents. Listen to it for the feel and notice how the repeated notes grow as they help move the music forward. You can see the bowings throughout if you watch carefully—I included the opening phrase with the hooked up-bows that lead to the strong beats of the measure. This is a common bowing for the whole song.

“Quia fecit mihi magna” | Johann Sebastian Bach | TENET Vocal Artists <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=yR2rVJDw36g>

Stevie Wonder's *Sir Duke*

Stevie Wonder's *Sir Duke* is a very well-known song with a very cool bass interlude that reoccurs in the song several times. This could be played on either electric bass or double bass. Once you accomplish the riff, spend some time learning the rest of the tune. *Sir Duke* is of course pianist/bandleader Duke Ellington with nods to jazz vocalist Ella Fitzgerald as well.

Stevie Wonder—Sir Duke <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=6sIjSNTS7Fs>

It's always great to see the up-and-coming bass stars! So here is one to go out with:

8-year-old Bassist RMG Artist Ellen plays to Stevie Wonder's *Sir Duke* <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=CiyH6EVD8xc>

Tom Pieper teaches orchestra at Central Middle School in Wayzata and acoustic and electric bass at MacPhail Center for Music. †

Sir Duke — Stevie Wonder

Clinic: One-Minute Warmups *Continued from page 21*

Ensemble (Where's the Beat?); Rhythm Fun (What's on Your Pizza?); Grab and Go—Finger Bow; Bowing Styles; Major and Minor; Mixed Meter; Slurring; String Crossings; Do Re Mi (It's All About Mi!). These warmups are intended to be used a la carte, depending on what your goals are for each rehearsal. Pick and choose as needed! Piano parts are optional. Mary and Ingrid then lead us through five warmups as examples of the material they have developed.

Posture / Spoken Word

Starting each rehearsal with good posture and positions is essential in working with beginning orchestras. In *The Posture Song*, students will be able to focus on body awareness prior to playing. *The Posture Song* is spoken (not sung) to a clave beat. The students are expected to perform the actions as they speak. (If some students don't do the

actions, try “opposite song” where students are expected to perform the opposite action to what they speak.)

My feet on the floor, I'm on the edge of my seat.
Sitting up tall so I don't miss a beat.
My instrument's ready, my arms are in place.
Gonna make a big sound to fill all of this space.
Bow fingers loose like cooked spaghetti.
Everything's set and now I'm ready.
Brain - check - Feet - check -
Instrument - check - Bow - check -
Now we're ready - (stomp) Let's go!

Rhythm or What's on Your Pizza?

In this warmup, students will be able to differentiate, demonstrate and create various rhythm patterns. Begin by having your students think of their favorite pizza ingredients. Maybe write on the

board or just remember things like cheese, pepperoni, pie, pizza, anchovy—each word will become a rhythm in a call and response game. The leader speaks the words, the class responds repeating the words, the leader plays the rhythm, the class plays. For instance, in $\frac{4}{4}$ using open D as the playing note:

Pie, pie, pie, pie	
Pie, pie, pizza, pizza	
Cheese please	

Once the leader has given some examples, there is an ad lib section where students in the class can call out words for the group to copy.

Dynamics

This warmup is a 40-measure 4-part chorale composed by Ingrid and Mary that requires students to demonstrate different dynamic levels within and between phrases, as well as between the different string sections. This warmup can also be used for tone production and uniform bow changes. The second time attendees played through, we were instructed to show the dynamics physically. Violinists and violists sit for *mp*, come halfway to standing for *mf* and standing fully for *f*. Cellists lean forward for *f* if they can't stand up. We found that dynamics were much more successful in the phrases where different instruments had different dynamics. We heard as well as saw as the *f* passage moved from instrument to instrument as the rest of the orchestra was *mp*.

The dynamics warm up required use of the whole bow. Mary Sorlie said, “My definition of a whole bow is frog to tip. What’s your definition? Show me!” It can be challenging to get upper string students to move past the square truly to the frog of the bow. Teenage students especially may start to shrink with self-consciousness. Mary showed you are at the frog of the violin bow when you can move finger 1 from the bow hold and touch the A string of the violin. To help students “over correct,” have them hold the bow at the balance point, and then play an up-bow until the ferrule bumps the string. Their bow arm will be past where they need to be with a normal bow hold at the frog. Going “too far” can help them understand where “far enough” is.

