

Journal of the American Viola Society

Volume 24 Number 1



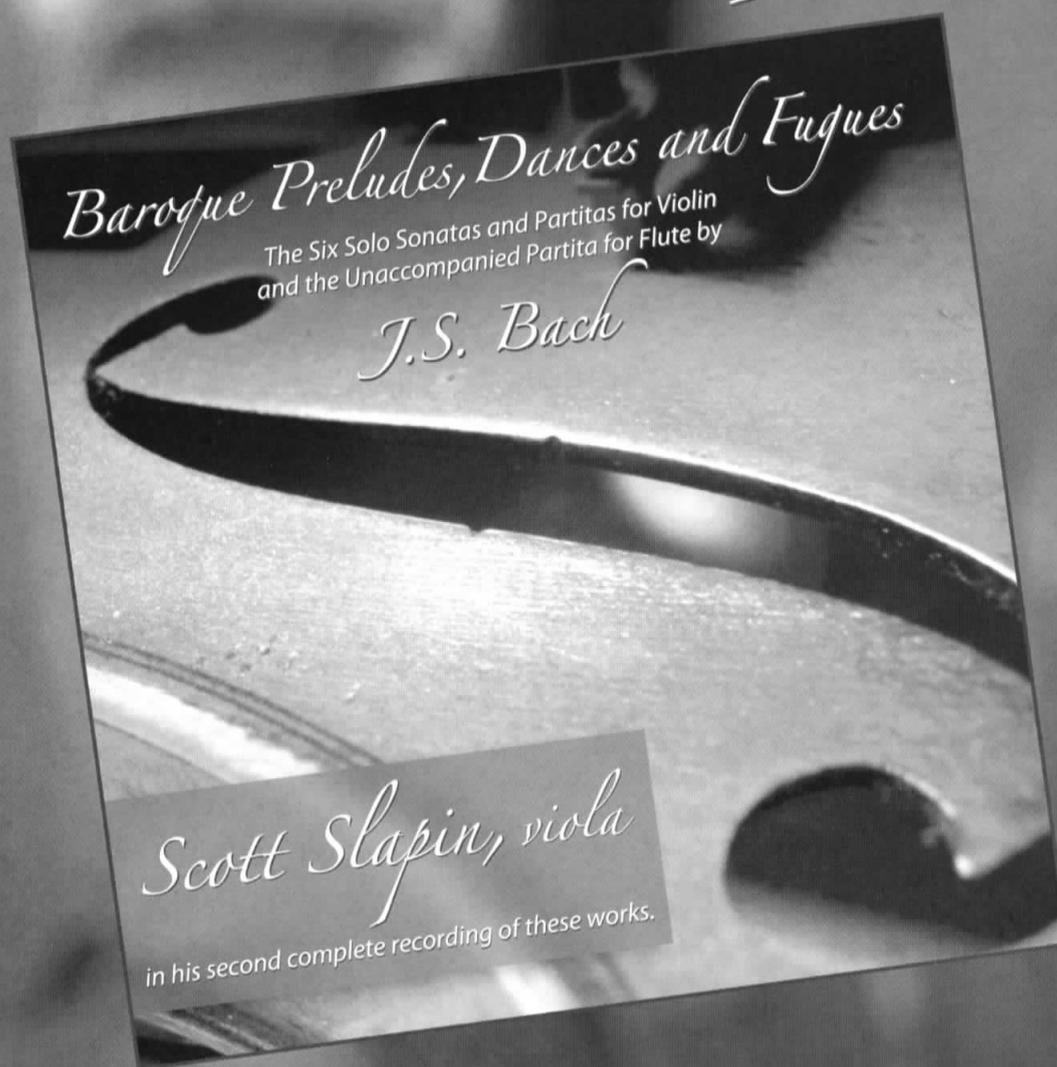
**Features:
Cecil Forsyth**

**Developing a Pre-College
Viola Program**

**Meet the BBCSSO
Viola Section**

J.S. Bach

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Journal of the American Viola Society

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Spring 2008

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- Editor: Matthew Dane
- Alternative Styles: Juliet White-Smith
- At the Grassroots: Louise Zeitlin
- AVS Retrospective: Dwight Pounds
- Fresh Faces: Lembi Veskimets
- In the Studio: Karen Ritscher
- Meet the Section: Michael Strauss
- Modern Makers: Eric Chapman
- New Music: Ken Martinson
- Orchestral Training Forum: Lembi Veskimets
- Recording Reviews: Carlos Maria Solare

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COVER ART

Appelmann Creative created the cover image as part of the print and web campaign to build awareness for the 2008 International Viola Congress. We put our full talent and expertise into every project we work on. Print. Web. Whatever.

The David Dalton Viola Research Competition Guidelines

The Journal of the American Viola Society welcomes submissions for the David Dalton Viola Research Competition for university and college student members of the American Viola Society.

Entries must be original contributions to the field of viola research and may address issues concerning viola literature, history, performers, and pedagogues. Entries must not have been published in any other publication or be summaries of other works. The body of the work should be 1500–3500 words in length and should include relevant footnotes and bibliographic information. Entries may include short musical examples. Entries must be submitted in hard copy along with the following entry form, as well as in electronic format for either PC or Mac. Word or WordPerfect format is preferred. All entries must be postmarked by 15 May 2008.

The American Viola Society wishes to thank AVS past president Thomas Tatton and his wife, Polly, for underwriting first prize in the 2008 David Dalton Viola Research Competition.

Send entries to:

AVS Office, 14070 Proton Road, Suite 100, Dallas, TX 75244.

A panel of viola scholars will evaluate submissions and then select a maximum of three winning entries.

Prize categories:

All winning entries will be featured in the Journal of the American Viola Society, with authors receiving a free one-year subscription to the Journal and accompanying membership to the American Viola Society.

In addition:

1st Prize: \$300, sponsored by Thomas and Polly Tatton

2nd Prize: *Bartók's Viola Concerto* by Donald Maurice and Facsimile edition of the Bartók Viola Concerto

3rd Prize: *An Anthology of British Viola Players* by John White and *Conversations with William Primrose* by David Dalton

David Dalton Viola Research Competition Entry Form

Please include the following information with your submission to the David Dalton Viola Research Competition. Be sure to include address and telephone information where you may be reached during summer.

Name _____

Current Address _____

Telephone _____ Email address _____

Permanent Address _____

Telephone _____ Email address _____

University/College _____

Academic Level: Fr / So / Jr / Sr / Grad

Topic _____ Word Count _____

Current AVS member? Yes / No

If you are not a current AVS member, please join AVS by including \$21 student membership dues with your submission, along with a membership enrollment form, which can be found in the current issue of JAVS.

FROM THE EDITOR

This issue has all sorts of articles and reviews that are sure to pique one's "viola" interest, and a couple of recurrent themes are evident: youth teaching and British viola players. Teaching viola to the young is obviously an important investment in the future, while the British tradition of viola playing from the past century is one to which we are all now deeply indebted.

As it happens, both our author Melinda Daetsch and "Fresh Face" Sarah Bylander Montzka teach using the Suzuki Method. For many of us with past knowledge of Suzuki, the huge growth of the viola version of the Method is a revelation- both Daetsch and Montzka start 4-6 year olds directly on viola. I can only imagine the sound of a 1/8-sized instrument's C-string...but at least that part of sound production gets easier as they grow!

The British influence on both contemporary viola playing and repertoire clearly is enormous. Cecil Forsyth is an example of a British violist and composer whose works for our instrument have been under-performed, most likely due to the fact that Lionel Tertis did not champion the pieces. More on Tertis is found in this issue in Dwight Pounds' typically thorough, well-considered review of John White's biography from last year. Finally, "Meet the Section" introduces the violists of the BBC-Scottish Symphony Orchestra section. Learn about the BBC system of orchestras, as well as get tips for what your own viola section might do to promote group bonding!

It is with mixed feelings that I finish editing my last issue of the Journal. The past four years have been a great learning experience; I have had the opportunity to work with writers from around the country and the world on viola-related topics of all kinds. Viola in Jazz, articles on pedagogy and pedagogues, interviews with violists both young and established, historical pieces, reviews of books, music, and recordings, and many, many columns from local viola chapters around the country- I hope that you, the reader, have

enjoyed the variety as much as I have. It goes to show that even in a field as specific as "the viola" there is so much to explore, so many interesting ideas, and most importantly so many great people.

Speaking of great people, it is with much enthusiasm that I introduce David Bynog as the Journal's next Editor. David brings a wealth of experience to the position. A long-time member of the AVS, he earned performance degrees from LSU and Rice then returned to LSU for a Masters in Library and Information Science. For the last decade he has worked at Rice's Fondren Library in Periodicals and Acquisitions. When not freelancing in the Houston area, David also teaches a graduate course in Musicology at the University of Houston. In fact, you will notice that Bynog wrote this issue's feature article on Forsyth- what better introduction? His passion for the subject and range of experiences give the AVS Board every confidence as the Journal evolves under his leadership. I, for one, very much look forward to reading the results.

Best wishes, and happy practicing!

Matthew Dane
JAVS Editor

The honor and opportunity to serve as Editor of the *Journal of the American Viola Society* is very exciting for me. Under the outstanding leadership of David Dalton, Kathryn Steely, and Matthew Dane, the Journal has grown into an invaluable resource for all aspects of the viola. I hope to carry forward the high standards they have set. Of course, the success of the journal is due to many people in addition to the editor. Numerous individuals contribute their time and skills to help produce a journal that is stimulating and relevant for all of our readers. We all owe a debt of thanks to these people who make the journal happen!

The success of the journal also depends on you: the reader. The contents of each

issue are developed with you in mind and with the goal of promoting the study and scholarship of the viola. I welcome your suggestions for topics that you would like to see in future issues; please feel free to e-mail me with your thoughts. If you are interested in submitting an article for consideration, guidelines can be found in this issue or at <http://www.americanviolasociety.org/JAVS/jav.shtm>. One great opportunity for our student readers is the David Dalton Viola Research Competition. This annual competition has produced several excellent additions to the literature on the viola. Guidelines routinely appear in the journal, and I hope that teachers will spread the word encouraging students to participate.

I look forward to the challenges and rewards that lie ahead. ☺

David M. Bynog
JAVS Editor, effective Summer 2008
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FROM THE PRESIDENT



Dear friends and colleagues,

At the end of June this year my term will end and I shall be stepping down as President of the American Viola Society. Juliet White-Smith will assume her term and I know will carry the society expertly and gracefully through its next few years. Juliet has great experience with our organization and has been a long time member and Board member of the AVS. She and I worked very closely together throughout my term when she was President-Elect and I valued her experience and commitment to the organization greatly.

I thought this might be an appropriate time to give you an overview of the things we have done over the past three years and also what we have planned for the future.

We have been very successful in our international congress search for 2010 (June 16th-20th) which has been awarded to the University of Cincinnati, College-Conservatory of Music with Catharine Carroll as host along with Masao Kawasaki. Cincinnati is perfectly situated in an area not blessed with many viola congresses in the past and we hope this will give new people the opportunity to attend. The facilities of the institution are wonderful and I feel sure that it will be a very memorable congress.

We also started to re-focus the vision of the society and develop two other important

aspects of our work. One is in the educational forum with the creation of the BRATS program and the other is in the instrument loaning program called the VIOLA BANK. BRATS Days have been held all over the country and I hear wonderful reports from those who attend. In addition - we have received many donations for the VIOLA BANK and I wish to thank Robertsons and Sons (our official home for the viola bank) and Sandy Robbins for all her support and drive. Regular reports will continue to be provided to you through the web site and JAVS.

We implemented our "Chapter in every state" drive and have been doing very well with new chapters - in particular one of our largest, the Chicago Viola Society, has re-formed and is now called the Great Lakes Viola Society. We have conducted numerous membership drives and also recently had a 30th Anniversary Donation drive that was very successful - thank you to all who contributed!

We welcome David Bynog as the new editor to the JAVS publication, and say goodbye to Matt Dane who, I am sure you will agree with me, has done an amazing job with our beautiful Journal. We wish him well and thank him for all of his tireless efforts.

In addition, one of our main focuses this year was our financial security. You will find printed in the pages of this journal a financial forecast. This is the new document (drawn up by our excellent treasurer Michelle Sayles) by which we will now plan our finances and program development. This will allow us to more securely move forward in these difficult financial times and to be very aware of how to manage our finances and when we need your help.

It is important to note however some significant points:

1. The AVS has faced some challenges over the last couple of years with increasing costs and initial declining membership and now has a solvent business plan in place.
2. The AVS board has actively recruited lapsed members, revived the Chicago AVS,

and welcomed many new chapters over the last 18 months to grow membership above and beyond previous levels.

3. Largely through the efforts of the board, the AVS has received very generous donations and support from members at large (30th Anniversary campaign to name one), the IVS, Madeleine Crouch, and large corporations like Microsoft- as a result, donations income is at an all-time high.
4. We have worked to make the JAVS more cost efficient than ever before.
5. The board has actively looked for ways to reduce administrative costs (implementing online voting is one such initiative). In addition all of our board members are completely volunteer and receive no reimbursement or financial support including travel expenses to any AVS event.
6. In spite of challenges faced this year, we will still be able to give out a significant amount of chapter grants and BRATS grants to AVS chapters and will be reviewing grant requests over the next few months. Next year, we hope to increase the number of grants even further.

We do believe that we are in a new era at the AVS. We are proud of our new programs and have taken financial responsibility by creating an annual budget and forecast which is a landmark policy change for the AVS.

It has been a great pleasure and honor for me to serve as President. I have made many new friends and colleagues and have enjoyed getting to know our members better. I wish the AVS great success and will always be a proud supporter of the American Viola Society! E

Yours,

Helen Callus
AVS President



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JAVS WELCOMES
ARTICLES FROM ITS
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SUBMISSION DEADLINES ARE
DECEMBER 15 FOR
THE SPRING ISSUE,
APRIL 15 FOR THE
SUMMER ONLINE ISSUE, AND
AUGUST 15 FOR
THE FALL ISSUE.
SEND SUBMISSIONS
TO THE AVS
EDITORIAL OFFICE,
DAVID BYNOG
DBYNOG@RICE.EDU
OR TO
MADELEINE CROUCH, 14070
PROTON RD.,
SUITE 100
DALLAS, TX 75244.

AVS 2007 Operating Budget

(June 2007 - May 2008)

	2007 Plan	Revised Forecast*	Var to Orig. Plan
Income			
Total Advertising	13,000	15,000	2,000
Total Donation	6,000	7,000	1,000
Total Member dues	33,108	32,614	(494)
Total Income	52,108	54,614	2,506
Expenses			
Total Administrative	15,302	15,511	209
Total Awards	390	390	-
Total Congress	1,500	1,500	-
Total Bank	600	600	-
Total Dues Expense	2,200	2,200	-
Total Grant Expenses	2,350	2,350	-
Total JAVS	27,785	25,035	(2,750)
Total Website	1,979	1,979	-
Total Board Reimbursements	-	-	-
Total Expenses	52,107	49,565	(2,542)
Income, less Expenses	-	5,049	5,049

*Based on actual results through January 2008

Treasurer's Report

It was necessary to either cut or delay expenses in order to both deliver the fall issue of the JAVS and to create a break-even forecast for the fiscal year.

