

STRING VIBRATIONS NEWSLETTER

SPRING/SUMMER 1997

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FROM THE PRESIDENT

Dear Friends,

As a full but slightly less hectic summer stretches out in front of me, I look back and realize what a wonderful year this has been for string teaching in Colorado. We are seeing ever increasing enrollment in programs throughout the state, flourishing youth orchestras, and bursting private studios. Two new student chapters of ASTA have started in our state this year, one at CU Boulder and one in Grand Junction. Both community and professional orchestras seem to be more stable financially, and our biggest problem is a shortage of qualified teachers.

In this digital age of technology and computers, we are seeing people reach out for the fine arts as a way to rediscover the qualities that make us human. Take time this summer to encourage a potential teacher. Show your students how to blend technology with music and challenge their imaginations. Find time to improve your own skills or develop new ones; learn a new piece, play some chamber music, go to a workshop. Find ways to make teaching and playing a string instrument stay alive and fresh.

I want to encourage all of you to attend our Summer ASTA Workshop on July 28-30. Our clinicians from Zeta Music promise to challenge our minds and entertain our ears. Also, take a moment to browse the enclosed brochure for your C-ASTA String Camp this August. We are very pleased to announce that our student internship at this summer's camp has been awarded to Kathryn Terrill of Eaglecrest High School in Aurora.

Please all take some time, recharge, and have a wonderful summer.

Sincerely,

J. Cameron Law
President, Colorado ASTA

NOTES FROM THE ASTA PRESIDENT:
ONE YEAR AFTER ASTA'S 50TH: A PROGRESS REPORT

Ed Adelson

I am very pleased to report on the state of ASTA, one year after our Association celebrated its 50th Anniversary Convention in Kansas City. I hope you share in the enormous excitement the ASTA Executive Board feels about the beginning ASTA's second 50 year era, as I update you on some of the many ASTA activities and projects.

Service to America's string teaching community remains central to ASTA's mission, and our expanded services and heightened visibility have contributed to a remarkable growth in members of the pasta several years. At last count, membership had climbed to over 11,100. The dramatic growth and retention of ASTA members is in good part a result of the excellent ASTA state governance.

ASTA's strong state leadership was really evident in Baltimore at the 1997 State President Retreat. Over 40 of our 49 state presidents came together for this day-long workshop which included lively discussions of state ASTA issues, interaction with the National Board and the staff from the National Office, and an inspirational talk by Dr. Tim Lautzenheiser.

The retreat was followed by a truly exciting ASTA convention. The convention was a combined project of ASTA, Eastern MENC, the Organization of American Kodaly Educators, Maryland Music Educators, and the Music Industry Council. Over 3,100 educators attended the convention, and all the string and orchestra clinics and concerts were standing room only! My appreciation is extended to the chairs of the ASTA committees for sponsoring the many ASTA forums and meetings; to violinist Franco Gulli and pianist Enrico Cavallo for their beautiful performance of Mozart at the ASTA reception in the Peabody Library; and to the brilliant young jazz violinist Sarah Caswell for her wonderful concert at ASTA's Banquet.

Some exciting new additions to ASTA were showcased during the Baltimore Convention. These included a meeting of the AST Electronic Task Force; the first public forum for ASTA's new Committee on Studio Instruction; and a meeting of the newly-formed String Industry Council (SinC).

ASTA's new String Industry Council has made exciting progress in its first six months of existence. Launched last fall in an effort to unite ASTA with our partners in the string industry, SinC now has over 50 members and has elected its first president, Charles Avsharian of Shar Products, Inc. The SinC Advisory Board has been meeting by phone to assist with setting up the organization, which will soon hold elections for additional officers. SinC plans a number of activities for its members for the coming year.

One visible activity of ASTA this past winter was the ASTA-led boycott of Burger King. This was in response to a negative portrayal of strings in Burger King's advertising, and was meant to send a strong message about the responsibility corporate America has to accurately portray arts opportunities in messages to the public. I am proud to report that Burger King has now produced and aired a commercial which shows string playing in a positive light, and which delivers the message that playing strings is a "cool" activity. As a result of this new, positive commercial, ASTA is no longer encouraging its members to boycott Burger King.