Mary then did a fun bow placement exercise saying “frog” or “tip” or “down” or “up” and having students do instant bow placement without playing. “Down” means place at the frog; “up” means place at the tip. The teacher calls the word and does the bow placement . . . and hilarity ensues as the tempo speeds up and the teacher sometimes does the opposite to what the word says.

Mixed Meter

When preparing for a mixed meter piece such as *M to the Third Power* by Carol Nuñez, *Terra Nova* by Richard Meyer, or any piece with $\frac{6}{8}$ and $\frac{2}{4}$ —it’s good to prepare the new rhythms with easy notes. We played a mixed meter warmup composed by Ingrid and Mary. With combinations of $\frac{4}{4}$, $\frac{2}{4}$, $\frac{3}{4}$, and a few measures of $\frac{1}{4}$ at the end—cello pitches were open D and open A. Each time signature lasted only one or two measures. In the first section, cello notes were only on the down-beats—so counting rests was essential. In the middle section, the rhythm was steady quarters with accents at the beginning of each measure. To give variety to rehearsing the accents we were asked to stand or lean on each accent; stomp on the accents; or do body percussion instead of playing—stomp the accents and just tap the normal notes; or stomp and air bow; or half play and the other half raise their hand when they hear an accent. *Count to Ten* by Alex Shapiro (for band or orchestra) was

recommended to give similar experiences; one group can count out loud while another group plays.

Major and Minor


This is a call-and-response experience that uses singing as well as playing. This warmup is best done by rote, rather than watching the music. Through singing then playing students will develop audiation, and the ability to match their fingers to their singing.

Using the lyrics “I’m so happy” “This is major” and “I’m so sad now” “This is minor” the pitches on the D string are D E F# E and D E F# E. The teacher sings; the students echo. The teacher plays what was sung; the students echo. “Happy sad” F# F# F# ♯. “Major minor” F# F# F# F#. After singing and playing the sequence on the D string, repeat on the G string.

Ingrid Koller is a freelance violist, violin and viola instructor, and composer in the Minneapolis/St. Paul area. For 19 years, Ingrid was a co-director of the Early Bird String Academy, a before-school orchestra program in North Saint Paul, Minnesota. You can find out more information about One-Minute Warmups at ingridkoller.com.

Mary Sorlie conducts the GTCYS Philharmonia East and West orchestras and serves as the GTCYS Harmony Artistic Director and Lead violin Teaching Artist. As a studio violin and viola teacher, Mary enjoys teaching students of all ages and abilities and was awarded the 2011 MNSOTA Master Teacher: Studio Award.


Faith Farr has been editor of this magazine since 1996. ♪



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Clinic: Teaching String Techniques has Never been so Easy! *Continued from page 21*

book and select lines of music in the gold book), video lessons from expert musicians and teachers, and supplemental content with additional repertoire for practice and reinforcement. Kirk also mentioned the newer books in the series:

- *Sound Differentiation: for Beginning String Orchestra* that provides differentiated parts for 15 well-known tunes—perfect for a variety of teaching situations, including odd or incomplete instrumentation, or when working with a mix of ability levels.
- *Sound Orchestra: Ensemble Development for String or Full Orchestra* that can be used when starting winds and strings together.

Kirk showed us a chart from David Elliott's book *Music Matters* that relates musical challenge with musicianship. To avoid boredom (because the music is "too easy") and anxiety or frustration (because the music is "too hard") we need to build technique and sound skills. Frustration is not having the technique to play musically. Self growth and musical enjoyment come when the musical challenge appropriately matches the musicianship level. Helping students develop good technique increases retention and student satisfaction.

