

## **STRING VIBRATIONS NEWSLETTER**

SPRING/SUMMER 1998

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### **FROM THE PRESIDENT**

Dear Friends,

As I begin my term as President of the Colorado Unit of the American String Teachers Association, I am excited about the opportunity to work closely with so many of you over the next two years. As I sit typing this, the OPRAH Show is on the television. Through working together for the common good, Oprah's Angel Network has

been able to raise one hundred and fifty \$25,000 college scholarships for deserving students. This is the power of many small actions collaboratively working for the common good. This is exactly the reason that I belong to ASTA. This is also the reason why I decided to run for President of CASTA. I know we will come together to create some great things for the string students and teachers in Colorado. I want to be a catalyst for supporting our ideas and goals.

We have started down that path. A primary goal I set for the CASTA organization is the rejuvenation of the Colorado ASTA Solo and Ensemble Competition. Beginning with this issue of *String Vibrations*, you will find advertisements. The money raised through advertising dollars will be earmarked for the state ASTA Solo and Ensemble Competition so that awards can be given to the winners. My hope is that the number of people advertising in *String Vibrations* will grow. It is good for the businesses and it is good for the students of Colorado. Please help by spreading the word to music businesses in your area and encouraging them to participate. Advertising rates are based on a full year and consist of: full page = \$150, a half page = \$90, and a quarter page = \$60.

Thank you to the Colorado Unit of ASTA for partially funding my trip to attend the State Presidents' Retreat at the ASTA National Convention in Phoenix. The Presidents' Retreat was informative and the national convention sponsored many wonderful events that were followed by opportunities for socializing and sharing ideas! Congratulations to Susan Day and the Cresthill Middle School Orchestra for a wonderful performance at the national convention. You really did Colorado proud! After attending the convention, my belief is confirmed that, as one of many ASTA members, we are collectively a voice of advocacy and support for string education.

Please submit articles of interest to you for publication in the *String Vibrations Newsletter*. In fact, I may be calling upon you to submit information from time to time. The article submitted by Wendy Yates was an outgrowth of a project for the String Project Pedagogy class at the University of Northern Colorado during the spring semester. The final project was to provide a brief presentation on some aspect of string teaching that was of particular interest to the student. Congratulations, Wendy! Other articles generated from this class may appear in future issues of *String Vibrations*.

An excellent array of activities and workshops are scheduled for the Summer CBA/ASTA Workshop! An Awards Banquet is planned, so be sure to send nominations for CASTA Outstanding Teacher and Lifetime Achievement Awards to Amber Campbell (see form in newsletter). Check out the workshop schedule! Anticipate comraderie with colleagues! College credit will again be

offered through the University of Denver! Come renew and share your experiences and teaching ideas! I look forward to seeing you there!

### **CASTA ELECTIONS**

Results of the recent Colorado-ASTA elections are in! Welcome to the new president-elect and new board members.

They are:

Katharine Mason - President-Elect

Southern Colorado

Alice Caplinger

Northern Colorado

Beth Ellison

Western Slope

Troy Raper

Andrea Meyers will continue to fill a term as Denver Area Representative. Nancy Allwein will continue as Treasurer, but will relinquish the position of Secretary to George Rosenbaum. Feel free to contact these board members with concerns and agenda items.

### **SUMMER CBA/ASTA WORKSHOP** **HOLIDAY INN, DENVER, COLORADO** **JULY 27-29, 1998**

Hotel: The workshop will be held at the Holiday Inn (I-25 at 120th). Convention rates are \$72.00 per room. You may contact the hotel at 1-800-HOLIDAY. A block of rooms have been reserved at this special convention rate and are available on a first come first serve basis. Mention that you are with the CBA-ASTA convention when you call.

Elitch Concert and Picnic: We will join CBA in concert at Elitches on Tuesday evening in the Trocadero Room, and a picnic has been planned before the concert. For convention participants who are performing in the concert, the admission ticket and picnic are free. A discounted admission rate of \$13.95 is available to family members of the performers, and family members may eat at the picnic for \$8.95.