- Temporary reduction of Management fees \$3450
- Time-matching donation from Microsoft \$4000
- Delay of IVS dues \$2200

- Decrease in JAVS printing costs -\$1000 and increase in ads +\$1000 per issue
- 30th Anniversary Funding letter increased donations \$1000 (projected)
- Combination of reduced costs, increased donations and delay of IVS dues freed funds for the fall issue of the JAVS (December).
- Delay of IVS dues to the spring and decreased costs of the JAVS eliminated the negative cash-flow situation through December. IVS dues can be paid in spring when greater cash flow is expected from increased donations and dues income.

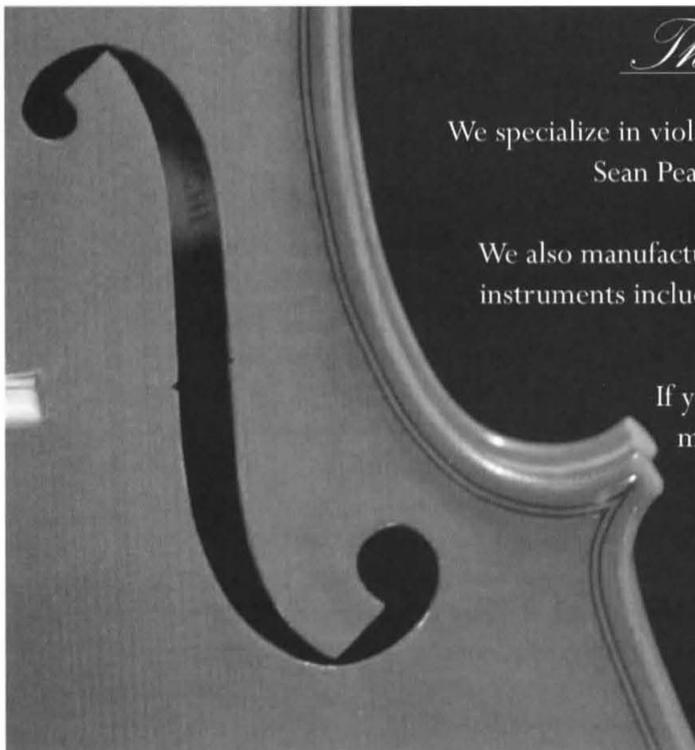
While we will get through the current year, additional work needs to be done to fund 2008.

- Management fees will increase back to normal costs (+ \$3,450)
- ASTA / Congress costs for the board (?)
- Increasing grants back to target amount (+\$2,500)

Other Considerations:

- Will membership stay at the same level with no Congress? Do we need a 2-year plan – i.e., save money in Congress years for the off-year where income may be less?
- Can we sustain General Donations?
- Will JAVS net costs remain the same?
- Will Administrative and Website costs remain the same?
- Will there be costs associated with sustaining the Viola Bank?
- Are there any new projects and what are the associated costs?
- 2009 and beyond – At end of current Treasurer's term, Microsoft time-matching donation will go away (\$4000)

– Michelle Sayles, AVS Treasurer



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36TH INTERNATIONAL VIOLA CONGRESS

The 36th International Viola Congress will take place on the campus of Arizona State University from June 4th through the 7th. Home to some of the best-designed and beautiful facilities in the nation, the ASU School of Music will house all events of the Congress including the XIth International Primrose Competition, which begins on June 1st, 2008. Hosted by ASU's Viola Professor Nancy Buck, this year's Congress promises to be an enjoyable and enlightening experience for student, amateur, and professional violists alike.

While attending the congress, guests are also urged to make the most of their stay in Arizona. Nestled in the splendor of the Southwestern desert, the greater Phoenix Metropolitan area is only a car ride away from some of the world's most spectacular attractions: The Grand Canyon, Monument Valley, Lake Powell, and the red rocks of Sedona.

Registration form found on the following page. For more information, please visit us at viola-congress2008.com ☞

Highlights of this year's congress include:

- **Recital performances by Kim Kashkashian, Paul Coletti, Paul Neubauer, Hsin-Yun Huang, Misha Amory, Carol Rodland, Roland Vamos, and many more**
- **Masterclasses with Heidi Castleman, Jeffery Irvine, Jerzy Kosmala, and Karen Ritscher**
- **Seminars with Composer-in-Residence Joan Tower**
- **Exhibition of instruments by hundreds of luthiers and bowmakers from around the world**
- **A wide variety of classes and lectures including seminars on performance injury rehabilitation, Yoga for violists, and much more**

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Jeffrey Irvine
 July 13th to 20th
 Professor, Cleveland
 Institute of Music

James Dunham
 July 20th to 27th
 Professor,
 Rice University's
 Shepherd School
 of Music

Alar Arad
 July 27th to August 3rd
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 University Jacobs
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Peter Slowik
 August 3rd to 9th
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The 36th International Viola Congress

June 4-8, 2008 @ Arizona State University Nancy Buck, Host Chair

Congress Registration Form

ONE FORM PER REGISTRANT - PLEASE PRINT CLEARLY
ALL CHARGES AND RATES SHOWN IN U.S. FUNDS

I. CONTACT INFORMATION

Name:			
Address:			
City:	State or Province:	Zip or Postal Code:	Country:
Primary Phone Number:		Cell Phone Number (opt.):	
E-mail Address:		Fax number (opt.):	
Company or School (opt., for name tag):			
Special Health Needs? If so, please describe:			

II. VIOLA SOCIETY MEMBERSHIP

ALL VIOLISTS ATTENDING THE CONGRESS MUST BE VIOLA SOCIETY MEMBERS.

I am a member of the (choose one):

<input type="checkbox"/> American Viola Society (AVS)	<input type="checkbox"/> Aus./NZ Viola Society (ANZVS)
<input type="checkbox"/> Canadian Viola Society (CVS)	<input type="checkbox"/> German Viola Society (DVS)
<input type="checkbox"/> Other (please specify): _____	

I am enclosing one year's membership dues to become a member of the American Viola Society (AVS):

<input type="checkbox"/> \$48 Regular (adult/professional)	<input type="checkbox"/> \$58 International (adult/professional residing outside the U.S.)
<input type="checkbox"/> \$21 Full-time Student	<input type="checkbox"/> \$30 International Student (full-time student residing outside the U.S.)
<input type="checkbox"/> \$63 Joint Regular AVS/CVS (Membership dues payable to the American Viola Society.)	

For information about membership in other (international) viola societies, please visit those organizations' web sites.

III. CONGRESS REGISTRATION

PRE-REGISTER BY APRIL 30TH. ANY REGISTRATION RECEIVED AFTER APRIL 30TH, AS WELL AS ON-SITE REGISTRATION, REQUIRES AN ADDITIONAL \$25 REGISTRATION FEE.

<input type="checkbox"/> \$250 Regular Full Congress Registration for adult/professional AVS-CVS-IVS members	<input type="checkbox"/> \$200 Overseas Regular Full Congress Registration for adult/professional VS members (from outside North America)
<input type="checkbox"/> \$150 Student Full Congress Registration for student AVS-CVS-IVS members	<input type="checkbox"/> \$125 Overseas Student Full Congress Registration for student VS members (from outside North America)
<input type="checkbox"/> \$60 (per day) Daily General Admission Rate _____ days attending x \$60 per day = \$_____	<input type="checkbox"/> \$100 Family/Chaperone/Non-violist Admission (for the Full Congress)
<input type="checkbox"/> \$50 (per day) Special Daily General Admission Rate - Available June 5th-8th to B.R.A.T.S. program participants only. _____ days attending x \$50 per day = \$_____ [See the next page for more details on the B.R.A.T.S. program.]	
<input type="checkbox"/> \$20 (per day) Special Daily Family/Chaperone Rate - Available June 5th-8th only to "non-violist" family members or chaperones of B.R.A.T.S. program participants. _____ days attending x \$20 per day = \$_____ (Congress registration fees payable to the American Viola Society.)	



IV. B.R.A.T.S. INFORMATION (optional event – JUNE 4TH)

[*B.R.A.T.S. is the Bratsche Resources And Teaching in the Schools program.*]

BRATS (or Bratsche Resources And Teaching in the Schools) is a unique educational program designed to help viola teachers recruit, work directly with, and reach out to large groups of viola students in their communities. Although this single day event is held in conjunction with the 36th International Viola Congress, it maintains a separate registration process, administered by the Arizona Viola Society. BRATS participants can initiate the process of registration for this special program by downloading the “BRATS Day Registration Form” from the official 36th International Viola Congress web site <www.violacongress2008.com>. BRATS events commence at 12:00 noon on Wednesday, June 4th, and conclude with an evening concert featuring acclaimed violist Nokuthula Ngwenyama. Certain BRATS events are planned independently of the Congress schedule, with activities targeted specifically toward junior high and high school students (grades 7-12).

*Please **do not** submit funds intended specifically for BRATS Day registration with this Congress Registration Form. The only BRATS-related funds that should be included with *this* registration would be for daily general admission to the Congress by BRATS program participants and their family and/or chaperones. (As stated previously in this form, certain special daily Congress admission rates are available to BRATS participants *only*.)

V. CONGRESS BANQUET (optional event – JUNE 7TH)

At 5:00 p.m. on Saturday, June 7th, as a prelude to the concert showcasing the final round of the 2008 Primrose International Viola Competition, the Carson Ballroom of Arizona State University’s Old Main Building will host the 36th International Viola Congress Banquet. For both the fine meal and the celebratory social gathering, the banquet is always a Congress highlight. Seating for this special event is limited to only 210 attendees. Registration for this particular event will close when the seating capacity has been reached. As such, interested parties are strongly encouraged to register early for this event. Registration for the banquet is only available to 36th International Viola Congress attendees.

\$42 Congress Banquet Registration

(Registration fees payable to the American Viola Society.)

VI. TOTAL CHARGES (combined amounts for Sections II, III & V): U.S. \$ _____

Send payment, in the form of check or money order (U.S. funds only, payable to the **American Viola Society**), along with your completed Congress Registration Form to:

AMERICAN VIOLA SOCIETY NATIONAL OFFICE
14070 PROTON ROAD, SUITE 100
DALLAS, TX 75244

Please be aware that online registration allows alternative payment options (beyond checks and money orders), should that be preferable.

*For information on **HOUSING** during the 36th International Viola Congress, please visit the official Congress web site <www.violacongress2008.com>. Both on- and off-campus housing options are available. However, one’s accommodations must be paid for separately from Congress registration. (Housing payments are not made to the **American Viola Society**.)

NOTICE: This convention registration is entered into by the attendee in consideration of the use of the facilities of ASU during the 2008 International Viola Congress. It is understood and agreed that all facilities of ASU will be used by attendees at their sole risk and that attendees shall hold ASU and the American Viola Society harmless for personal injury or property damage resulting from participation in the 2008 International Viola Congress, either on or off the premises of ASU.

CECIL FORSYTH: THE FORGOTTEN COMPOSER?

by David M. Bynog

*A dyspeptic drum-major,
from Crewe,
Could eat nothing but musical stew.
So, each day, a viola
In hot coca-cola
He braised—with a horse-hare
or two.¹*

For many years Cecil Forsyth's name has been relegated to the ranks of the musically ignored and forgotten. As a composer, even his most prominent work, the *Viola Concerto in G Minor*, is unfamiliar to many violists. He does not earn any significant mention in either volume of Maurice Riley's *The History of the Viola*, nor in John White's *An Anthology of British Viola Players*. Yet his compositional output includes three viola works, numerous vocal and choral works, several operas, orchestral works, and chamber music. If his name is remembered, it is largely for his writings, which include one of the most comprehensive books on orchestration, a treatise on violin playing, and several valuable works on music history. A review of some of his contributions important to violists—both compositions and written works—is long overdue.

Alexander Cecil Forsyth was born on November 30, 1870, in Greenwich, England, and was educated at Cranbrook. While little is known about his early musical

instruction, Forsyth relays an apocryphal story about his studies on violin, "I never practised less than two hours a day—and that meant a good deal at an English public school.... I can honestly say that when I ... went up to the university, I went, not having heard the names of Kreutzer or Fiorillo, but with a complete collection of all the most expensive concertos of De Bériot, fantasias by Léonard, *et hoc genus omne*."² While this may not be entirely true, it is easy to believe from listening to his *Viola Concerto* that he was influenced by the works of composers such as de Bériot or Vieuxtemps. Forsyth graduated from Edinburgh University in 1891 and later attended the Royal College of Music. There he studied composition with Charles Villiers Stanford and music history with Charles Hubert Parry.

Forsyth was quite active in British musical life during the early twentieth century. He played viola in both the Queen's Hall Orchestra and the Philharmonic Orchestra. In the Queen's Hall Orchestra he found an ideal vehicle to have his works performed, and several of his compositions were featured in the Promenade Concerts, which were just in their infancy. It was here that his *Viola Concerto* was premiered on Sep. 12, 1903, with Émile Férir as soloist. The work was warmly received. "In Mr.

Forsyth Mr. Wood has made a 'find,' for he has an uncommon sense of dignity and of poetry in the discovery of his subjects.... Not often is a young composer represented at practically his first appearance by a work which in idea, style, and technique shows so much maturity."³ The concerto must have made some favorable mark since it was repeated again in 1904 with Férir as soloist and in 1906 at Queen's Hall with S. L. Wertheim as soloist. This time the criticism was less favorable:

It was this sense of climax that we missed in Mr. Cecil Forsyth's concerto in G minor for viola and orchestra; the codas, for instance, always came as a surprise, and did not seem to have been sufficiently prepared by what had gone before; otherwise the melodious and straightforward work leaves a pleasant impression behind it. It was played well, but not remarkably well, by Mr. S. L. Wertheim, who appeared rather bored by the solo passages and cadenzas, but as these are the dullest bits of the work we ought not perhaps to grumble.⁴

Forsyth completed his second work for viola, *Chanson Celtique*, in June of 1905. The work premiered at the Proms on October 21, 1905 with S. L. Wertheim as soloist. Other compositions of his that were performed at the Proms included four orchestral studies

from *Les Misérables* as well as an orchestration of several works by Mendelssohn.