Kirk took us through various one-line

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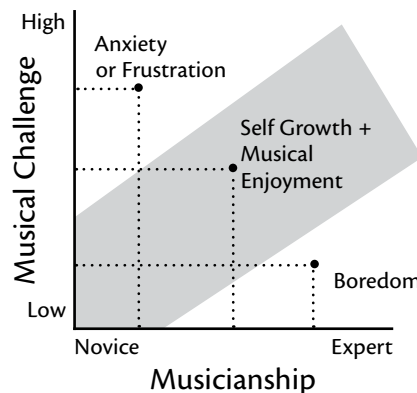
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exercises from *Sound Innovations* designed to develop sensitivity for controlling bow

speed, weight and contact point. He covered classical bow strokes including martelé, collé and spiccato, and contemporary bow strokes like the chop. Left hand development includes finger patterns and shifting exercises. Kirk recommended playing 3 octave scales with the first two octaves in quarter notes, and the top octave in half notes—to have more time to attend to the bow and left-hand precision required in the high register.

The gold book includes a *Sound Creativity* section. Using 8-measure chaconnes in classic, Latin and rock styles, students are given guidelines for creating melodic, rhythmic and bowing variations. The gold book ends with an introduction to the Arabic/Turkish taqsim form. This section of the book equips students to improvise by moving from the familiar to the less familiar.

Kirk is convinced that kids can do anything; we just have to teach them how. Teachers make a difference in the lives of students—keep doing what you are doing!

At the University of Northwestern-St. Paul, Kirk Moss is Dean of 2 colleges and 12 departments from Engineering to Music; he brings a creative lens to STEM areas. He is a past national president of the American String Teachers Association, five times chaired the ASTA National Orchestra Festival, and held office on ASTA's Executive Board. He has coauthored Sound Innovations series method books for Alfred Music.

Faith Farr has been editor of this magazine since 1996. ‡



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Chopping Online

Continued from page 23

worthwhile to see someone play a technique quite well, and then have the master teacher make comments on how to improve. By watching the Video Exchanges, I have learned subtleties that I didn't notice my first time through the lessons.

Contemporary Cello Etudes

Last summer, after working with the material for about a month, I found a place on Mike Block's site that encouraged me to "claim your free book" *Contemporary Cello Etudes*. I entered my address and received the 120-page glossy-bound book containing 28 etudes by Mike Block, Rushad Eggleston, Natalie Haas, Mark Summer, Matt Turner and others. Wow. Each etude is about 2 pages long. Most have several paragraphs to a page or more of text describing the techniques involved, and explaining the special notation used.

By August, my student and I knew the "summer camp" experiment was so successful that we signed up for a full year and my student is now working his way through these etudes. For each one, Mike Block has a performance video that you can watch from the audience view or the overhead view, plus several lesson videos where he explains the special techniques and gives practice tips. I've made use of the video speed control—I find listening / watching at 75% speed helps me take in the details. The number of student Video Exchanges varies with each etude—depending on how many students have worked them up to a

high level. They are all really useful.

Nice Tuxedo by Mike Block works on 3 against 2 polyrhythm and includes an improv section.

Cradle Song by Stephan Braun is a steady-eighth etude with double stops and 3-note chords, and both arpeggiated and scale-wise motifs. The skill to be developed is using your right hand like a fingerstyle guitar player would—using your thumb for the bass on the low strings and alternating your other fingers for the melody/chords on the upper strings. Several students submitted Video Exchanges and I learned a lot about creating dynamics in pizzicato (pizz closer to the bridge for *f* and around the half-string harmonic for *pp*). I also developed more nuance in my left hand—keep the fingers down strongly for a ringing, legato sound, and release the LH quickly for a more staccato effect. Although I've played pizz forever in orchestral works, I'd never taken the time to really refine my pizz sound—when the conductor wanted loud or soft I just pulled more or less hard. Last September, around the time my student and I were working on this etude, I was playing Haydn quartets with friends and did some experimenting with the *Andante cantabile* movement of Op.3 No. 5, which is continuous pizzicato. I'm pleased that my pizz were more varied and more musical than my previous performances of that movement.