Some in the media criticized ASTA's boycott of Burger King as an over-reaction to a harmless (and fun) commercial. It is important for these critics to understand that, for too many children in our country, the sole exposure to many

arts opportunities is found in the commercials they see on TV. Even though string playing is on the rise in our nation's schools, it remains a sad fact that vast numbers of children have no opportunity to experience strings, and that the legacy of string playing is wholly absent from their lives. Such children are enormously vulnerable to messages in the media, having no way to compare the messages they receive on TV with any experiences of their own. ASTA is gratified to have led a national dialogue about this issue. We hope that this dialogue has helped educate corporations about the responsibility to encourage a full range of arts exploration for children. The ASTA Board is committed to continuing this dialogue with corporate America.

String playing has experienced a lot of positive exposure in the media recently, as well. Many of you have shared with me your feelings after reading the deeply moving article in the March, 1997 *Readers Digest* about the young man, blind and raised in an orphanage in Vietnam, who won the California ASTA Solo Competition. ASTA's new P.R. Coordinator, Carol Rawleigh, is working hard to insure that such positive messages are widely reported in our nation's media. Carol is available to assist in public relations for your state ASTA activities as well, and can be contacted at 910-273-3600, or at rawleigh@nr.infi.net.

ASTA has a variety of new and expanded activities, including new life and health insurance offerings, with materials explaining these new opportunities to be sent to our membership in the coming weeks. On the ASTA Web Page (www.astaweb.com), you can find the guidelines for ASTA's current competition for publishing and recording new intermediate level double bass compositions. You can also find a copy of ASTA's current Strategic Plan. The National Board will revise this strategic plan at a retreat next January, and will fully examine future plans for some of our important activities. As always, I invite you to respond to any of the items listed in ASTA's Strategic Plan. All comments and suggestions will be brought to the next strategic planning session.

As I write these remarks, ASTA is sending to its membership a ballot asking for permission to proceed with plans for unification with the National School Orchestra Association. If the unification takes place, ASTA members will join with the members of NSOA to create a new organization which will include the activities of both organizations.

I also want to remind you of ASTA's first ever national Symposium, to take place at Ohio State University in early October. Bob Gillespie will direct this symposium, which draws upon the results of a year-long investigation by a task force chaired by Member-at Large Dorothy Straub. The result of the symposium will be a document which helps to define teacher training requirements at the university level, so that we can produce string teachers prepared to meet the

challenges of the 21st century. I hope you will consider coming to Columbus in October, and adding your voice to this important ASTA project.

Plans are proceeding for ASTA's 1998 national Convention, tentatively planned for April in Phoenix. There is a form in the Spring *American String Teacher* which invites proposals from ASTA members for clinic sessions. More information about the 1998 convention will be sent to you in coming weeks.

I hope you will write, call, e-mail, or fax me suggestions and concerns about ASTA programs and projects. I look forward to hearing from you, and I wish each ASTA member a happy and productive spring and summer!

FROM THE EDITOR

Thank you to ASTA National Office, the Colorado Unit of ASTA, and the University of Northern Colorado for funding my trip to the National Convention in Baltimore. Many wonderful events were followed by opportunities for socializing and sharing ideas! Look for an article concerning the convention in this issue of *String Vibrations!*

In January at the ASTA Board Meeting held during the Colorado Music Educators Convention, ASTA members felt the "What's a Teacher to Do?" column was worthy of another try. This column was intended as a way for teachers to network with each other and to share common concerns and possible solutions with the ASTA membership. Send your questions to me (Greg Hurley, School of Music, University of Northern Colorado, Greeley, CO 80639) and the question will be presented in *String Vibrations*. ASTA member responses to the question will be published in future issues of *String Vibrations*. Questions could be centered around pedagogy, dealing with students, gaining administrative support and understanding for string programs, or philosophical concerns on issues such as grading. These are but a few of the ideas that might be addressed through this column. I look forward to seeing your questions and responses in future newsletters.

Articles for publication in *String Vibrations* are welcome and appreciated. Articles may be submitted to Greg Hurley at the above address. Many thanks to Beth McCollum for sharing her ideas and submitting her article "**Working Toward a Superior Performance.**" Beth is a string specialist in the Wake County Public Schools in Raleigh, North Carolina. She holds bachelors and masters degrees from Appalachian State University in Boone, North Carolina, and she is the Secretary of the NCMEA Orchestra Division.