While still composing, Forsyth turned his attention to more academic writing, beginning in 1911 with *Music and Nationalism: A Study of English Opera*. In this work he discusses the historical, political, and sociological causes concerning the lack of support for English National Opera. He partially attributes the lack of support to the influence of foreign nations—particularly Italy and Germany—on English music.⁵ In 1914 he published what would prove to be his most enduring work, *Orchestration*. This was considered to be one of the most inclusive books of orchestration at the time and is still one of the standard books on the subject. It is notable for Forsyth's extensive remarks on the development of instruments, his prime choices of orchestral examples, his frank and humorous assessment of the character of instruments, and the inclusion of several less used or obsolete orchestral instruments such as the viola d'amore, the guitar, the serpent, and the Russian bassoon. He even included the Highland bagpipe in his second edition of the work. Forsyth's caustic wit shows throughout his comments on many of the instruments. Even the viola does not escape him:

*The Viola is not merely "a big Violin." It is a Viola. . . . [Regarding tone quality] The top string is perhaps the most affected. Its quality has something nasal and piercing; something suffering, even unpleasant. A prominent melody on this string becomes unbearable after a short time. . . . The instrument, however, is often entrusted with melodic passages in [the] middle register, and no better example could be given than the beautiful subject already quoted from Tchaikowsky's Romeo and Juliet. . . . The bottom-string of the Viola is the most characteristic of all. In fact, to the average concert-goer the Viola is only a Viola when it is on its bottom-string. "Sombre, austere, sometimes even forbidding," its mere sound, even in the simplest phrases, is sufficient to conjure up the image of Tragedy. Indeed, the simpler and more persistent the phrase the greater its effect when played on the Viola.*⁶

Forsyth's thoughts on orchestral writing for the viola is reflected in his earlier solo writing for the viola, as both the Viola Concerto and the *Chanson Celtique*

make frequent use of the lower register employing simple, lyrical phrases.

That same year, in response to World War I, he left England for the United States. Working from outside England, he had less influence on promoting his works there, and he produced very few large-scale works after 1914. By this time Lionel Tertis, a colleague of his from the days in the Queen's Hall Orchestra, was already making a name for himself as a viola soloist. Neither of Forsyth's early viola compositions seemed to gain favor with Tertis, thus his viola works suffered from a severe lack of visibility in England.⁷

Forsyth settled in New York in 1914 where he worked for the publisher H. W. Gray. He continued composing and wrote several additional texts including *Choral Orchestration* and *A Digest of Music History*. In 1920 he wrote *Modern Violin-Playing* with Samuel B. Grimson. This book aims to provide "an accurate study of the physical laws that govern violin-playing," and contends that successful violin playing depends "on the proper understanding and application of the laws of anatomical action."⁸ The book primarily focuses on proper physical positioning of the hands, fingers, and instrument. Forsyth was likely responsible for the comments on playing the viola in the book:

*Every violinist should also play the viola. If he asks the reason of this strange advice, the answer is "for his own benefit." But will not his intonation be spoiled? No, it will be improved. He will be forced, by the difference in the note-spaces, into a much more accurate consciousness of his own finger-board. To gain these advantages he need not, of course, play the viola in public. But if he plays it at home, it must not be with the sort of amiable condescension with which a crack trumpeter takes up the coronet. If he feels any snobbish inclination to begin by calling it "the more dignified instrument," he should pause. It is tonally the equal of the violin, historically its superior. And if it is useless for flashy trick-work, it can offer, as a humble substitute, much musical loveliness in the twin-realms of chamber-music and the orchestra. Another caution. There is no need to sprawl and wallow in one's chair, because one is playing the viola. Violists do not. As a joke, wallowing is poor: as art, disrespectful.*⁹

A few years later, in 1922, Forsyth published one more work for viola, *The Dark Road*. The work was also published that same year in an arrangement for solo organ. The piece did not seem to attract much interest and is not even listed in standard bibliographies of viola compositions. Forsyth continued writing and composing, mostly vocal works, and died in New York on December 7, 1941.

It is evident from Forsyth's writings that he was very learned and erudite. These works display a wonderfully acerbic wit that spilled over into the texts of some of his vocal works, several of which he wrote himself. His music displays a keen flair for melody and orchestration but seems very limited in development. His fairly conservative harmonic structure, particularly compared with his English contemporaries from the early twentieth century, coupled with his lack of promoters in England, helped to prevent him from garnering much attention. Nonetheless, his viola works are quite attractive and worthy of more interest.

Viola Concerto in G Minor

The *Viola Concerto* was written in 1903 and premiered at a Promenade Concert on September 12th of that year. *The Observer* had this to say about the work:

He composed the concerto heard last night specially for Mr. Férris, the excellent player who "leads" the violas of the Queen's Hall orchestra, and who, of course, was responsible for the solo part. The work is described by its composer as "an attempt to write a concerto in which the beauties and possibilities of the viola are used without any imitation of the technique of the violin or violoncello." He complains that the viola is so little used as a solo instrument that listeners, hearing it, usually make a sort of mental comparison of it with the violin and cello; and this, of course, is not only unfair, but leads to an overlooking of the individual merits of the viola, which, though unable to do much that is possible on the other instruments, can, on its own ground, "give them points."¹⁰

Written in an ultra-Romantic style it is, perhaps, reminiscent of Saint-Saëns. It is an ideal work for an intermediate to advanced student who longs for a "true" Romantic viola concerto. The piece is very

well-written for the instrument and sounds virtuosic without being too technically demanding. Since Forsyth was both a violist and a competent orchestrator, the balance is consistently right with brawny tuttis but a light orchestral texture while the viola is playing. The melodic and harmonic content of the concerto displays a decidedly British palette.

While suitable for students it also deserves a higher degree of visibility in the repertoire of professional viola soloists. The viola and piano reduction, with the piano reduction by noted pianist and composer John Ireland, was originally published by Schott in 1904 and was reprinted in the 1990s (Schott ED 1077). Violists are fortunate that the work has been recorded twice. Lubomir Mal's recording with the Prague Symphony Orchestra was released on compact disc in 1993 (Panton 81 1306-2 011) and Lawrence Power's account with the BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra, coupled with the equally under-rated concerto of York Bowen, was released in 2005 (Hyperion CDA67546).

The first movement begins with a rhapsodic introduction suitably demonstrating the upper and lower registers of the viola. After a brief tutti the viola introduces the lyrical first theme in G minor. The first movement follows a fairly standard sonata form with an impressive cadenza immediately before the recapitulation. It is the melancholy second movement that generates the most enthusiasm as expressed in *The Times*, "A very refined gift of melody and the power of inventing characteristic themes both belong to Mr. Forsyth, while his ability for emotional expression was impressively shown in the beautiful slow movement."¹¹ The final movement, marked *Allegro con fuoco*, contains a simple dotted-rhythm motive, with the violist frequently playing multiple stops. Forsyth's lyrical writing emerges again with a contrasting theme, first in E-flat major and later in G major.

Chanson Celtique

Chanson Celtique, sometimes referred to as *Chant Celtique*, is a short piece for viola and orchestra written in June 1905. The Celtic nature of the piece was undoubtedly due to Forsyth's recent work with Charles Stanford on organizing a collection of Irish Folk tunes gathered by George Petrie. Of the 1,582

tunes ultimately published in this collection, Forsyth specifically chose to incorporate number 699, “I Grieve for My Lover in Secret.”¹² The *Chanson Celtique*, like his Viola Concerto, received several performances with orchestras during the first part of the twentieth century. Notable performances in the United States include Émile Férir’s performance with the Boston Symphony in April 1912 and Herman Kolodkin’s performance with the Cleveland Orchestra in January 1920.

The work begins with a brief introduction in D minor in which the viola plays a solo, lyrical melody. It is followed by the Irish tune from the Petrie collection that is briefly developed before moving to a contrasting theme, largely reminiscent of the introductory material, first in A minor and then in A major. It concludes with a return to the Irish tune in D minor. A relatively simple piece, it is very suitable for intermediate students. It was published by Schott in 1906 for viola and piano and is currently available in the anthology *Viola Music for Concert and Church*, edited by Joseph Boetje and published by Boston Music Company (B.M. Co. 11013).

The Dark Road

The Dark Road for viola and string orchestra was published by H. W. Gray in 1922 and presumably written that same year. It was premiered on November 27, 1922, with Mrs. Schradieck Aue as soloist. The premiere was the inaugural concert for the Montclair Art Association Orchestra, the predecessor of the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra. The work is “practically formed out of one very simple six-note theme. This is treated for many measures with considerable sombreness and severity of effect; but later gives way to a sweeter version of itself (in the major) which is built up to a climax. This leads, by means of a little ‘bridge-passage,’ to a return of the original subject.”¹³ The work was never published in a viola and piano reduction and probably received few if any performances other than the premiere. The short work is in G minor and, as described above, contains a simple, lyrical theme. The theme is repeated numerous times but there is little variation, embellishment, or development and little of harmonic interest. Easily it is the

weakest of his viola compositions, and it is unsurprising that it did not attract much attention.

Forsyth’s Musical Legacy

When evaluating Forsyth’s lasting contributions to music his reputation rests on his scholarly writings. His book on orchestration is the most successful of his works and has become a standard resource on this topic. His thoughts on orchestration have influenced generations of musicians, and while most musicians are probably unfamiliar with his compositions, they are much more likely to know his name from this book. His writings on nationalism in English music—most notably in *Music and Nationalism: A Study of English Opera*, but also in other works—have remained influential, particularly for highlighting frustrations that many English composers were feeling at the end of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century.

His compositions have proven much less enduring, and it is essentially his viola compositions that have remained in the musical repertoire. Certainly a large share of Forsyth’s failure to leave a significant mark as a composer rests with Forsyth himself. He never seemed to build on the momentum of his early compositions. In early 1903 W. Barclay Squire ranked Forsyth in a group of promising young composers and grouped him with Cyril Scott and Ralph Vaughan Williams as the most interesting of those composers.¹⁴ “Of Mr. Forsyth I can only say that the songs of his which were sung by Mr. Campbell McInnes (at Miss Verne’s concert on the 3rd), and by Mr. Francis Harford on the 10th, impressed me so much by their strongly poetical character, that I hope that before long other compositions by him will be forthcoming.”¹⁵ Only a few months later he achieved great success with the *Viola Concerto*. A few other successful compositions followed, but none that really stirred great excitement in listeners or performers. Forsyth continued to compose throughout the rest of his life, but other musical matters seemed to occupy his time, leaving less time for perfecting his craft as a composer.

Many of Forsyth’s compositions were performed and published during his lifetime, but several factors have

subsequently contributed to the neglect of his compositions. Many of his pieces are out of print, and only a handful of his works have been recorded. A significant number of his works are large-scale orchestral pieces or operas, which means they are much less likely to find a contemporary venue for performance than if he had written more chamber music. The music for his choral works and songs are largely unavailable, and with the vast repertoire available for the voice it is unlikely Forsyth's contributions will see much of a revival, though there are some hidden gems in these vocal works. Also, his conventional compositional style and general use of nineteenth century harmonic language makes his works less interesting than some of his contemporaries. Ultimately, in the larger framework of music history his limited number of compositions and their lack of innovative features do not make him a prime candidate for a large resurgence.

The *Viola Concerto* is by far his most successful composition, and, speaking musically, it is perhaps his best. It was an important piece in the history and development of the genre for the viola. One of the earliest viola concertos of the twentieth century, it achieved critical acclaim resulting in numerous performances during the first quarter of the century both in Europe and America. Had Lionel Tertis or William Primrose shown interest in the work, they likely could have built on the early critical reception of the work and made it a staple of the repertoire. The later composition of several significant viola concertos by other composers in the twentieth century also helped to push this work into the margins. However, with the reissue of the music and two recordings, interest in the work is being renewed. Both it and the *Chanson Celtique* are gaining attention from violists once again, and they are occasionally being performed on viola recitals. While Forsyth's music is unlikely to gather a great revival that many other English composers, such as Frank Bridge, York Bowen, and Rebecca Clarke, are receiving, his viola compositions are worthy of preserving his legacy as a composer and deserve attention from a new generation of violists.

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formance schedule as a freelance violist in the Houston area. His primary teachers have included Jerzy Kosmala, Csaba Erdélyi, and Roberto Diaz. Bynog will begin his tenure as JAVS Editor with the Summer 2008 issue.

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¹ Cecil Forsyth, "Inspissated Gluem," in *Clashpans: Five-Line Staves on Matters Musical* (New York: Cornwall Press, 1933), 19.

² Cecil Forsyth, "The First Performance of Gounod's 'Redemption' (Epic of the Stolen Pig-Cart)," *Music & Letters* 6, no. 1 (January 1925): 88.

³ "Promenade Concerts," *Times* (London), Sep. 14, 1903, <http://callisto.ggsrv.com/imgsrv/WrapPDF?banner=46f288a3&digest=fe2e5b8dd5873468e2da28af23775163&contentSet=LT&recordID=0FFO-1903-SEP14-005-F> (accessed August 1, 2006).

⁴ "Queen's-Hall," *Times* (London), Sep. 27, 1906, <http://callisto.ggsrv.com/imgsrv/WrapPDF?ban->

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⁵ For a more detailed view on the rationale behind this book see Meirion Hughes and Robert Stradling, *The English Musical Renaissance, 1840-1940: Constructing a National Music*, 2nd ed. (Manchester, UK: Manchester University Press, 2001), 119-23.

⁶ Cecil Forsyth, *Orchestration*, 2nd ed. (New York: Macmillan, 1949), 381-94.

⁷ John White discusses Tertis's "equivocal position in the musical world – on the one hand always searching for repertoire, on the other hand ignoring important new works or simply being oblivious of their existence." John White, *Lionel Tertis: The First Great Virtuoso of the Viola* (Woodbridge, UK: Boydell Press, 2006), 94. White specifically mentions that Tertis never performed Forsyth's *Viola Concerto* but that he was certainly aware of the work (*ibid.*, 309). The concerto would have been an excellent piece for Tertis and his disregard of this work is curious.

⁸ Samuel B. Grimson and Cecil Forsyth, *Modern Violin-Playing* (New York: H. W. Gray, 1920), 1.

⁹ *Ibid.*, 53.

¹⁰ "Promenade Concerts," *Observer* (London), Sep. 13, 1903.

¹¹ "Promenade Concerts," *Times* (London).

¹² George Petrie, ed., *Petrie's Complete Irish Music: 1,582 Traditional Melodies* (Mineola, NY: Dover, 2003), 176.

¹³ *Concert of Orchestral Music at Montclair Art Museum* (n.p.: Nov. 27, 1922), program note.

¹⁴ W. Barclay Squire, "On Some English Music," *Pilot*, March 21, 1903, 280.

¹⁵ *Ibid.*

IN THE STUDIO

BUILDING A PREP VIOLA PROGRAM

by **Melinda Daetsch**

- The Irish step dancer bounds onto the stage as twelve violists play their two-part rendition of the Drunken Sailor. At the end of the performance, the audience is on its feet applauding wildly.
- Thirteen young violists tour France and Switzerland performing in fine concert halls, and also busking on the streets to enthusiastic response.
- A viola ensemble of sixteen players walks out on stage to perform a “STOMP”-like version of a Bartok duo, clapping and stomping Bartok’s rhythms with energy and style as the audience watches in fascination.
- Twenty-six violists take the field dressed in the New Britain Rock Cats baseball team’s colors before the start of the game to play an arrangement of the National Anthem in eight parts - 2000 people cheer in the stands.
- A group of violists from the United States joins violists from all over the world to play a special concert of viola ensemble music in Turin, Italy after the Winter Olympics; they form international friendships and create music across linguistic and cultural divides, perhaps giving hope for a world where beauty can be shared in spite of differences.