Slap by Eugene Friesen raises the pizzicato stakes quite a bit. The tempo is quick $\text{♩} = 140$ and the rhythm syncopated. The C notehead indicates a left-hand slap on the fingerboard with all the fingers across all strings. The x notehead is a muted piz-

zicato—the left hand fingers lie lightly on the indicated string while the right hand pizzes. H is a "hammer-on"—strike the string hard enough with the finger to make the pitch heard without plucking. In the performance video, Mike Block does a lot of "finger drag" with his right hand, which I wrote in under the notes, to show the pizz finger number and then using a dash — to indicate the drag. The first note of this excerpt, B \flat , is a slide from the previous pizz B \natural . Then for the F-G-F on beats 2 & 3, you place your best pizzicato finger (Block uses finger 2) between the A and D strings, then drag through the D/G/C strings in a sort of rhythmic strum to your right to pluck the strings successively. Meanwhile your left hand is a normal firm finger 1 to play the D-string F, touches the G string lightly with finger 4 to mute the open G, and is firm again to play the C-string F. I watched a lot of overhead video at 50% tempo to see the right-hand technique Block used on the performance. This etude is one my student and I got up to a moderate tempo before we set it aside for now.

Currently my student is working on *The Investigator*, a Celtic style tune by Natalie Haas. Both the first part (a $\frac{6}{8}$ jig) and the second part (a $\frac{4}{4}$ reel) are challenging for changing slurs and accents, and both fingered and bowed ornaments. He hopes to perform this at a recital in a few months.

What's next?

I'm not terrific at multi-style playing (yet). But with Mike Block's videos and student Video Exchanges, I am learning enough to coach my student in an area that interests him a lot. Mike Block is helping me achieve my goal of helping my students become better than I am.

There are many other multi-style performer/teachers at ArtistWorks.com. In addition to guitar, banjo and mandolin, Brittany Haas and Darol Anger teach fiddle; John Patitucci—jazz bass; Missy Raines—bluegrass bass; Stu Hamm and Nathan East—electric bass. Perhaps you will find an area to explore for your instrument and your students.

Mike Block is a multi-style cellist who has toured extensively with Yo-Yo Ma's Silk Road Ensemble. Since 2012 Block has been associate professor at Berklee College of Music in Boston. Access his material at <https://ArtistWorks.com/cello-lessons-mike-block>.

Faith Farr teaches at her home in North Oaks. †

Cradle Song
Caprice for Right-Hand Pizzicato
Stephan Braun

Lento $\text{♩} = 60$
Em
Dmaj
Em
Dmaj
D

In this etude to learn "fingerstyle guitar" pizzicato, I put right-hand fingering under the notes, using T for thumb pizz and fingers 1, 2, 3 the same as cellists use for left hand.

Excerpt from Slap by Eugene Friesen

Em7♯5
Em7♯5
Em7♯5
Em7♯5

This etude uses left-hand techniques for rhythmic color and texture. The fingering under the notes is the pizzicato finger, with the dash — indicating drag through the strings.

Mary West Solo Competition 2023

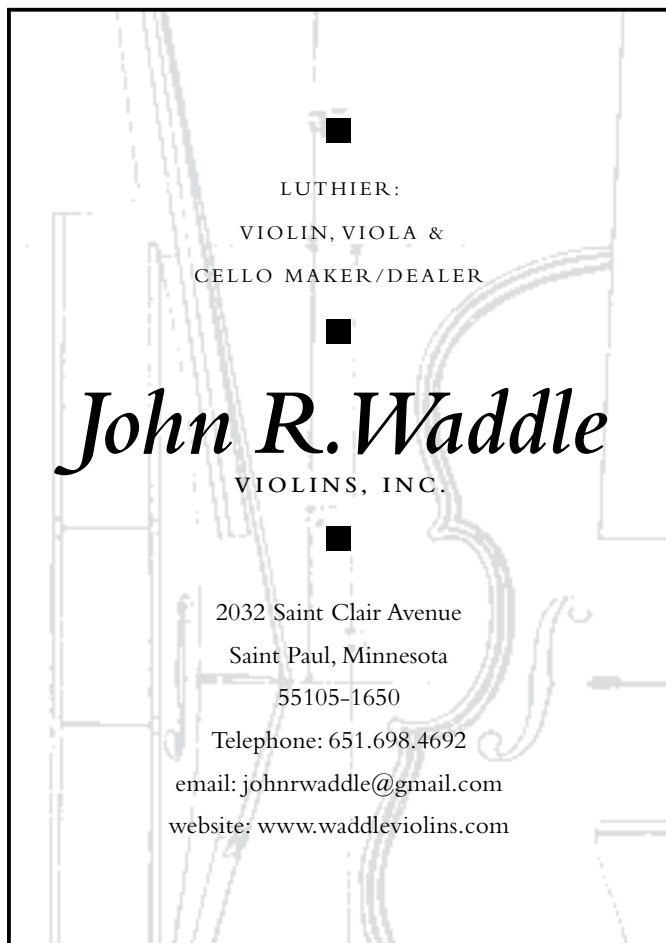
Continued from page 17

adults, \$12 for seniors and free for students.