College Credit: Once again we will be offering college credit for attending the convention. U.C.D. will offer, 2 credits for 3 days, or 1 credit for attending Monday or Tuesday. Cost will be \$60.00 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 10, 1998.

**SUMMER ASTA WORKSHOP SCHEDULE**  
**HOLIDAY INN, DENVER, COLORADO**

**MONDAY, JULY 27**

8:00	Registration	
8:30	Orchestra Reading Session Sponsored by Flescher-Hinton Music	Cameron Law
10:00	ASTA Board Meeting	Greg Hurley
11:00	Teaching to the Music Standards in the Elementary Instrumental Classroom	Michelle Ewer
1:30	Reflections on the Past: Building and Sustaining a Model Program	Steve McNeal
2:30	ASTA General Meeting	Greg Hurley

**TUESDAY, JULY 28**

8:30	"Give Me Four!" . . . Strings, Fingers and More	Doris Gazda
9:30	Planning for Instruction: Orchestral Methods for Technical Development	Peter Miller
11:00	Visit Exhibits	
1:30	They Need to Know . . . Intervals, Scales, Bowings, and Harmonics	Doris Gazda
2:30	"Light Classics" Rehearsal	George Rosenbaum

(bring folding stands)

- 6:00 Picnic at Elitches
- 8:00 Performance at Elitches in Trocadero Room

### WEDNESDAY, JULY 29

- 8:30 Sequential Steps for Building Improvisation Skills In Students Greg Hurley
- 9:30 Listening, Singing, and Writing: The Keys to Music Reading Doris Gazda
- 11:00 String Bass BASS-ICS Jim Vaughn
- 12:00 Awards Luncheon

### FEATURED CLINICIAN: DORIS GAZDA

Doris Gazda, co-author of *Spotlight on Strings* (Kjos) and faculty associate at the University of Arizona, has provided the following information regarding her workshops:

"Give Me Four!" . . . Strings, Fingers, and More! This session introduces a new approach to instruction on violin, viola, cello, and bass by using four fingers on four strings with an emphasis on fingering patterns, intervals, and rhythms. It will focus on how music reading and writing skills, introduced simultaneously with rote learning, become dynamic tools in building independence and success for beginning students. The session will also show how improvisation improves listening skills. The new method, "Spotlight on Strings," by Doris Gazda and Albert Stoutamire will enable string students to progress rapidly and effectively while providing a means for the development of individual musicianship

They Need to Know . . . Intervals, Scales, Bowings and Harmonics This session will help string teachers and band teachers who are teaching strings develop understanding of fingering patterns, styles of bowings, the

relationship between intervals and tuning, and rhythmic applications in exercises and scales. Using "Spotlight on Strings, Level Two," by Doris Gazda and Albert Stoutamire, the workshop will include teaching harmonics and vibrato. It will demonstrate that musicianship will be learned through solo and ensemble selections appropriate to the level of advancement.

Listening, Singing, and Writing: the Keys to Music Reading This session will demonstrate how moving through the oral tradition to writing and reading music is a means to becoming musically literate. Improvisation and composition learned in a gradual, systematic way are skills that will improve both music reading and performance technique.

**CBA/ASTA SUMMER WORKSHOP 1998  
CONVENTION REGISTRATION FORM  
JULY 27, 28, 29, 1998  
HOLIDAY INN  
DENVER, COLORADO**

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Home Phone \_\_\_\_\_ Work Phone \_\_\_\_\_

School or Business \_\_\_\_\_

FEES:

Convention Pre-registration Fee \$60.00 \_\_\_\_\_

ASTA Dues (if due/past due) \$42.00 \_\_\_\_\_

Convention Fee after July 10 (or at the door) \$70.00 \_\_\_\_\_

Extra Admission Tickets to Elitches  
number of tix \_\_\_\_\_ X \$13.95 \_\_\_\_\_