Finally, David Rutherford, a UNC graduate, has taken a position in Idaho leaving a position available at Star Valley High School and Jr. High in Afton, Wyoming. David's orchestra was featured on national television in 1996 when the group provided the music for a silent film festival. This event provided national attention to the positive impact string instruction has on the community. Information about the vacancy may be obtained from Dr. Brian Pead, Superintendent (307-886-3811). Good luck, David, in your new position!

Be sure to check out the schedule of events for the Summer CBA/ASTA Workshop!

WORKING TOWARD A SUPERIOR PERFORMANCE

Beth McCollum

Many things work together to help create a superior performance with your orchestra. One of the most important aspects to consider is choosing music that is appropriate for your group. The literature that one selects should challenge and stretch the technical abilities of the orchestra, without being so difficult that a successful performance is out of reach. Strive for a well-balanced program, making sure that all instruments are challenged and that varying keys, style periods, and music styles are represented. Another point of program balance to be considered is that of musical difficulty. It is important to offset a difficult piece with one that, while still a challenge, is more easily attainable.

After selecting the program, study, and mark, and learn the scores before the literature is presented to the students. Once the students are familiar with the music, have them follow their part as you play professional recordings of the pieces. You will be surprised at how many details of style, technique, and interpretation they pick-up. An added bonus of this activity is that your students will develop into more critical listeners.

An ongoing point of concern with any group is posture. Why go to the trouble of getting your orchestra to play the music beautifully if they are going to slouch while performing? Instill pride so that they will want to sit tall in their chairs with their feet on the floor. Do not let them settle for almost right. Have them concentrate on playing with good posture, tone, intonation and rhythm. When you encounter a difficult passage, have the students clap their part with correct rhythm, style and dynamics. This can be done by single section or as tuttle orchestra. To reinforce this, have them do the same passage singing their part on a unison pitch, then plucking the passage, and finally, playing the passage just as they first clapped it, with correct rhythm, style and dynamics. Many problems can be cleared up and many musical aspects can be addressed using this method in addition to being a lot of fun for the group!

Once the orchestra has a good grasp of the music, the real fun begins! Change your routine, after all, we all get a little bored with repetition. Some ideas include: record your group during class and have them listen to and critique their performance; break them into smaller groups and have them play for each other; bring in a guest conductor; scramble seats so that they are not surrounded by people who are playing the same part; have them close their music to see how much of it they can play from memory; and have them sing their parts to help them understand the phrasing. Don't be afraid to try new things. Most importantly, get excited about what you are doing, it's contagious!

There are indeed many points to consider when working towards a superior performance. Including choosing the music to be performed, studying the scores, devising creative methods of presenting the music, and finally, the musical performance itself!

ASTA SPECIAL PROJECTS GRANT

Congratulations to Juliet White-Smith, Professor of Viola at the University of Northern Colorado, who applied for and was awarded a Special Projects Grant by the ASTA National Executive Board. Her project is entitled "The Alexander Technique and its Application to Teaching Music" and will be presented as a weekend workshop next fall. Watch for details in the next issue of the *String Vibrations Newsletter*.

SUMMER CBA/ASTA WORKSHOP REGENCY HOTEL, DENVER, COLORADO JULY 28-30, 1997

Hotel: The workshop will be held at the Denver Regency Hotel (off I-25 at 38th) in the lower convention rooms of the "Gold Dome". Convention rates are \$52.00 per room. You will need to contact the hotel at 1-800-525-8748 by June 28, 1997 to receive this rate. Mention that you are with the CBA convention when you call.

Elitch Concert and Picnic: We have again arranged to join the CBA and their "March Concert" with our "July Concert" at Elitches on Monday evening. We will also have our picnic there with free time in the park afterwards. All paid convention members who are performing will be admitted free to Elitches. Please note: family and friends will need to pay regular admission to get into the park (sorry!). We will meet at the park around 4:00 p.m.

College Credit: Once again we will be offering college credit for attending the convention. U.C.D. will offer 3 credits for attending all 3 days, 2 for 2 days, of 1 credit for attending 1 day. Cost will be \$50.00 per credit hour.

Registration: You may register at the convention, or save \$10.00 and pre-register with the enclosed form. PRE-REGISTRATION IS DUE BY JULY 1, 1997.