We would like to send a big “Thank you” to all who made the Mary West Solo Competition a success. Thanks go to Jared Zeigler, Rebecca John, and Tina Brauer in the Augsburg Music Department and facilities for giving us permission to hold the live competition in their facilities. The band room and choir room are excellent audition spaces and the warmup space ample for all. We are grateful to the University of Minnesota School of Music for providing Ultan Recital Hall for the Winners Recital free of charge, including opening the building to the public on a weekend when it was otherwise closed. Thanks go to Peter Remiger, UMN, for his help.

Faith Farr and Daniel Keeler served as competition coordinators—organizing the schedule, coordinating volunteers, working with the judges, communicating with performers, teachers, accompanists and site hosts, and preparing the recital program and taking pictures at the recital. The judges Mark Kausch, Betsy Husby, Rômulo Sprung, and Elise Parker worked together harmoniously and commented on how high the level of the playing was all day. Judy MacGibbon and Laurie Busch assisted as timers and hallway helpers during the competition. Emily Heuschele and Cristina Seaborn helped out behind the scenes during the Winners Recital and Daniel Keeler served as emcee.

Thank you teachers for your hard work in preparing your students for this event. The competition takes place in early November each year. We look forward to hearing your students next year! ♪



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Board Elections

Nominations Due January 2024

MNSOTA members will elect a new President-Elect and a new Secretary and Treasurer this spring. The President-Elect serves 6 years—two years as President-Elect, two years as President and two years as Past-President. The Secretary and Treasurer serve for two years. Elections are held in the spring of even numbered years. Rules for the election are set by our National board and are summarized in the MNSOTA Bylaws found on our website, www.mnsota.org. Elected terms of office begin on May 15.

The current board members in elective positions are:

- Christopher Jannings, Arden Hills, President. (Christopher will become Past-President for 2024–26)
- Becky Plachy, Ellsworth, President-Elect. (Becky will become President for 2024–26)
- Office of Past-President is currently vacant. Normally the Past-President rotates off the Board.
- Daniel Keeler, White Bear Lake, Secretary. (Daniel's term will expire with the election, but he has agreed to run again.)
- Dan Mollick, St. Louis Park, Treasurer. (Dan's term will expire with the election and he is not interested in running again.)

The current board members appointed by the President are:

- KC Thompson, Moorhead, Webmaster
- David Kozamchak, New Brighton, Collegiate Chair & Mentorship Coordinator
- Cristina Seaborn, St. Cloud, Eclectic Styles Chair
- Emily Heuschele, Falcon Heights, Membership Coordinator
- Faith Farr, North Oaks, Journal Editor
- Daniel Ericksen, Member-at-Large
- Deb Sittko, St. Paul, Advisor Emeritus.

MNSOTA seeks to have a broad representation on the board. We want to include different geographic areas, all our main teaching areas—pre-college studio teaching, school teaching and college teaching, as well as performing and conducting.

If you would like to nominate yourself or someone else for President-Elect, Secretary and/or Treasurer please contact President Christopher Jannings. The Board also welcomes anyone who would like to volunteer to assist at any of our events. Please fill out the Talent Search form on our website, or contact a Board member.

The MNSOTA board is an active, working board. Members take a variety of responsibilities for the many activities that MNSOTA sponsors. Board member duties include:

1. Attend/lead/record quarterly board meetings.
2. Coordinate one or more MNSOTA events each year and help when needed with other events.
3. Fulfill your job description from the Board website (ask Christopher Jannings, MNSOTA President, for access to the site if you need details: president@mnsota.org).
4. For President: be present at all events or find a substitute board member when you are not available.
5. Take initiative to ensure growth in string education in Minnesota.

You may nominate a colleague or yourself.