Holden Nardini warms up for the Rock Cats game.



Tour group performs in 12th century Church near Interlaken, Switzerland.

Viola jokes? – Perhaps. But, each of these five scenarios actually happened, and the outcome was that more kids wanted to start playing the viola after each of these events. Comments like, “Wow, viola is such a beautiful instrument! We

had no idea!” came flooding in. Asked to contribute some thoughts and ideas on the topic of “growing pre-college viola programs,” I started to think about why it is that the pre college program at the Hartt School has grown consistently over

the last six years. Perhaps the secret to growth is to offer stimulating, challenging musical goals, and to build community within a program. I have also learned that growth can occur in unexpected ways.

When I came to the Hartt Community Division in 2002 I was asked to develop and “grow” the viola program. I immediately thought of enticing violinists to switch to viola. I thought of offering interesting viola events such as field trips, masterclasses with visiting artists, tours, and other “cool” things. I myself had been a Suzuki violin student who discovered the viola when I was twelve years old while attending a chamber music camp that was in need of a violist. I enthusiastically volunteered to play the viola since I had always wanted to play the cello anyway, and I figured that this would be my way to the C string.

I had come to the viola myself after eight years of violin lessons; I was unsure about introducing the viola to very young beginning students as their first instrument. I thought that it was more “normal”

for students to come to the viola after having had a firm foundation in the violin.

Imagine my surprise when I discovered that I would be teaching some eager four and five year old violists at the Hartt Suzuki program who had consciously decided that they really wanted to play the viola (not the violin). “How can they know this at such an early age?” I asked myself. (Then again, for that matter, how do kids know that they want to play the *violin* at such an early age?) The mother of one of my five-year old viola beginners informed me that she had taken her son to watch the teaching of different instruments in group and individual lesson settings and her son had been firmly convinced after hearing all the instruments that the viola was for him. When he started his lessons, he took to the viola with focus, determination, and gusto, (I called him my “mini Primrose”) and I found myself revamping my ideas about how to grow a viola program. I had been thinking that the growth would come from violinists who wanted to switch to viola, or

from students who had started viola in the public school and now wanted to have private lessons. Growth has indeed occurred in this manner, but I have been amazed to find that every semester I have more and more requests from the parents of very young children (and from the young children themselves) who have heard the viola groups perform and want “that sound.” (Well, maybe it has to do also with some of the “shenanigans” – such as the clapping and stomping Bartok rhythms described above – that the viola groups get into on stage as well.)

In the Suzuki Method students receive private lessons and group lessons every week and at the Hartt Suzuki program, students are also placed into one of five levels of string orchestra as part of their normal curriculum. I am thrilled that even the youngest violists can start to have orchestral and ensemble training. The life of a violist (amateur or professional) is so much about playing in ensemble that harmony is much more a part of the violist's life than just melody. Even the youngest beginning level groups of viola students start class by playing scales in thirds and thus harmony becomes a normal part of their lives. The fact is that hearing inner harmonies and intervals is essential for violists. This understanding fits in nicely with “growing a viola program” since it highlights the fact that music is usually not made alone but in collaboration with others, and social settings are a natural result. Social settings of course give rise to parties, and we all know that violists love parties!



Busking in Solothurn, Switzerland.

Once every semester we have large group class concerts for all the instrument groups in the Suzuki program at Hartt. The violin group classes play repertoire from the Suzuki literature while accompanied by the piano. The viola groups perform pieces arranged for Viola Ensemble without piano (see wonderful offerings from Elizabeth Stuen Walker and Joanne Martin) and the Suzuki viola repertoire is performed with duet/trio and quartet accompaniment from the more advanced viola groups which results in rich harmonic texture instead of simple unison performance of melody. Prior to every group class concert I gather all the viola group classes together for a couple of mass rehearsals (there are about 45 students in the viola program now). This group rehearsal is always exciting and motivating for the youngest viola students as they look up to the older students and realize that someday they will be playing at advanced levels themselves. The older students feel proud to “mentor” the younger students, and everyone experiences what it is to play successfully in harmony. After the most recent mass group class rehearsal, the mother of my newest viola beginner told me that her daughter went home from the rehearsal and got her viola out of the case and kept playing all afternoon because she was so inspired to hear the wonderful sound of a viola choir all around her and she couldn't wait to be able to play more music herself.

Young musicians inspire each other.

My most advanced viola ensemble; “The Hartt Community Division Viola Tour group” is probably the

group that has done the most to recruit students for the viola program at Hartt due to the fact that they are the most visible performing group. The Tour group is open to any violist who has polished and memorized the Telemann Concerto in G major, and who can make a commitment to attend weekly rehearsals. The group meets every Saturday morning from 9:30-11 and does a fair amount of performing in and around the community, and beyond (see above “viola jokes”). The group was in existence when I came to the Hartt school as an advanced Suzuki group class. My colleague Emily Yaffe and I decided to reformat the group and open it up to Suzuki *and* traditionally trained students who wanted ensemble experience. In the fall of 2002 our group was comprised of a mere seven high school aged violists and we met in a small room on the ground floor at Hartt. We experimented with various viola ensemble literature offerings, and were always looking for ways to develop the group musically.

Shortly after we began to work together with the Viola Tour Group, Emily and I discovered that we both were avid baseball fans and we figured we could turn this mutual fanaticism to our advantage to build our program for young violists. One of my friends had made an arrangement of the National Anthem for eight violas that I “premiered” with my viola students at the Luzerne Music Center Summer Music Program in a softball game between the Philadelphia Orchestra and the Luzerne Music Center students the summer before I moved to Hartford. (The Luzerne

Music Center kids lost the game, but the violists were a huge hit!) Emily and I dreamed of our viola group playing at a “real” baseball game, and Emily was able to set up a performance for our fledgling viola group for the New Britain Rock Cats, the farm team for the Minnesota Twins! Eight of us, including Emily and me, donned the Rock Cats colors and went to play on the field. This event turned out to be a huge success for the ballpark and for us. We have been invited back every season for six seasons. The Viola Tour group has grown since 2002 to include more than 25 students, and last season we actually filled the dugout before we went onto the field!. The violists now look forward to this yearly event and the youngest students can't wait until they are able to be included. Families are thrilled because they can invite relatives to come and hear the kids play in a setting that includes a ball game as well as the performance. One family scheduled a family reunion around our ball game performance and bought thirty tickets for their extended family members, most of whom never would have darkened the door of a concert hall, but were completely up for accepting a “concert” at the ball game! (Next goal? Fenway!)

When I arrived Hartt in 2002, I came with an invitation from the Swiss National Suzuki Institute to bring a group of students to the Swiss National Conference that was slated to be held in Bern in 2004. While it seemed rather crazy to think of trying to get the viola group ready to be “musical ambassadors” to Europe in only two years, this goal provided such incentive and momentum that we saw the group double in size in

one year. The sheer enthusiasm of the members of the group spread to other students in the school and beyond. In preparation for this tour the level of the group as a whole shot up at lightening speed and the individual members of the group developed personally on every level. The Tour was a huge project, but the result was fantastic beyond belief. The Tour group repertoire included Bach's Brandenburg Concerto # 6 (with violists on all parts), and a feisty arrangement of the Drunken Sailor for two violas. Since our step dancer couldn't go on tour with us, the members of the viola group actually danced while they played, which really brought down the house wherever we performed in Europe. Then there were arrangements by Elizabeth Stuen Walker and Joanne Martin of Shostakovich and Celtic music, the Telemann concerto for two violas, and a special arrangement of the French National Anthem for four violas which surprised and pleased our French audiences who leapt to their feet in amazement as soon as we started to play their anthem. The whole trip was exciting, and the friendships that formed within the group, and with new international friends, continue strong to this day.

Since 2002, the viola program at the Hartt Community Division has grown from a handful of violists to a huge, solid group of 45 students. As a result, The Connecticut Youth Symphony, which also meets at the Hartt School, boasts a strong section of 14 violists, and the chamber music program at the Hartt Community Division has enough very able violists to supply every string quartet. While not necessarily the goal of developing the viola program, many of the violists who have come through the program have fallen in love with the viola to the extent that they are pursuing their viola studies at such schools as The Eastman School of Music, the Hartt School, The Interlochen Arts Academy The Juilliard School, The New England Conservatory, Oberlin, Peabody Conservatory, and many others. Many of our current students and alumni go to summer music programs such as Aspen, Encore, The Great Wall Program, Interlochen, The Kennedy Center Orchestral Studies Program, Kinhaven, The Luzerne Music Center, The Quartet Program, Tanglewood,

and others. Motivation has given rise to motivation. Some alumni from the Tour group are playing electric viola in rock bands, enjoy playing viola in their college orchestras, and some have even started to teach the viola and pursue Suzuki teacher training.

Many factors contribute to the successful growth of a viola program. I have discussed just a few of the endeavors that have worked in my experience. I cannot close without saying that for me there is an element of "being in the right place at the right time," which may be the single most important reason that any program can succeed. I have been very fortunate in my teaching career to work in places where people were interested in and excited about making music and learning to play the viola. I have also been fortunate to work with colleagues who were like-minded and willing to think way outside of normal bounds, and to teach students who have joy and enthusiasm to spare. Come and visit "Violaland" in the "Harttland" any time, and you'll see what I mean!

— Melinda Daetsch is Adjunct Professor of Viola at the Hartt School, (University of Hartford, CT), coordinator of the Suzuki Viola Program at the Hartt Community Division, and is on the faculty of the Luzerne Music Center, NY. Equally passionate about teaching and performing, Ms. Daetsch has been guest artist with the St Petersburg String Quartet, The DePasquale and Everest String quartets, the Philadelphia Piano Quartet, the Claremont and Lions Gate Trios.



Tour group in Solothun, Switzerland (including new Swiss friends that were our hosts.)

AVS RETROSPECTIVES:

REFLECTIONS ON THE 5TH INTERNATIONAL VIOLA CONGRESS — JUNE 3,4,5, 1977 THE EASTMAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC

By Myron Rosenblum
Sunnyside, NY

*Historic photos by Louie Ouzer,
Rochester, NY-
restored by Dwight Pounds*

After the remarkable 3rd International Viola Congress at Eastern Michigan University in 1975, the second viola congress on American soil, the 5th International Viola Congress, took place two years later on the campus of the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, New York. Initial efforts to hold the congress in Banff, Canada suddenly fell through; so

with the assistance of Louise Goldberg (violist and librarian at the Eastman's Sibley Library) and Francis Tursi (Eastman's viola faculty), the congress was arranged and took place in June, 1977.

This congress featured an almost entirely new roster of viola soloists and teachers, and, like the 3rd Congress, highlighted William Primrose as honored guest and speaker. In addition to Mr. Primrose, this congress was graced by the extraordinary talents of Francis Tursi, Walter Trampler, Paul Doktor, Michael Tree, Jacob Glick, Martha Strongin Katz, and

Heidi Castleman. Other violists who appeared as performers were William Berman, Robert Coleman, Harold Coletta, Myron Rosenblum, and Robert Slaughter. Well-known violists Lillian Fuchs, Ernst Wallfisch, William Lincer, Abraham Skernick, and Karen Tuttle were invited to participate, but for various reasons declined and we can only speculate how much better this wonderful congress would have been with their presence.

The opening event was a concert of unusual concertos for viola with orchestra. Assisted by the United States Air Force Chamber Orchestra, Robert Coleman was viola soloist in Sir William Herschel's *Concerto in F*; Harold Coletta, violist was featured in Roman Hoffstetter's *Concerto in E flat* and Robert Slaughter, viola and Myron Rosenblum, viola d'amore were the two soloists in Christoph Graupner's *Double Concerto in D*. For those who still believed in the dearth of Classical-period viola concertos, it was a revelation to learn that Herschel, whose legacy remains as a famous astronomer (he discovered the 8th planet, Uranus) and Hoffstetter,



Walter Trampler performs Rolla with Air Force Chamber Orchestra.



William Primrose during his formal talk.



William Primrose surrounded!

who is now known as the true composer of the Haydn, Op. 3 string quartets, each composed three viola concertos. Graupner, a contemporary of Bach and Telemann, was fond of both viola and viola d'amore. Not only did he write two concertos for viola d'amore and viola soli with strings, but composed a Sinfonia for soli viola d'amore, cello, and bassoon with 3 violas and basso, as well as employing viola in a solo capacity in two operas—*Dido* (1707) and *Antiochus and Stratonica* (1708).

The turnout at this congress was somewhat smaller than at Ypsilanti but still impressive. The directory made available to all members at the congress listed a total of 250 attendees, performers, and speakers. Nevertheless, the prevailing dynamism, excitement, and general enthusiasm at the EMU congress continued at Eastman. As in Ypsilanti, the presence of William Primrose electrified us all and to have the opportunity to hear him speak and mix informally with all us was a unique experience.

Solo recitals were given by, in chronological order: Walter Trampler (Rolla's *Rondo in F* and Joh. Amon's *Concerto in G*—both with orchestra—plus Shostakovich's Sonata); Paul Doktor (Sonatas by Schubert, J.S.Bach, P.Locatelli, and Brahms, plus John Biggs's *Invention for Viola and Tape*); and Francis Tursi (Sonatas by Verne Reynolds and Brahms, plus Bloch's *Suite*). A concert of music for multiple violas offered music by James Fry and Raymond Helble. Among the fine violists who performed in these multiple viola pieces were Sally Banks, Jeffrey Irvine, Leslie Blackburn, Karen Griebling, and Marna Street.

The Cleveland Quartet -- Donald Weilerstein and Peter Salaff, violinists, Martha Strongin Katz, violist and Paul Katz, cellist, performed the Ravel quartet and Mozart's wonderful D Major quintet with Francis Tursi as guest violist. How gratifying it was to hear Katz and Tursi play Mozart so wonderfully together.

Other events of note included a lecture by John Celantano (*Viola Pedagogy – High School and College Level*) and lecture-demonstrations by both Carleen Hutchins (*Violas from 12 to 20 inches – Their Research and Development*, which was impressively illustrated by William Berman playing Persichetti's *Infanta Marina* on Ms. Hutchins's 20 inch viola) and Jacob Glick (*Music for Viola and Tape Since 1970*, in which Glick performed intriguing music by Jean Ivey, Joel Chadabe, Diane Thome and Thea Musgrave). Glick



The Cleveland Quartet performs Mozart with Francis Tursi.



Walter Trampler and William Primrose

was a fine violist and musician who had a passion and a commitment to contemporary music and dedicated a good part of his professional life to it. Heidi Castleman's *Some Seldom-Considered Aspects in Playing the Bach Suites* had fascinating and thought-provoking insights, focusing on aspects of tempo, meter, phrase length, rhythmic patterns, bow strokes, and the background of French and Italian styles in the Baroque and

dance steps of the period. Two excellent Castleman students--Mary Ruth Ray and Allyson Dawkins-- illustrated Ms. Castleman's theories and approach to this superb music, played on viola with much enthusiasm and conviction.