SUMMER ASTA WORKSHOP SCHEDULE
REGENCY HOTEL, DENVER, COLORADO

MONDAY, JULY 28

8:00	Registration	
8:30	Orchestra Reading Session Sponsored by Flesher-Hinton Music	Troy Raper
10:00	ASTA Board Meeting	
11:00	"Light Classics" Rehearsal (bring folding stands)	Greg Hurley
1:30	Colorado Music Standards Update	Scott Betts
2:30	ASTA General Meeting	
4:00	Elitches Performance and Picnic	

TUESDAY, JULY 29

8:30	String Technique Forum (Come prepared to share your best teaching strategies.)	Cameron Law: facilitator
9:30	Electric and MIDI String Instruments: Classroom Functions and Applications Part I. Introduction	Drew Tretick & Randy Shawber
11:00	Visit Exhibits	
1:30	Private Studio Teaching	Sue Smith
2:30	Electric and MIDI String Instruments: Classroom Functions and Applications Part II. Applications	Drew Tretick & Randy Shawber

WEDNESDAY, JULY 30

8:30	Practice Habbits of Middle School String Students AND Attitudes of Music Majors toward String Education	J. Emanuelson K. Frink
9:30	Electric and MIDI String Instruments: Classroom Functions and Applications Part III. Lab	Drew Tretick & Randy Shawber
11:00	Recruiting Beginning String Players	Cameron Law & Amber Campbell
12:00	Awards Luncheon	

**CBA/ASTA SUMMER WORKSHOP 1997
CONVENTION REGISTRATION FORM
JULY 28, 29, 30, 1997
REGENCY HOTEL
DENVER, COLORADO**

Name _____

Address _____

Home Phone _____ Work Phone _____

School or Business _____

FEES:

Convention Pre-registration Fee \$35.00 _____

ASTA Dues (if due/past due) \$40.00 _____

Convention Fee after July 1 (or at the door) \$45.00 _____

Please mail registration and payment to:

Nancy Allwein/CASTA Secretary
9517 W. Ohio Avenue
Lakewood, Co 80226

PRESIDENT ELECT REPORTS ON NATIONAL ASTA CONFERENCE

Greg Hurley

In late February, I had the distinct pleasure of attending the ASTA National Conference in Baltimore. Held in conjunction with the Eastern Division of MENC, Maryland Music Educators Association, the Organization of American Kodaly Educators and the Music Industry Conference, the combined partnership provided excellence and variety in terms of clinics, meetings, performances, and vendors. As President-Elect of the Colorado Unit of ASTA, I participated in the ASTA State Leadership Retreat on Thursday, Feb. 27. The State Leadership Retreat gave state unit representatives the opportunity to learn of ASTA projects, services, in addition to informal roundtable discussions. Two exciting new additions to ASTA's programs were announced: namely, the String Industry Council and Membership Health Insurance. Further, the proposed plan to unite the American String Teachers Association with the National School Orchestra Association was presented. Membership in one of these organizations, if passed, (by now you should have received a ballot) would automatically provide membership in both organizations. Strength in numbers is obviously one of the goals of union of these two organizations.

In the days following the State Leadership Retreat, excellent student ensembles performed, informative clinics were presented, and inspiring masterclasses by artist teachers were offered. It was inspiring to watch master teachers Shirley Givens of Juilliard and Peabody Conservatory, Almita and Roland Vamos of Oberlin Conservatory, Herbert Greenberg of the Baltimore Symphony and Peabody Conservatory, and Franco Gulli of Indiana University work with talented youth. At the ASTA reception on Friday evening, which was held at the beautiful Peabody Conservatory Library, Franco Gulli, recipient of the ASTA Artist Teacher Award, performed Mozart's Sonata in B-flat, K. 378 with pianist Enrica Cavallo! The ASTA Award Banquet presented an opportunity to honor those people who have demonstrated excellence in teaching, dedication to students, and service to the profession. The categories for awards were: Citations for Exceptional Leadership and Merit, the Elizabeth A. H. Green School Educator Award, Distinguished Service Award and the Artist Teacher Award. Performances by the Peabody Trio and students of the Peabody Preparatory Young People's String Program were presented in honor of the ASTA Award Winners.

I left the conference with renewed energy and enthusiasm for string teaching and playing, and I am confident that the profession is indeed alive and well. The efforts of ASTA and our state chapter are to be commended for promoting excellence in string education.