Send your nomination to:

Christopher Jannings,
MNSOTA Nomination Committee Coordinator,
1415 Glenhill Rd., Arden Hills, MN 55112
president@mnsota.org

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:

- [Choir, Orchestra Teacher](#): Eagle Ridge Academy Charter School, Minnetonka, MN
- [Music School Teacher Orchestra](#): Yinghua Academy, Minneapolis, MN
- [0.5 FTE General Music/Orchestra Teacher 2023-2024 School Year](#): Lakes International Language Academy, Forest Lake, MN
- [Violin and Viola Teacher](#): Spark School of Music, Champlin, MN
- [Assistant Professor of Music Education](#): University of Minnesota, Minneapolis, MN
- [Assistant Professor of Music/Music Production](#): Bethel University, St. Paul, MN
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- [Music Teacher—Long Term Sub](#): St. Francis Xavier School, Buffalo, MN
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- [Music Teacher \(Part-time\)](#): St. Pius X School, Fergus Falls, MN
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“You can’t phrase with your neck.” *Continued from page 20*

dynamic was actually softer. I began to be more mindful of when I detected semblances of these habits in my own playing, and realized that sincere musical feeling can easily get housed internally in our body rather than being directed into the string. This concept of being focused on directing energy into the string itself allows us to embrace the energy and emotion that we feel while channeling it into a musical result that we and listeners can perceive.

The nature of music is such that we respond with greater physical energy when the musical energy is also on the rise. Therefore, I am on the lookout particularly in cases of forte dynamics, crescendi, sforzandi, and staccato notes. We see a similar phenomenon in difficult passages, but I’ll discuss that separately.

I see four main areas in our bodies where this kind of overdrive occurs, although I imagine it can vary so widely from person to person that it might help to keep an open radar rather than confining oneself to a shopping list. In my experience the usual suspects are our right shoulder, right thumb, neck, and left fingers.

In the first place, it is extremely helpful to validate the student’s musical feeling. We expect the same in general psychology, and music is no different. A repressed feeling is always going to end up in some godforsaken, unwanted place, ready and waiting to shoot us in the foot at a later date. Ask the student to be clear about exactly the kind of tone, phrasing, or emotion they are trying to generate. Talk about what factors (arm weight, speed, bow placement, sounding point, vibrato) can accomplish that goal. Then have them play a given passage while noticing the physical area in question (perhaps a long stretch of fortissimo while monitoring for a relaxed right shoulder). When this comes up with my students, I make it clear that they will need to set time aside specifically to work on this, and that they should scan their music for a handful of places daily to practice in this way.

Often simply setting aside time to practice awareness fixes the problem. But depending on the zone in question, there may be specific strategies that are needed. In the case of neck tension, the student can play the passage with the head released from the chinrest where it can’t bear down upon the violin in excitement. A friend in Minnesota Orchestra says he was taught to practice musically intense sections while

grinning, because positioning the facial muscles that way releases tension in the neck. When dealing with the right arm, it may prompt us to have a tangent on arm weight in general: I might have the student release their arm weight into my hands or have them place the bow on the string and silently pull the string left and right. I also sometimes have to bundle discussion of right shoulder and thumb because both the bearing down of the right shoulder and the pinching between the thumb and index finger are two popular cheat methods for expediently adding “tone,” and by asking for one to be released, the student might revert to the other. Tight left fingers are a case where surrender is needed, but I find it constructive to ask a student to focus the energy in the right arm and keep the left fingers light. Sometimes I tell younger students that the right arm is forte but the left hand is piano, and joke that it might feel like patting their head while rubbing their tummy.

One of the most encouraging things about this process is that as the student starts to send more of the energy into the violin itself, there is a positive feedback loop: the student hears the newly loud, vivid, or energetic sounds, and receives a sense of satisfaction or completion: “Hey, I’m hearing that intensity I feel internally. I guess I don’t have to push more.” I sense that some of the most tense students are locked in a vicious cycle where, daunted by their inability to get the sound they need, they continue to trap more and more physical energy into any squeezable or press-able muscle group.