Paul Doktor's master class focused on Brahms' *Sonata op. 120, no. 2*, Bach's *Gamba Sonata No. 1* and Hindemith's *Der Schwanendreher*.

Leslie Blackburn, Nina Falk, Jeffrey Irvine, and Paul Silver were the impressive students with whom Doktor worked.

Needless to say, one of the highlights of this congress (as with the 3rd International Viola Congress at EMU) was the presence of William Primrose. The attendees were invited to submit questions to Mr. Primrose, and so for two hours we were graced by the inspirational, often witty, perceptive, and experiential commentaries of one of the great string players of the 20th century who was, along with Lionel Tertis, surely the "Father" of modern-day viola playing.

Louise Goldberg gave two events of interest: *Virtuoso Viola Music Around 1800* in which Marna Street performed Georg A. Schneider's *Solo for Viola No. 5*, Hoffmeister's *Concerto for Viola in B flat major* (yes, another Hoffmeister viola concerto!), and Giacomo Zucchi's *Tema con Variazioni*. Immediately after Doktor's solo recital on the second night, there was a "mini-concert" of viola d'amore music from the Huberty Collection, a MS that exists in the Sibley Library and which Dr. Goldberg edited and had published. This music was played by Dr. Goldberg, E. Markus, and Marna Street.

Walter Trampler, looking as elegant and dapper as always, held an open discussion with the audience and gave much insight into practical aspects of viola technique, practicing, and performance. Michael



Michael Tree

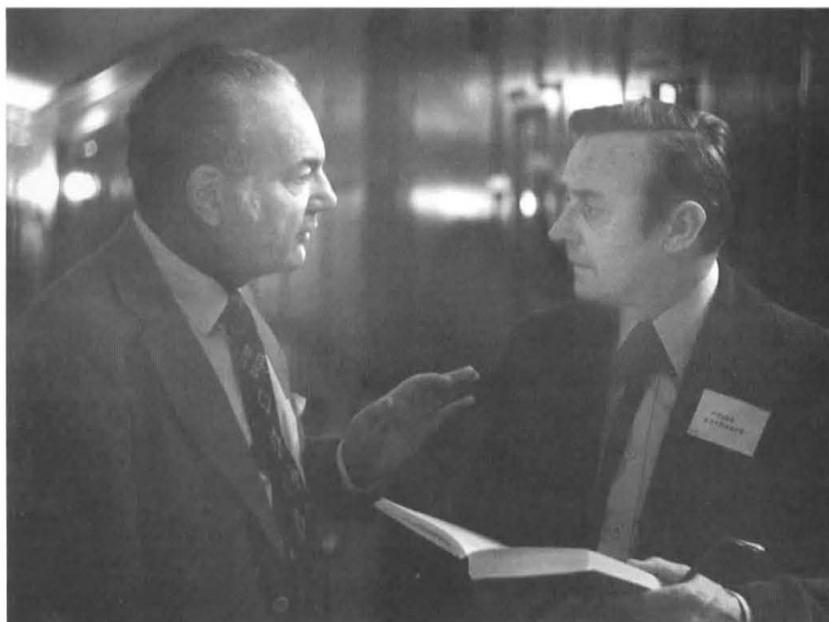
Tree, a crossover violinist and now a strong proponent of the viola, talked on *The Viola in the String Quartet*. Questions from the audience were invited in both talks.

A business meeting of the Viola Research Society (the predecessor of the American Viola Society and the American chapter of the international society, the Viola Forschungsgesellschaft) took place on the first day and the many productive discussions held that day would lay the groundwork for the next stages of the American Viola Society, such as the establishment of chapters; future elections of the Executive Board (Marna Street and Ann Woodward were accepted as temporary secretary and treasurer;

Louise Goldberg was already acting as temporary vice-president); newsletters; more student involvement; exhibits of new violas; future congresses; and a composers' showcase for new viola compositions.

It is intriguing to see some of the other important violists, viola teachers, and AVS-affiliates who came to the congress as attendees -

- Roberto and Manuel Diaz, Nathan Gordon, Karen Dreyfus, Burton Fine, Baird Knechtel, Robert Oppelt, Guillermo Perich, Dwight Pounds, William Preucil, Maurice Riley, Karen Ritscher, Thomas Tatton, Lawrence Wheeler, Ann Woodward, Eric Chapman, and Franz Zeyringer. Many of these have gone to positions of greater prominence in the viola world.



Paul Doktor and Franz Zeyringer



Harold Coletta tries out an instrument.

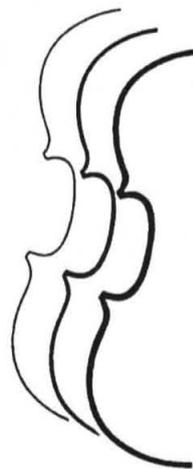
Though the Eastman congress was less glamorous than its predecessor in Ypsilanti, it was still outstanding, largely owing to the superb artists who performed. To have William Primrose, Paul Doktor, Walter Trampler, and Francis Tursi all together for these few days provided an exceptional experience for us all. It is with some sadness to note that most of these viola soloists who took center stage at Eastman are no longer with us. But their legacy continues in their recordings and their many pupils who have filled that void in today's viola world.

It was the role of both the 1975 and 1977 congresses to set the stage for the many impressive

International Viola Congresses that followed and it is most gratifying to see how these musical events have grown and blossomed, to offer great violistic and musical experiences, abounding with outstanding viola talent. As William Primrose said in his 1975 talk at Ypsilanti, "You've come a long way, baby!" Yes, indeed!

— Myron Rosenblum, violist/viola d'amore player, was the creator and founder of the Viola Research Society, the predecessor of the American Viola Society and the first president of the AVS. His viola studies were with Lillian Fuchs, Walter Trampler and William Primrose. He has appeared at many International Viola Congresses as speaker and performer

and was intimately involved in the programming of the first two congresses on American soil, at Eastern Michigan University, Ypsilanti Michigan in 1975 and the Eastman School of Music, Rochester, New York in 1977.



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ALTERNATIVE STYLES

VIOLA WORKS BY JAMES GRANT AND ADVENTURES IN COMMISSIONING

by Michelle LaCourse

James Grant is one of those rare contemporary American composers who enjoy a thriving career outside of academia. His music is fresh and eclectic, exploring a wide variety of harmonic and formal approaches to everything from solo instrumental pieces to major works for symphony orchestra and chorus. Violists have a true fan and a friend in Grant, whose appreciation for the dark, moody, and rich sounds of our instrument has led him to score an impressive number of pieces for viola. These include works of a fanciful nature, and a number of pieces written in a jazzy, “blues-y” style, which I believe is a welcome addition to our recital repertoire. I love the viola repertoire, but I must admit that it is dominated by big, heavy and somber works (and, I would guess, the highest percentage of elegies in any instrument’s rep!) Who doesn’t love the chance to sing high drama through our instrument? But I’ve often sought new ways to lighten the mood of viola recital programs while including only truly worthwhile compositions. Jazzy, fun, quirky, sultry, or eccentric are adjectives not often used to describe pieces we play, but here we have a wonderful collection of just that sort, in pieces long and short, presenting a wide range of technical challenges. What follows are overviews of nine viola pieces

written by James Grant. Along the way, I’ll also describe some options for commissioning new works, a satisfying venture that is not nearly as complicated or difficult as one might assume.

Torch for viola and string orchestra (2001): In 1997, I had the good fortune to be one of the

violists (along with Eve Abraham and Michael Kimber) invited to present the first performances of Grant’s new viola concerto with a consortium of orchestras. Each orchestra contributed to the commissioning fee, and the “multiple premieres” were all presented within a span of several months. After the initial performances of the

III. Triple Mocha Indulgence from CHOCOLATES

mm. 1 - 20

The musical score is for the piece 'Triple Mocha Indulgence' from the work 'CHOCOLATES', measures 1 to 20. It is written for Viola and Piano. The score is in 4/4 time and features a key signature of one flat (B-flat). The Viola part begins with a measure rest, followed by a series of eighth and sixteenth notes, including triplets and a 'rit.' (ritardando) marking. The Piano part starts with a 'mf' (mezzo-forte) dynamic and includes a 'poco cresc.' (poco crescendo) marking. The score includes various musical notations such as slurs, accents, and dynamic markings like 'p' (piano) and 'mp' (mezzo-piano). There are also performance instructions like 'Freely' and 'Steady' with corresponding tempo markings of 84 and 60. The score is divided into systems, with measures 1-8, 9-10, 11-15, and 16-20 shown.

Waltz for Betz

mm. 1-20

viola concerto, the composer, always responsive to feedback from soloists and conductors, revised the concerto, and the final version of the work emerged as the piece that is now entitled *Torch*. In this version, the piece is about fourteen minutes long, and is separated into three distinct movements. The first is a gentle dance including playful exchanges between the viola soloist and the strings of the orchestra, gradually increasing in intensity and flirting with dissonance. The second movement, entitled “Recitative” allows ample opportunity for the

soloist to explore colors and tonal variety in its intense and slowly unfolding turbulence, which evolves into a cadenza section that explores all ranges of the instrument and a broad palette of emotions as well as virtuosic technical challenges. The final section of the piece explores the harmonies and lush melodic style of the popular American 40s and 50s ballad or “torch song” (typically about love and longing, or “carrying a torch” for someone). It was this part of the piece that inspired me to ask Grant to write me a set of torch songs for viola and piano.

Chocolates (torch songs for viola and piano) (1998) is a three-movement work (about sixteen minutes long) written completely in the language and style of those passionate and tuneful ballads and jazz improvisations known as torch songs. The first includes a quasi-recitative “song intro” section that develops into an expansive tune with varied presentations of the line and chord progressions full of jazz and blues harmonies that would bring out the “closeted nightclub singer” in any of us. The second movement is in a slow ballad style, full of yearning and reminiscence. The third movement, entitled “Triple Mocha Indulgence”, takes melodic material and chord progressions through three distinct treatments (in slow, moderate, and fast sections), with delightful results. Short quotes of melodic material from Gershwin, Bach, and others emerge here and there in improvisation-style sections (a la Art Tatum), and along the way we hear everything from a “soft shoe” section to a “honky-tonk piano” solo. Grant subsequently orchestrated the piano part, thus adding another concerto to our repertoire in a fresh and very attractive style. I commissioned *Chocolates* (original version with piano) in part with “faculty development funding” from the university where I was teaching at the time. Many colleges and universities (especially state schools) have a pool of funds available for faculty members to use toward the purchase of scores or equipment that will help in their teaching studios, or for special projects that will aid their career development

or that will “contribute to the field.” Funding for such projects is sometimes restricted to travel money to attend conferences or to perform abroad, but some schools will consider commissioning new music as a “fundable” project. In many cases, special application needs to be made for use of school funding with no guarantee of receiving anything (much like applying for a grant), but in others, there is an amount equal to a set percentage of the faculty members’ salary available annually, as long as a legitimate request is made for its use.

Truffles (more torch songs for viola and piano) (2000), an eleven-minute, two-movement work, was also commissioned with help from the same faculty development funding. I enjoyed the previous set of “torch songs” so much, and audiences responded so well to it, that I simply wanted more. Technical challenges are of a significantly higher level in this set, which contains more writing that sounds like spontaneous and complicated improvisation. Training in jazz playing is not required to tackle these pieces, however. In both *Chocolates* and in *Truffles*, Grant artfully notates the rhythmic freedom that we hear in jazz singing: the anticipations, “late” entrances and what sound like spontaneous alterations of rhythm and improvisations. One doesn’t necessarily need to study Billie Holiday, Ella Fitzgerald, or Sarah Vaughan recordings to learn how to bend and alter subdivisions and entrances for these pieces (since the composer has written this all out), but familiarity with those “torch singers” can provide a great intro-

Eccentric

From *Sultry and Eccentric*, mm. 1-8

duction to the genre, and make it clear why the viola is such a natural instrument for this style.

Waltz for Betz (vla/pno, 1999) was originally composed for piano solo. Grant had written it as a musical Valentine (for fine-art photographer Elizabeth Siegfried, to whom he is now married: a successful Valentine, to be sure!) I heard this piece in its piano solo version over the phone, while discussing the torch song pieces, remarked that I thought it really would sound lovely with a viola line, and commissioned the version for viola and piano.

About five minutes long, the piece presents clear reference to Satie’s *Gymnopédies* in the piano opening and accompaniment, but with more than a touch of Mancini in the harmonic language chosen. Grant later orchestrated the piano accompaniment (for string orchestra), making a gorgeous “miniature” to add to our repertoire with orchestra.

Sultry and Eccentric (vla/pno, 2000) began its life for tuba and piano, commissioned by a consortium of 51 tuba players, who each contributed to the project. Having discovered Grant’s flexibility and

High Autumn

♩ ca. 40
Slow, regal

Viola

Piano

adeptness at reworking pieces for other instruments, and still hungry for more writing in the torch style, I asked about other recital-type music he had written recently. After he introduced this eight-minute, two-movement work to me in its original version for tuba and piano, it didn't take long to convince him to make a viola version of the piece. With apologies to the tuba world (!), I think the piece gains enormously from the sound and colors of the viola, and like to believe that the composer

had the sound of the viola in his ear as he was writing it in the first place since viola was the first instrument for which he wrote in this style and harmonic language. The first movement (*Sultry*) is yet another torch song, while the second movement (*Eccentric*), features quirky runs and leaps, and a highly eccentric rhythmic and melodic palette.

Stuff (2001) found me continuing my spree of theft from our tuba-playing colleagues. 78 tubists from

30 states and three countries joined Grant's "2001 Solstice/Equinox Commissioning Consortium," and as each Solstice and Equinox approached during that year, a new piece was sent out to the participants. Here was a new goldmine of shorter works that I convinced Grant would sound wonderful on viola. After the proper amount of time had passed during which commissioning artists have sole rights to new pieces, he proceeded to create versions for viola, with new possibilities for octaves, slurs, articulations, and double stops in mind. *Stuff* is a theme with seven character-driven variations for unaccompanied viola. The five-minute work gives a short, melancholy theme a wide variety of treatments from a lullaby to "cartoon music" to a swing variation.

Just a Thought (vla/pno, 2001) is about three and a half minutes in length. In it Grant provides a sweetly singing line for the viola, (think more of a chance to be a "crooner" here than a torch singer), exploring melancholy, reflection, love and hope with a warm and immediately accessible setting in the piano. The piece could be a touching encore piece or "just a thought" amid contrasting pieces on a recital program.

High Autumn (vla/pno, 2001), at about four minutes, presents a completely different language from the other pieces in the collection. Slow and regal, with dramatic, gestural writing and harmonies at times somewhat reminiscent of Copland, one can almost see and feel a radiant New England Autumn as the piece unfolds.