Extra Tickets for Picnic  
number of tix \_\_\_\_\_ X \$8.95 \_\_\_\_\_

Total \$ \_\_\_\_\_

Please mail registration and payment to:

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

**CASTA MIDDLE SCHOOL STRING CAMP 8/7-9, 1998  
STUDENT INTERN APPLICATION**

The CASTA Middle School String Camp, held each summer at Camp Cedaredge at the base of the beautiful Grand Mesa, is now in its fifth year. An integral part of this camp is the student intern program. The intern is a student in his/her senior year in high school who plans to major in string education the next fall in college. This student will have the opportunity to work with a professional teacher within the context of the camp to design lesson plans, discuss delivery and classroom management, teach an enrichment class, and receive feedback. The purpose of the program is to provide a potential string teacher with real world teaching experience before the first semester of college. Our interns then return the following summer as a paid member of the camp staff. Interns attend the camp free of charge, and may be paid for counselor responsibilities. This program has been wonderfully successful in the past, and we urge you to please pass along this application to a qualified student.

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Phone \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

Instrument \_\_\_\_\_

High School \_\_\_\_\_

Director's name and phone \_\_\_\_\_

Private teacher's name and phone \_\_\_\_\_

1) Please enclose a brief essay on your musical career goals as well as your reasons for applying for this internship.

2) Please enclose a cassette tape including two short contrasting pieces. Partial movements are acceptable-10 minutes maximum.

Send completed application, essay, and tape to:

Cameron Law  
CASTA Student Intern Program  
611 East Indian Creek Dr.  
Grand Junction, CO 81506

**NOMINATION FORM 1998  
COLORADO STRING TEACHER ASSOCIATION**

**Nominee for CASTA Outstanding Teacher 1998**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Current String Teaching Position: \_\_\_\_\_

**Nominee for CASTA Life Time Service Award 1998**

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Address: \_\_\_\_\_

Past/Current String Teaching Position: \_\_\_\_\_

**Statement in support of nominees.** (Include information about his/her work and accomplishments within the string profession. This might include such things as where he/she taught, dates of service, awards, special accomplishments, contribution to the music community, and impact on the lives of students.)

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Signature of Nominator \_\_\_\_\_

**return nomination to:  
Amber Campbell  
610 Devin Drive  
Grand Junction, CO 81504**

**or**

**email: [amberc@mesa.K12.co.us](mailto:amberc@mesa.K12.co.us)**

**Nominations must be postmarked by July 10  
Comprehensive Private Lessons  
by Wendy Yates**

In this article, I will discuss the importance of incorporating music theory into private string instrumental lessons. As a violist, teacher and musician, I find it extremely valuable to gear all teaching towards an all-encompassing product of musical understanding while developing playing skills. Teaching string instruments is tricky, must be both disciplined and abstract, and without proper focus, can be a frustrating field with many challenges. It's difficult enough to maintain the students' attention span and even more challenging to use this time wisely. All too often, student's end up bored, with little to no comprehension of the music they are trying to interpret.

Our job as music educators, no matter which medium, is to inspire, facilitate, and cultivate a productive learning environment where children will not be afraid of or hindered from reaching their true potential. Emphasizing and interpreting the basic principles of musical theory by means of fun words, sounds, and activities will help communicate and nurture the love for learning music basics such as rhythm, pitch, texture and form.

At every level in our musical training, comprehensive exercises on rhythm can be employed. Focus on a steady beat is of primary importance. Using different syllables and words for different rhythmic units will help beginners to overcome rhythmic obstacles. Whether "ta ta ti ti", or "blueberry", and "strawberry", these connections to our natural speaking patterns clarify rhythmic relationships and strengthen the student's ear and eye coordination (Newman, p. 27). It becomes necessary to consistently quiz students with questions such as "How many eighth notes fill up the time

used by one whole note? (p. 27)." Rhythmic patterns will become familiar and the student will no longer feel threatened when sight-reading. Through integration of language patterns and consistent questioning of students' rhythmic knowledge, the students' brains are allowed to simplify, compute and comprehend accurate rhythm that will serve as a solid foundation for future repertoire.