Finally, a red herring. Naturally, we all see students who are physically tense when repertoire is difficult. I don’t think what we are seeing is heartfelt musical energy but, rather, instinctual motions related to “holding on” or controlling movements. The solution is a separate discussion, because we are looking to mollify anxiety-driven tension rather than properly channel exuberance. But one parallel I see is that simply telling a student to inhibit physical motions might make things even worse. Perhaps the student can add movement in a particular way (I sometimes feel as though half of bow arm problems are cured by asking the student to use more bow!). I often ask the student to “let X happen” or to make a muscle “soft” or “quiet.” In any case, inhibition has no place on the violin!

I imagine that we will always have

a spectrum of players who incorporate various amounts of motion with equally excellent results. I recently saw Benjamin Beilman perform a recital at Schubert Club and took the audience on an odyssey of color and emotion while staying physically centered throughout. And when Geoff Nuttall of the St. Lawrence Quartet passed away last year, I came across (and encourage you to search for) a YouTube video of the Haydn Op. 20 No. 3 Quartet in which he does all but run laps around the other quartet members. But he does so while keeping an efficient bow arm that generates a great array of color. Many of his gestures involve opening his body fluidly upward and outward, or releasing excess through his feet. It is a lot, but it seems that the energy is never trapped in his body en route to the violin. We can all find a position in this range of possibilities where we can feel comfortable and free and still make certain that our feelings end up transmitting to the listener.

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

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
March 15 is the next deadline!

lective practice minutes to hit a particular goal followed by a reward. Enticing students with a little free time or a movie day can be worth it when the number of minutes they spent practicing outside the classroom exceeds the time you are giving up for the reward. Other challenges can center around proficiency on a musical passage or demonstration of a skill.

You can also create competition between your classes if you teach multiple grades or levels. Posting the progress on the wall in the form of a poster helps students see their progress and may push them to work harder when they see their group falling behind. I recall my own middle school days where the class was challenged to perform a set of scales. I worked harder on those scales than any other music I can remember. The students that passed all of them went on a trip. Of course, you may not be able to use a trip as incentive. It's often more about the attainment of the goal rather than the reward itself once it's complete.

Put Some Air in The Tires

The winter months often include the need to put additional air in our car tires. We and our students can feel deflated at this time. Perhaps we would benefit from some added pressure? Consider doing so with the addition of an adjudicated festival or bringing in an outside clinician.

While it's too late for this year, Middle Level Orchestras should all consider attending one of the MNSOTA regional festivals. Preparing for a performance in front of your peers, for judges, and a clinician can be the right amount of pressure for this time of year. I try to take my students yearly and our preparation for the event

includes some of our most focused work. High School ensembles can consider MSHSL Large Group Contest as well.

If you can't attend a festival or contest, you can also bring in a clinician to your classroom. Consider contacting a nearby university. Music faculty will often work with local schools to promote their college, and you can avoid the high cost associated with bringing in a big-name clinician. For students, it often doesn't take a nationally recognized musician. It's mostly a chance to hear from a different voice. If you have more than one orchestra teacher in your district you can trade classes for a day. If not, your choir or band colleagues still have things they can share with your students regarding musicianship.

All Seasons Come to an End

Hopefully you've found an idea or two in this column. I would not recommend doing all of these things. Pick one and commit to what you are doing. My goal was to brainstorm some possible ideas to help us through the winter months. This season will come to an end eventually. If we can survive the winter doldrums and come away with some skill building or renewed motivation that is a win for all involved.

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

Welcome New and Renewing Members!

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Annette Caruthers, Viola, Studio Teacher, Saint Louis Park
Mary Flanagan, Violin, Studio Teacher, Mankato
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Hayley Virginia Nelson, Taylors Falls
Thomas O'Keefe, Violin, Orchestra Teacher, Northfield
Chung Park, Viola, Conductor, Northfield

Trenton Plopper, Viola, Middle/Junior High School, Faribault
Lori Ringen-Poencet, Violin, Studio Teacher, Rochester
Abigail Spichke, Violin, School (multi level), Plymouth
Rômulo Sprung, Saint Louis Park, Violin, Studio Teacher
Kathryn Christine Thompson, Viola, Orchestra Teacher,
Moorhead
Andrew Towsey-Grishaw, Viola, College/University Professor,
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WI, ND & NE Reminder

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

Membership questions?

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

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Complete all applicable fields on the registration form. If you have any questions, please contact Member Services. We look forward to welcoming you to the ASTA community.



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