Endorphins

mm. 1-12

Endorphins (2001) is a five-minute piece also for viola and piano. As the tempo heading “Aerobic” suggests, the movement is fast-paced, fun, and exciting. Rapidly changing meters and playful exchanges between viola and piano make the piece a treat for the performing duo. A middle section with references to the themes of *Stuff* and *Just a Thought* and a moody cadenza recalling *High Autumn* give the piece a dramatic core, after which the fun resumes and the collection closes in high spirits.

And Next...

At the time of this writing, Grant is working on a piece for unaccom-

panied viola, to be complete later in the year.

[All musical excerpts are copyrighted and used with permission of the composer. Music is available through the composer’s website, www.JamesGrantMusic.com, which also includes audio samples of the pieces.]

More thoughts on commissioning music:

Meet The Composer, Inc. publishes a helpful set of guidelines and suggestions for commissioning on their website www.meetthecomposer.org. Remember that there are many fac-

tors that will affect the cost of a commission, including the composer’s fame, how busy they are at any given time, and how desirable the project seems to them. Composers are also naturally interested in having their pieces performed as much as possible, so commissioning consortia are an attractive arrangement, and this approach significantly reduces the cost to each participant as well.

Ensembles or solo performers who have ongoing relationships with music festivals sometimes have pieces commissioned by the festival’s organizers, and the piece will receive its premiere on a festival concert.

Foundations and competition sponsors sometimes commission new works, and there have been numerous pieces requested and written as gifts or memorials, by former students, by family members or relatives, or by organizations, in honor of a colleague, mentor, or friend. Helping to bring a new piece of music into existence is an exciting and rewarding venture, and could bring the next wonderful composition into the repertoire. In addition to gaining a satisfying new piece to play, those participating in the commission enjoy a decidedly personal connection to the music. I highly recommend it!

– Michelle LaCourse teaches viola at Boston University, where she is also Chair of the String Department. She has given master classes at music schools across the country, and during the summer months she teaches and performs at the annual Karen Tuttle Viola Workshops, BU’s Tanglewood Institute, and the International Chamber Music Course and Festival of Positano, Italy.



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"There was so much to learn and it made me realize that there is a lot of talent in every one of us!!" –A.G Participant

"I had a great time. I hope I'll see you next year and have the chance to work together again." –L.F. Auditor

"I had a blast at the Viola Institute and gained a lot!" –K.G. Auditor

"She was absolutely thrilled with the program, the faculty, and her experience there. She left with some very meaningful and helpful advice from your faculty, and this gave her a big boost in her performance confidence." –K.D., Parent

Application deadline: April 4, 2008.

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from the Orford Arts center: www.arts-orford.org*

FRESH FACES:

SARAH BYLANDER MONTZKA: A TALENT FOR STARTING FROM SCRATCH

By Lembi Veskimets

Every one of us was, at one point, an absolute beginner on our instrument. We all had a first teacher, someone who showed us how to hold the viola and make our first sounds on it. How we experience the beginning of our musical life can help determine whether we persevere in our musical studies, how many technical issues we have left to overcome and how comfortable we are performing. It takes a special communicator with an organized mind and a pedagogical background to lay this foundation. For most of us, starting a student from scratch would be daunting at best, but for Sarah Montzka it is “the most enjoyable experience” in her career as a private studio teacher.

Starting college, however, Sarah thought she was headed for life as a professional orchestra musician.

As someone who thrives on interacting with others, she soon discovered that the hours of solitary practice required to prepare for orchestra auditions was not for her and took on extra coursework in pedagogy. She realized that teaching could become the art form through which she could best express herself. Her path led her first to serve as Coordinator of Education Programs for the Jacksonville Symphony during which time she also performed as an extra in the Jacksonville, Savannah (GA) and Charleston (SC) Symphonies. She took away from those experiences the strong feeling that “kids can enjoy truly beautiful music even if it is new to their ears.” In her view, children do not need to be won over by pop or movie music they already know but rather, be exposed to good quality performances of great composers. In her work, she is



Violapalooza participant, 2007.

inspired by the reminder of Leonard Bernstein challenging his Young Peoples Concert audiences to ask “What does music mean?”

Now living in Chicago, Sarah teaches students aged 3-18 at the Music Institute of Chicago using the Suzuki method. Developed by Shinichi Suzuki in the mid-20th century, this educational philosophy teaches that any child can learn music just as he or she learns his or her native language – by immersion in a musical environment, learning by ear before learning notation, playing in groups, and performing in public often. It also involves the parent supervising the youngster’s practice every day and a Suzuki-trained teacher.¹ However, Suzuki’s goal of this music education was to “nurture young people” who “through playing beautiful music, would grow into good people and make a more peaceful world,” accord-



Teaching at Montzka’s studio.



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MODERN MAKERS: WHAT'S IN YOUR VIOLA CASE?

By Eric Chapman

The question “What’s in your Wallet?” frequently asked in a TV commercial is closely related to what’s in your viola case. Balancing budgets and musical needs is, for most musicians, a delicate tightrope. Then there is also the necessary art of compromise in the selection of any viola, as there is no perfect instrument anymore than there is a perfect performance. Also crucial is balancing expectations for your new instrument with the work required to get the instrument to behave, thereby becoming the viola of your dreams. Just as your child will need music lessons to progress, your viola will require a very good luthier to keep the instrument developing properly.

The present economy and budget constraints among arts organizations create many problems. Compounding these issues is the shortage of violas. If market availability and price considerations have left you limited options in terms of size, string length, and desired sound, you are not alone. Perhaps my own journey down the same path can help focus the process.

Even being a violin dealer specializing in violas, my search for the “right” small viola remains difficult. As I get older, rehearsals seem to lengthen and the risk of injury increases. I would like to downsize a bit. If I can’t find the elusive instrument in a reasonable price range, I am a firm believer in commissioning an instrument. But what model do I select, and who has been highly successful with that design?

Among my favorite models are those developed by G. B. Guadagnini (1711-1786), one of the greatest Italian luthiers of the Classical Period. Like Stradivari, who made few violas in his 93 years (only eleven are now known), the Guadagninis are credited with only nine violas in Joseph Rode’s wonderful book on the family. Duane Rosengard’s new, defini-



Guadagnini model by William Scott, 2004.

tive study of G.B. (published in 2000) photographs and lists four of those instruments, providing invaluable measurements for each.

What makes the Guad models so attractive? They are under 16” and pack considerable cutting power, relieving both the player of back problems and the conductor of worries about loud orchestra brass. They are user-friendly given the short string length and a slanted and narrow upper shoulder. The model also seems to adapt to various modifications which many good makers find appealing.



Guadagnini model by William Scott, 2004.

Once I decided that the Guad model would best suit my needs, I was faced with the next question: Who are the top makers with a track record of success with such a model? While no one can possibly know all the top makers, three who made outstanding Guad models came to mind. William Scott of Minneapolis won two Violin Society of America Gold medals for viola, both made from a Guadagnini-based model. I had the pleasure of playing each at the various VSA competitions. Tschu Ho Lee, the former director of the Chicago School of Violin Making and an internationally renowned expert, recently celebrated his 75th birthday with the creation of instrument #349, a 16" Guad inspired instrument now in the possession of my daughter. It is an amazing instrument with a back fashioned from 100 year old slab cut maple and the sound of a great old Italian viola. Frank Ravatin,

universally recognized by colleagues as one of the world's best, has ten Gold medals and a five-year wait list. Like Scott and Lee, Ravatin's Guad model has been highly successful. Among the memorable ones I have seen and played were two copied from the famous original owned by Bernard Zaslav. My regular viola is from Ravatin's Gold Medal quartet at the VSA international competition.

Once that a maker has agreed to make the desired model, what next? The debate, ongoing as this article goes to press, concerns wood selection. Should the back be slab cut maple where the wood is harvested by cutting across the log or quarter cut where the wood is cut in a pie shape? It is the dilemma. My personal preference is for slab cut backs because the wood strength is generally not quite as stiff, the graduations can be slightly thicker and the sound is warm and often darker in timbre. The maker's preference with this particular pattern is for quarter cut, as he feels that the sound will be bit more focused and therefore more conducive to concert quality, which is of course the bottom line.

What can I expect when the instrument arrives? Like any newborn I will need TLC. Above all else, I will need patience with the instrument and I must be willing to experiment with set up and string selection. What the instrument likes best for strings at the outset may change to something else within a week or two. With top makers, I know the instrument will be very high quality—it becomes a matter of getting it the way I want it (or in some cases the way my wife wants to hear it!).

— A founder and current Board member of the Violin Society of America, Eric Chapman owns Eric Chapman Violins, Inc. in Chicago and serves as Vice President of the Chicago School of Violin Making. He has been commended for distinguished service by both the AVS and the VSA.

MEET THE SECTION

BBC SCOTTISH SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA VIOLAS

By Rik Evans

The BBC Scottish Symphony Orchestra is based in Glasgow and was founded in 1935. In January 2006 the Orchestra was excited to move from its home for the last seventy years, a rather depressing studio in the BBC Scotland building in the West End, into the heart of the city to the infinitely more inspiring City Halls, a light and airy 1,200-seat hall of a shoe-box design with beautiful stained glass windows down either side of the hall. Famed for its great acoustics, City Halls was built in 1841, closed in 2003 for a \$30 million refurbishment, and reopened with the arrival of the Orchestra.

The BBC has five full-time orchestras. Aside from us there is the BBC National Orchestra of Wales, in Manchester the BBC Philharmonic, and in London both the BBC Symphony Orchestra and the BBC Concert Orchestra, the latter of which specialises in lighter music. Aside from the Concert Orchestra, every concert the other orchestras perform is recorded, or sometimes broadcast live for BBC Radio 3. Radio 3 is a station devoted mainly to Classical music but also features Jazz, World Music, and Drama.



Holiday Gathering 2007. Standing (l to r): Jacqui Penfold, Scott Dickinson, Rik Evans, David McCreddie, Eilen Berridge. Sitting: Robin Panter, Sarah Chapman, Alice Batty, Andy Berridge. Fully Reclining: Fiona Richardson.

Our Chief Conductor is Ilan Volkov, who has been with the orchestra since 2003. When appointed he was the youngest ever chief conductor of a BBC Orchestra. His concerts often feature very diverse programming; he is passionate about both modern, innovative music and works that have not been performed for a long time. One highlight performed recently was a piece for 'wired conductor' and orchestra, and featured Ilan with various wires emanating from his person. When the wires connected with each other they would trigger various samples from the PA. Ilan will step down in 2009 and the post

will be filled by Edinburgh-born Donald Runnicles, currently Principal Conductor at San Francisco Opera. Our Associate Guest Conductor is Stefan Solyom from Sweden, a young conductor whose zest and enthusiasm bring great results from the orchestra.

Our schedule varies greatly from week to week; mainly we rehearse for concerts but we often make CD recordings for Hyperion Records, or dedicated programmes for Radio 3.

Although based in Glasgow, our orchestra performs all over Scotland and travels the most of

the BBC orchestras, often as far as Aberdeen (150 miles) or Inverness (170 miles). During the summer we play several concerts for the Edinburgh International Festival and make a couple of trips to London to play at the BBC Proms at the Royal Albert Hall. We tour abroad occasionally too, most recently to Prague, and 2008 brings extensive tours to Holland and China. The week I joined the Orchestra, in March 2006, we went on a tour of South America, taking in Brazil, Uruguay and Argentina which was both a fantastic experience and a great time to join...

lot of fine steak, and as the evening wore on the proprietor brought several bottles of a local, rather undrinkable firewater-type spirit known as 'Ron.' On our walk back to the hotel our evening was interrupted by two police officers who took mild exception to two members of the section (who shall remain anonymous) attempting a swim in the large, ornate fountain situated in the square outside our hotel. Following some diplomatic discussion in our respective languages, our heroic violists got away with a slight ticking-off, and the officers even agreed to pose for a photo with us as a goodwill gesture.

with two young children, Ben and Jamie. When time permits Scott enjoys hillwalking, reading, and socialising. He plays a Maggini copy viola by John Dilworth, made in 1998.

Andrew Berridge is our Number 2 and joined in April 2003 following a freelance career based in the north of England. Andy studied at Liverpool University and took a two year postgraduate at the Royal Northern College of Music. He is married to Eilen, also a member of the section, and they live in the countryside outside Glasgow. He enjoys hillwalking, chamber music, and sailing. Andy plays a viola by George Stoppani from 2001.

Our Number 3 is Jacqui Penfold. She studied at the Royal Manchester College of Music and joined the orchestra twice, first in 1977 after jobs in the Hallé and Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra. She left to freelance and look after her children in 1978, before joining again in 1991. Jacqui is something of a property magnate and enjoys fast cars. She plays a Wilfred Saunders viola made in 1971.

Fiona Robertson is from Glasgow and studied at the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama. She is the longest serving continual member of the section, joining as a tutti player in 1983. She was made Number 4 in 1991. Fiona has a busy family life with three children and enjoys archaeology and craft-work. Her viola was made by Victor Unsworth in 1993.



South American Night Out. Back row (l to r): Andy Berridge (arms in air), David McCreadie, Eilen Berridge, Robin Panter, Jacqui Penfold, Jo Galbriath. Front row: Fiona Robertson, Scott Dickinson, Alice Batty, Rik Evans.

The tour to South America also saw something of a rebirth of a tradition of the now-legendary viola section nights out. According to the section's two longest serving players, until that tour there hadn't been a viola night out in at least a decade. The night began with a fantastic meal mainly involving a

And so to the members of the section...

Scott Dickinson is our leader. Scott joined the orchestra as principal viola in 2002 after being the violist in the acclaimed Leopold String Trio. He is married to Sue, a flautist and has a busy family life

At the moment there are five Tutti players; the strings of the orchestra were expanded when we moved to City Halls; we have one position still to fill, which will take the section from eight full time players to ten for the first time in the orchestra's history.

The Tutti players are, in alphabetical order:

Alice Batty is from London and studied to postgraduate level at the Royal Northern College of Music. She joined the orchestra in 2006 after playing in London's Southbank Sinfonia for a year. Alice is a keen gardener and enjoys going to see gigs in Glasgow. She plays a viola by Martin Hillsden from 1995 but is currently trying another viola by John Dilworth. (If she makes the purchase it will take the number of Dilworths in the section to three.)

Eilen Berridge studied at the Royal College of Music with Simon Rowland Jones and had a freelance career in London before returning to her native Scotland to join the orchestra in 2003. She is another hillwalker and also enjoys running, swimming, and looking after her two cats. Eilen plays an Alan Beavitt viola from 1995.

Sarah Chapman is the most recent addition to the section, having joined in September 2007. Sarah studied at the Royal Academy of Music before taking a postgraduate course at the Royal College of Music with Andrij Vytovych. Before joining Sarah freelanced in

London with various orchestras and also worked with the likes of Elton John, Oasis, and Sufjan Stevens. She enjoys skiing, running, and going to see bands. Sarah is the youngest member of the section but plays the oldest viola; an 1896 instrument by Charles Brugère.