Pitch is also another area that all music teachers need to address. Students could start by using a piano to check pitch. Major and minor chords, scales and arpeggios should be broken down and explained to students through sight-singing methods such as solfege or scale numbers before applied to instruments. Unfortunately many string students are reluctant to sing and afraid to hear their own voices. The teacher could begin to break this self-consciousness by acting to the extreme by showing ridiculous singing in any genre. This will help lighten the seriousness of things and help kids have fun while attempting to find their own voice. Encouragement of singing is extremely important in all music teaching.

The consistent inquiry on pitch topics, such as intervals and chords, and helping the student to make the connection sound to the visual notes on the page will strengthen overall musical comprehension. Five minutes in each lesson could be spent with pencil and manuscript paper. The teacher's dialogue might proceed as follows: "can you please play the first three notes in your C Major arpeggio? Write them on your own staff paper. Put them together and you'll have written your first C Major chord. I wonder how we could make this happy major chord sound sad and minor?" And the conversation continues! On the instrument, for example, ask the student to play a fourth above f, or a major seventh above c, while discussing the musical and spatial qualities of such intervals. It is also helpful to draw students' attention to other harmonic lines. Ask students to pick a line they haven't listened to and ask them how that line interacts with their own line and the bass line. With proper instruction, activities such as these bring quick improvement and lead to more advanced technical understanding. Double stops and octaves will not be so distant in their future repertoire. In each lesson a new area of pitch and rhythm can be embarked on.

Not only is it important to reinforce rhythm and pitch through repetition and inquiry, it is also necessary to teach students a more specific vocabulary, especially concerning texture and form. These terms will aid in musical comprehension and important memorization skills. Pointing out familiarities and differences in a piece, through the explanation of terms such as monophonic, homophonic and polyphonic music, or repetition, contrast, and phrase, instill a better understanding of unity and variety, which is the foundation of all music.

This thorough development of the rhythmic and pitch memory must be a priority because its goal is geared towards the process and cultivation

of musical understanding which will last a life-time. William Loveland in his book *Common Sense in Music Teaching* lists three basic principles in music education, which stress the importance of a comprehensive curriculum. They are:

1. All that we learn is ultimately based on memory.
2. All we learn is cumulative.
3. All we learn is based on understanding (p. 19).

When classroom and private teachers integrate a music theory into a comprehensive curriculum, they find their enrollment rosters, and concerts more successful and rewarding. In William Loveland's words "Lessons must be interesting, varied, even exciting so that the pupil goes away stimulated" (p. 54). We must seek to expand and open our students' minds so they will be intuitively more dedicated and prepared for any musical arena, whether Carnegie Hall or the local community orchestra.

### Bibliography

Loveland, William(1965). *Common Sense in Music Teaching*. G. Bell and Sons. London.

Newman, Grant (1979). *Teaching Children Music*. Brown and Benchmark. Madison, WI .

### **Congratulations to Susan Day and the Cresthill Middle School Orchestra by Andrea Meyers**

The performance of the Cresthill Middle School String Orchestra at the 1998 National ASTA and MENC Conference in Phoenix, Arizona was remarkable and memorable. The performance was held in the Crowne Plaza ballroom with hardly an empty seat. Sandra Dackow was spellbound, sitting at the edge of her seat throughout the entire concert. In fact, Ms. Dackow led an overwhelming standing ovation at the end of the program!

The honor of performing at this event was hard earned and well-deserved by Susan and her orchestra. Additional "kudos" to Susan for the extraordinary accomplishment of rehearsing and preparing over seventy energetic and highly motivated seventh and eighth grade students. All this while continuing to compose several new string orchestra pieces (be sure to see the performance program on page 14)! Susan is to be honored for providing her students with an unforgettable experience in the context of a challenging and educationally sound tour.

Aside from intercepting a midnight rendezvous and waiting for a few latecomers to the bus, the trip was a wonderful experience for all concerned. Thanks, Susan for including me. A great time was had by all!