Rik Evans... I'm from Manchester and studied there at the Royal Northern College of Music and took a postgraduate course at the Royal College of Music before working with the BBC Philharmonic for a year and freelancing in Manchester. I enjoy film, going to gigs, and Newcastle Brown Ale. I play a John Dilworth Maggini copy made in 2003, and often point out to Scott that mine has a superior one-piece back, although it still sounds nowhere near as good as his.

Robin Panter is originally from Liverpool and studied at the Royal Northern College of Music to postgraduate level. He freelanced in Manchester, Liverpool and London before joining the SSO in 2004. Robin recently became engaged to his flautist girlfriend Vourneen. He enjoys the Scottish great outdoors and is a keen climber and hillwalker. Rob also enjoys yoga, singing, and photography.

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BOOK REVIEW:

LIONEL TERTIS

BY JOHN WHITE, FRAM

reviewed by Dwight Pounds

Rebecca Clarke on Lionel Tertis: That the viola has, however, a very personal tone of its own, extremely sympathetic, and capable of great possibilities, no one who has heard a player like Mr. Lionel Tertis will deny, and though to the present generation it must seem as though its technique can scarcely go further, it may be that future years will show such an advance that its position of today will be regarded as but a period in its evolution. (Liane Curtis, Ed., *A Rebecca Clarke Reader*, p. 119)

Maurice Riley on Lionel Tertis: It remained for Lionel Tertis, more than any one else up to his time, to develop a favorable climate for the viola as a solo instrument in England. Through his unstinting efforts and artistry, the viola was gradually accepted by English composers and conductors as an instrument worthy of performance opportunities. The result was a blossoming of viola talent from 1910 until the Second World War. (Maurice W. Riley, *The History of the Viola* Vol. I, p. 241)

...Tertis' struggle for recognition was much more difficult than was Casals'.... There was little or no precedent for a violist to seek a career as a concert artist. (Riley p. 252)

William Primrose on Lionel Tertis: Think of what Tertis had to start with. I have read reviews from 1924 of his concert with Kreisler in London where they more or less introduced to the London public 'this little-known work', the Mozart Sinfonia Concertante in E flat, and that hasn't been so many years ago. (David Dalton: *Playing the Viola—Conversations with William Primrose*, p. 183)

Eugène Ysaÿe on Lionel Tertis: We must not overlook the viola either. This instrument is a necessity in

all groups and must not be looked down upon. Both Paganini and Vieuxtemps played the viola from choice, and Joachim loved the color of the bigger instrument. My friend Tertis is doing much missionary work for his viola, and I have had a young man from Scotland who will blaze new paths in the years to come. (William Primrose: *Walk on the North Side—Memoirs of a Violist*, p. 59)

Lionel Tertis—The First Great Virtuoso of the Viola, by John White, FRAM

408 pages hard back

Published by The Boydell Press, Woodbridge,
Suffolk IP12 3DF, UK, 2006

ISBN 1 84383 278 X

Foreword by Tully Potter

In *Lionel Tertis*, John White has in reality given his readers considerably more than the biography of a great violist and giant of his musical era. Tertis' career becomes the framework for a much larger story in the author's diligent and careful hand—a montage of British music as it existed in the first half of the 20th century and beyond—as violinists, violists, cellists, pianists, composers, conductors, chamber groups, critics, and orchestras alike come and go in profusion. Small wonder, considering that White spent a quarter of a century gathering his data—newspaper articles, long-forgotten concert and recital programs, correspondence, and other sources which pertained often to the smallest details of his subject's life and career. This biography is a veritable roll-call of the century's great and near-great: Kreisler, Casals, Primrose, Piatigorsky; Thibaud, Rubinstein, Beecham, Barbirolli, Boult, Sargent; Schnabel, Szigeti, Solomon; Rachmaninoff, Goossens, Hindemith, Holst, Elgar, Vaughan Williams, and Walton are all—as the saying goes—"present and accounted for." This is also true

of an impressive group of young British composers—the brightest and best of their generation, however trite it may sound: Arthur Bliss, York Bowen, Arnold Bax, Frank Bridge, Eric Coates, Benjamin Dale, Rebecca Clarke, John McEwen, Cyril Scott, and Cecil Forsyth. These are names almost immediately recognizable to the knowledgeable violist because they wrote viola music in various combinations, many for Tertis personally, succumbing either to his persistence and cajoling or the siren song of his artistry in his inalterable drive to expand the instrument's repertoire, and certainly his personal repertoire. Little was it recognized at the time that they, with their better-known colleagues (Elgar, Vaughan Williams, Walton), would be at the forefront of a new musical resurgence, not only for the viola, but for British music as a whole—a muted voice at best in European music since the passing of Henry Purcell in 1695.

The first nine of the book's sixteen chapters take Lionel Tertis (1876-1975) from his early career and the Great War through 1937 and his first retirement. The next seven chapters constitute almost a second book, with less emphasis given to a recently-retired performer who is merely middle-aged at 61 than to the intellectual and human qualities of the *second* Lionel Tertis who balanced being a world-class artist, a loving and devoted family man and colleague, and successful instrument designer, innovator and promoter with a darker side—controversial and opinionated writer, a sometimes curmudgeon described as occasionally overbearing, even villainous, with unprepared students, and defender of very rigid standards who seemingly was incapable of compromise. Pity the pianist who did not blend well or did not play with expression, the student whose intonation was consistently faulty, or the instrument maker who was as much as one-sixteenth of an inch off Tertis' exacting specifications. His return to active performance, the passing of his first wife and much later his remarriage, and his work as philanthropist and propagandist for the viola are also documented in these chapters which additionally illustrate that the positive qualities of the man far out-weighed the negative. Understanding the whole of Tertis' career as put forth in this biography will require the reader to process a rather extensive quantity of critical reviews, correspondence, recital

programs and personalities. While John White is very scrupulous in his attention to the thousands of details at his disposal, he is also judicious in his choice of content. The book should appeal firstly to violists, secondly to students of 20th century British music, and possibly to luthiers or anyone interested in experimental instrumental design, but probably not to the casual reader.

A Pianist Discovers the Viola. Music educators, particularly Suzuki and beginning strings teachers, will be intrigued to learn that Lionel Tertis came to the viola relatively late in life, entering the Royal College of Music in 1892 as a pianist with violin as a secondary instrument, and the Royal Academy in 1895 as a violinist. Only when a fellow student who wanted to form a string quartet suggested that he take up the viola did he “discover” the viola. White quotes Tertis:

And as I did, with an old cut-down instrument...very nondescript, but I loved the timbre, I loved the quality from the first moment I studied it, and from that time I worked at it myself, for the simple reason that there were no pedagogues for the viola—it was either a drummer or a pianist that taught it. (LT p.5)

Three weeks later the same quartet played Beethoven's Quartet in F, op. 18 no. 1 to the Royal Academy Principal, Sir Alexander Mackenzie. Quite impressed and learning that Tertis had played viola for less than one month, Mackenzie remarked without hesitation, “You will never regret this [the decision to take up the viola].” Tertis' lessons with the assigned teacher at the Royal Academy, Hans Wessely, did not prove particularly effective and their personal relationship was often strained. More than any teacher, the self-taught Tertis found a model to train both his ear and his hands in Fritz Kreisler. White writes: “It was by adapting Kreisler's technique to his own playing that Tertis was able to produce the rich, sonorous tone which was his hallmark.” (LT p. 10) Bernard Shore said of him: “You could never say that he came from any particular school of playing—as there was none—he made it himself.” (LT p. 241)

Tertis as Performer. Lionel Tertis as performer is known for impeccable intonation and an unforget-

table tone, particularly on the C string. Even when his critics could not stomach one of his transcriptions *du jour* on a given recital, in spite of themselves they seemed captivated by his intonation and his tonal production. Showing the continuing influence of Kreisler, Tertis wrote: “[Vibrato] should be continuous, there should be no break in it whatsoever...there is nothing so dead or ruinous to an expressive phrase as the sound of a cantabile slow passage in which one or two notes are partly or wholly devoid of vibrato.” (LT p. 10) Once he had formulated his concept of viola tone, the next step was to identify the instrument that would consistently satisfy the demands that he would place on it. There is no evidence that Tertis, a small man, was ever intimidated by the size of an instrument as he quickly learned that only a quite large viola would meet his exacting tonal standards. He played a 171/8th inch (43.5 cm) Montagnana, purchased in Paris in 1924, for much of his professional career. In 1928 he purchased a 1590 Gasparoda Salò which he described as “a huge thing (17? inches or 45.09 cm),” but it proved too much for him and he soon returned to the Montagnana. (LT pp. 76 and 92) Years of performing on the huge instruments resulted in acute fibrositis in his right arm, however, and he announced his retirement early in 1937. All who knew Tertis, who was “only 62” at the time, were dismayed but, following two years of rest and healing, he returned to active playing in part as his contribution to the war effort.

In addition to his extensive schedule as a pioneering viola soloist, Lionel Tertis enjoyed 22 years with one of the great British chamber groups, The Chamber Music Players. Albert Sammons was violinist and leader, William Murdoch pianist, Lionel Tertis violist, and Felix Salmond cellist. There were only three changes through these years, all cellists; Salmond was replaced in turn by Arnold Trowell, Cedric Sharpe, and Lauri Kennedy. The ensemble was suspended in late 1936 at Tertis’ original retirement, reformed in 1939 when he began to play once again, and officially disbanded in 1942 upon the untimely death of Murdoch. Of this experience Tertis wrote, “Some of the happiest hours of my life were spent with these good friends and excellent musicians.” (LT p. 43)

Sammons and Tertis were deeply involved in the 1929 formation of the BBC Orchestra. Ernest Ansermet wrote of the British viola sections:

...The viola sections of the British orchestras are, to my mind, the best in the world and Lionel Tertis is the highest representative of this tradition of your instrumental school—which had, as an indirect result, the production of the part of the British composers, of the best works ever written for this particular instrument. (LT p. 154)

What was the genesis of such praise? Tertis himself described his involvement:

...I had a good deal of contact with Sir Thomas Beecham in the early days, and on one occasion I remarked to him that the tone quality of the viola section in his orchestra (London Philharmonic) was rather poor. I asked him if he would mind if I gave them some help in tone production, the players being willing, and his reply was: ‘BOIL them if you like.’ (LT p. 265)

Something to Play—The Quest. While Tertis did not have the advantage of the Zeyringer Lexicon for reference in seeking out viola literature, it causes one to consider whether his tendency as a robber baron of other instrumental literature was driven by choice or circumstance. Did he forego using established literature, did he look for it, or did he presume it did not exist? White never hesitates to point out how Tertis’ idiosyncrasies, foibles, and contradictions influenced his career. In Chapter 7 he writes:

It was typical of Tertis’s rather equivocal position in the music world—on the one hand always searching for repertoire, on the other hand ignoring important new works or simply being oblivious to their existence—that in the midst of [a] glut of important new music he busied himself with adapting a concerto written for another instrument. ...But other new concertos (two by Hindemith, others by Tibor Serly, Darius Milhaud and William Walton) were either premiered virtually under his nose...or—in the case of the Walton—actually offered to him. He ignored two fine works by Belgians (Joseph Jongen and Jan Rogister)...nor was he aware of the three solo Suites by Max Reger. ...When Tertis was an old

man, Paul Doktor played him one of the Suites and he was mortified to think that this music had passed him by. (LT p. 95) ¹

Tertis performed in Belgium and France and had very successful concerts in Berlin. It is difficult to imagine that someone so driven in his quest for something to perform did not seek out his contemporaries, inquire about their personal viola libraries, or search for literature in music stores and libraries while abroad, but apparently it is so. There are no references in *Lionel Tertis* to either Hermann Ritter in Germany, Maurice

Vieux in France, or Vadim Borissovsky in the Soviet Union, though Tertis was aware of and greatly admired the “Russian School.” (LT p. 193) White confirmed that he is in possession of letters to Tertis from both Borissovsky and David Oistrakh. Each were contemporaries and violists of great importance in their respective countries.² Although the topic is worthy of a separate article, it would appear that Tertis’ interest in viola literature centered on the *British early 20th century*. However, whatever tendencies Tertis may have had as an Anglo-centric thinker and actor define his career more than diminish it, given the many works written for him by British composers (see Appendix 6) and which for decades have enriched viola literature.

Tertis and Primrose. A highly touted 24-year-old violinist named William Primrose appeared with Lionel Tertis in a 1928 performance of the Mozart *Sinfonia concertante* in Paris, with Primrose playing the violin part. Commenting upon the experience, Tertis wrote,

Primrose, then, was a most brilliant violinist.... At the end of the concert in the artists’ room Primrose suddenly said to me: ‘I am a disciple of yours from henceforth’, and he immediately gave up the violin to become the world famous viola soloist. (LT p. 91)

It is interesting to note the contrasting impressions and recollections their first concert left on the two men. Primrose wrote:

I did make an appearance in Paris in 1928, however, playing the Mozart concertante with Lionel Tertis, the violist, and Sir Thomas Beecham conducting. By this time I had definitely made up my mind to switch to viola, but I didn’t tell anyone. I’m reasonably sure, though, that if I had advised Tertis of my secret ambition he would have welcomed me with open arms because he was the great viola protagonist. (Primrose p. 45)

It is in some respects remarkable that Tertis and Primrose established a friendship that endured throughout their lives—the same cannot be said of Tertis and Paul Hindemith or other non-British violists. Commenting on this friendship of many decades and Tertis’ influence upon him, Primrose wrote:

AN EVENING WITH LIONEL TERTIS AND FRIENDS*

(*as “wished for” by Dwight Pounds)

Please Choose From Among the Following

Concerto for Viola and Orchestra William Walton
Lionel Tertis viola
Hallé Orchestra (Manchester), Sir Hamilton Hardy, conductor

Flos Campi ** Ralph Vaughan Williams
Lionel Tertis viola
Queens Hall Orchestra, Sir Henry Wood, conductor

Romance ** B. J. Dale
Lionel Tertis viola
Scottish Orchestra, Sir Landon Ronald, conductor

Viola Concerto in C Minor ** York Bowen
Queens Hall Orchestra, Sir Landon Ronald, conductor

Sinfonia concertante, K 364 W.A. Mozart
Albert Sammons violin, Lionel Tertis viola
Hallé Orchestra, Sir Thomas Beecham, conductor

Piano Quartet in E flat, op. 87 Antonín Dvořák

Phantasy Quartet in F sharp Frank Bridge

Piano Quartet in A major Ernest Chausson

Quartet in C minor, op. 15 Gabriel Fauré

Piano Quartet in A major or C minor Johannes Brahms

Piano Quartet in G minor W.A. Mozart
The Chamber Music Players
Albert Sammons violin, Lionel Tertis viola,
Felix Salmond cello, William Murdoch piano

Encores

The Blackbirds Lionel Tertis

Londonderry Air arr. by Tertis Traditional
Lionel Tertis viola, Lady Fermoy piano

Passacaglia on a Theme by Handel Johan Halvorsen
Albert Sammons violin, Lionel Tertis viola

** World Premier

When I first started to perform on the viola, Tertis was very generous in his praise. He encouraged me, and as the years went on we became close friends.... I don't really owe anything to Tertis so far as my personal style of playing is concerned. While he had some good students, I don't know any violist who, as a player, owes anything to Lionel directly. Lionel had a distinctive and individualistic style, which would have been difficult to imitate—and it would have been foolish to try. (Primrose p. 164-165)

Two documents are particularly noteworthy among the 22 references in Lionel Tertis to William

AN EVENING WITH LIONEL TERTIS AND FRIENDS,

PART 2*

(as "wished for" by Dwight Pounds)

Please Choose From Among the Following

<i>Chaconne</i> , BMV 1004	J.S. Bach
<i>Fugue in D</i> (in the style of Tartini) **	Fritz Kreisler
Lionel Tertis viola	
<i>Suite for Viola and Piano</i> , op. 2 **	B.J. Dale
Lionel Tertis viola, York Bowen piano	
<i>Sonata for Viola and Piano</i> **	Arnold Bax
Lionel Tertis viola, Arnold Bax or Harriet Cohen piano	
<i>Sonata for Viola and Piano</i> **	Arthur Bliss
Lionel Tertis viola, Solomon [Cutner] piano (Special thanks to Mr. William Walton for turning pages)	
<i>Sonata No. 2 for Violin and Piano</i> , transcribed for viola	John Ireland
Lionel Tertis viola, Gerald Moore piano	
<i>Lament for two violas</i> **	Frank Bridge
Lionel Tertis and Frank Bridge	
<i>Trio for Two Violins and Viola</i>	Eugène Ysaÿe
Eugène Ysaÿe and André Mangeot violin, Lionel Tertis viola	
<i>Fantasia for four violas</i> **	York Bowen
Lionel Tertis, Eric Coates, James Lockyer, Phyllis Mitchell	
<i>Concertante for five violas</i>	Kenneth Harding
Lionel Tertis, Bernard Shore, Harry Danks, Rebecca Clarke, Harry Berly *	
<i>Introduction and Andante for six violas</i> **	B.J. Dale
Lionel Tertis, Eric Coates, Raymond Jeremy, Dorothy Jones, James Lockyer or Leonard Rubens, Rebecca Clarke or Phyllis Mitchell	

* The listed Harding *Concertante* performers constitute a memorial grouping only—Tertis, Shore, Danks, Clarke, and Berly never performed together as a group.

** World Premier

Primrose:³ the very moving letter to Lillian Tertis in 1975 upon her husband's passing and his eloquent summary of the Tertis legacy. (LT p. 300-1)

The Richardson-Tertis Viola and the Tertis Model.

Despite the obvious length of this review, it would not be complete without commenting upon Tertis' attempt to standardize viola design, and this from a man who admitted: "I want to emphasize that I am not a violin maker, nor am I a scientist, nor do I know anything about acoustics—who does?" His qualification for such a task was predicated upon 70 years of solo performance, observing and playing many of the old masters, putting "two and two together, and eradicating some of their clumsy features." (LT p. 324)

Tertis' description of the state of viola-playing from the 1890s is revealing and an important precursor to his thought on viola design:

They (violists of the day) produced a perfectly appalling sound—which made your hair sand on end, there was no vibrato, as cold as ice, and very bad, and they played on instruments that had been cut down and had no semblance of C-string sonority. (LT p. 5)

Tertis wrote to Mrs. Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge in December 1939: "I am playing again and after two years collaboration with a violin maker, have evolved a viola which is a true instrument. There are no good old ones to be had so now I have the satisfaction of knowing there will be some violas for future generations." (LT p. 179) Tertis' interest in developing his own viola design was driven by the scarcity and cost of decent violas and the deficiencies of those in circulation, both large and small, but particularly small. His goal was to build a "fine toned and manageable instrument." This was accomplished by adjusting the curvature of the upper and lower plates and lengthening the ribs to increase the interior air space of the instrument, thus giving the slightly shorter instrument approximately the same air space as the larger one. Going more into detail, he later wrote:

The many different sizes of violas in circulation make it difficult for a player to go from one viola to another. . . and it is this lack of standardization in the viola which we are trying to rectify and which has hitherto been an obstacle to its progress. . . The “Tertis Model” we think will help to correct these shortages and defects. It is 16² inches long [42.5 cm] and this I consider to be the maximum length for playing under the chin and at the same time the minimum from which we hope for a really satisfactory sonority. (LT p. 211) I feel that the distribution of air space inside the instrument is the major influence on their tonal qualities, and apparently I have been very fortunate in achieving it. (LT p. 324) [Also] incorporated are other features, resulting from practical experience, which make it, for its size, easy to handle. . . On my own behalf I should like to add that neither in the viola nor the scheme have I any financial interest whatsoever. (LT p. 211) [The “scheme” refers to Tertis’ practice of distributing detailed drawings of his design to violin makers throughout the world with the intent of multiplying exponentially the international availability of quality violas, and these at a decent price.]

The person most responsible for the new instrument’s success undoubtedly was the very patient and long-suffering luthier, Arthur Richardson. White writes,

The Richardson family found Tertis very charming and friendly in their home, but he was a difficult man to work with, liable to explode in an alarming way. . . his outbursts deeply upset Richardson, who, like many dedicated craftsmen, was essentially a quiet, contemplative man. . . Tertis was not a practical man [and] although a perfectionist and genius in his playing [he] could not grasp the artistry of the maker’s craft and the varying characteristics of timber. He thought it would be possible to produce drawings and measurements of an instrument to be strictly adhered to in the making, so that violas could be churned out like so many motor cars. [Richardson] would have nothing to do with this. (LT p. 162)

Richardson’s daughter said of the experience:

Tertis, without my father’s knowledge, went to Lovett Gill with one of my father’s instruments and got him to make drawings of it. They were printed and labeled

simply ‘Tertis Model’; the Richardson had been left out. Our family were up in arms at such injustice and at such underhand and unprofessional behaviour, but my father, although deeply hurt, was not interested in the advancement of his own finances or of his own image. He continued to make and experiment on instruments, both large and small, being only interested in musical instruments and music. . . My mother, fearing for my father’s health and livelihood, unavailingly begged my father to have nothing more to do with Tertis. (LT pp. 162-3)

Other luthiers who enjoyed success and favor with Tertis were Lawrence Cocker, George Smith, and Wilfred Saunders—particularly Saunders who crafted a viola that Tertis used for ten years. Tertis, however, proved as intractable as ever in his demands and it probably is no exaggeration to say that Saunders came to hate Tertis. “He wasn’t easy to work with and in the end I couldn’t sustain the demands he made on me.” (LT p. 214)

Despite its success and acceptance in many quarters, the Tertis Model viola did not in Primrose’s words “take over viola construction,” nor was it universally accepted. Though it must be presumed that many are still used professionally and the “love and tyrant” of Tertis’ life has not been consigned entirely to the historical shelf, White’s correspondent Andrew Bellis observes, “Since about 1970 it has been next to impossible to sell a ‘Tertis Model’ viola, but those ‘in the know’ who possess ‘R.T.’ violas (especially the early ones, I am told) are quite happy with them.” White very concisely summarizes the legacy of the Tertis Model viola:

Today it seems that the Tertis Model has had its vogue and has been relegated to an interesting historical development. Some of the fine instruments which were made to the Tertis pattern are still in professional use, but many of today’s violists get wonderful sounds from instruments of various shapes and sizes, giving the player a choice that would have been unthinkable in Tertis’ time. Nevertheless, the effort put into the Tertis Model was not wasted, as it created an enormous amount of interest in the whole question of viola size and shape. In many ways, today’s luthiers (and, by extension, players) are indebted to Tertis, for opening up so many avenues of development for the instrument he loved. (LT p. 169)

Photographs and Appendices. The author has selected an interesting and wide-ranging selection of photographs covering 34 pages which document Tertis, his family, and major aspects of his career. The extended discography (which alone covers 16 pages) and eight appendices are in themselves tribute to White's attention to detail and total dedication to his subject and which provide invaluable information on Tertis' violas, the detailed drawings of the Tertis Model, his writings and talks, his appearances with the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), his honors, music with Tertis connections, his bequest and his legacy.

Dozens of topics remain unexplored in this review and which are best reserved for the book itself—particularly the war-time efforts and sacrifices of Tertis and his contemporaries (particularly Benjamin Dale and Bernard Shore), the marvelous contributions of Ada and Lillian Tertis, his affinity for *portamento*, his system of fingering, the Lionel Tertis International Viola Competition and Workshop, the reactions of those who played the Tertis Model viola, the unlikely development of the Tertis Model violin and cello, his North American concerts, and Tertis' tribute to Arthur Richardson, to mention only a few. *Lionel Tertis*, as the first great virtuoso of the viola, certainly is worthy of attention, but this goes both directions—John White, already an accomplished servant of the viola as performer, lecturer, teacher, editor, and writer has proven himself more than worthy of his subject in *Lionel Tertis* and in the process has raised the proverbial bar for those of us who write about the viola. His scrupulous attention to detail is such that even the most demanding researcher would be happy to claim it as his/her own. Hopefully this book, easily one of the greatest every written about a violist, will find its way into hundreds of studios and libraries, be translated into the language of every country where people play and love the viola, and put Lionel Tertis' fascinating life and achievements into proper perspective.

Recommended Reading. One concluding comment: before reading John White's *Lionel Tertis*, find a copy of *An Anthology of British Viola Players* (edited by White) if at all possible and read those sections on York Bowen, Frank Bridge, Benjamin Dale, Gordon

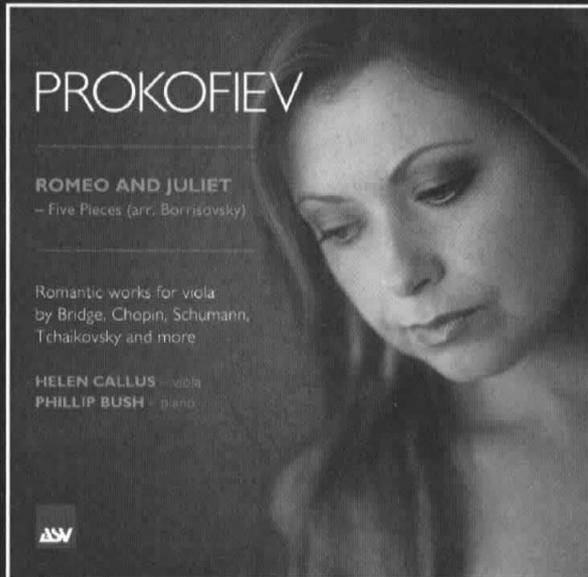
Jacob, Ralph Vaughan Williams, and the William Walton Viola Concerto. These articles will provide excellent insight and preparation for readers unfamiliar with these composers' contributions to the viola and the state of the instrument in the early 20th century.

Notes:

1. There also is no mention of Schubert's *Sonata per Arpeggione* or Schumann's *Märchenbilder*, standard viola works that were written decades before Tertis' birth.
2. The life of Hermann Ritter (1849-1926) overlapped that of Tertis by fifty years and the Englishman's long life completely encapsulates those of Maurice Vieux (1884-1957) and Vadim Borissovsky (1900-1972). Tertis and Ritter enjoyed astonishingly similar careers: both were strong advocates for the viola in their respective countries and each developed a viola design that garnered its share of attention and success that provided important precedents for 20th century luthiers. It would appear that Tertis' design was infinitely the more practical of the two: the Tertis Model Viola measured 16 $\frac{1}{2}$ inches (42.5 cm) body length as opposed to Ritter's *Viola alta*, a 18.9-inch (48 cm) behemoth. Ritter may have exceeded Tertis as an innovator by adding a fifth string (the violin e) to the *Viola alta*. (Riley Vol. I, p. 212) Riley documents that Ritter was a large man, however, and played his *Viola alta* with apparent ease. Richard Wagner was pleased, if not delighted, by the tone of the Ritter viola and requested that they be used at Bayreuth. Taking commonality with Tertis a step further, Ritter, as leader of the viola section at Bayreuth (all equipped with his new *Viola alta*), brought it to a new standard, just as Tertis had done for Beecham and the London Philharmonic (Riley Vol. I, p. 172). Franz Liszt was sufficiently impressed with Ritter's artistry and tone to compose *Romance Oubliée* for viola and piano, dedicating it to him. Karl Hörlein, the Würzburg luthier who built for Ritter, sold the instruments as fast as he could build them. In time they inevitably lost popularity with the average performer because the

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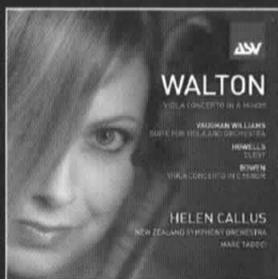
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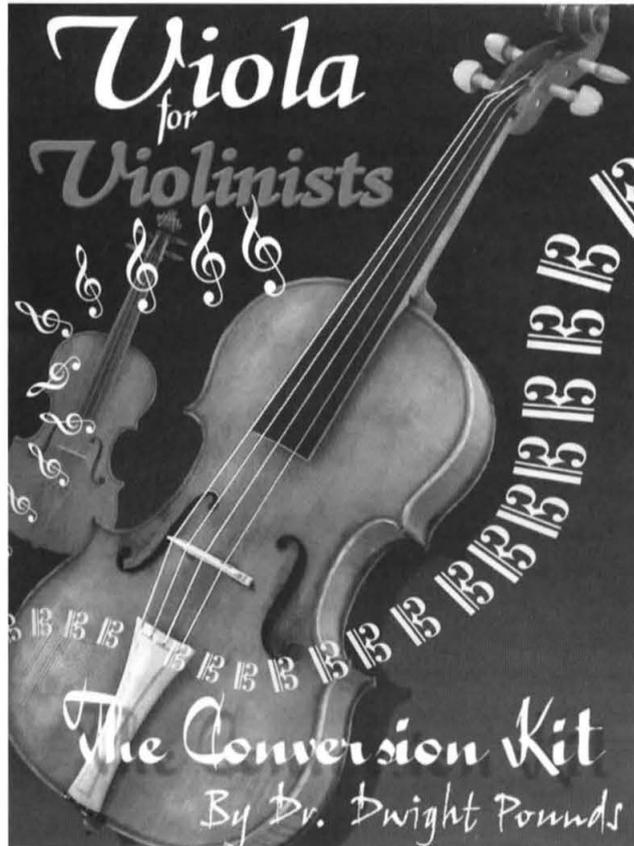
Viola altos' excessive size made them unmanageable. (Riley, 211-212) Still, the students of both Tertis and Ritter were thoroughly indoctrinated on the necessity of large violas.

- Primrose's 22 references in *Lionel Tertis* are exceeded only by those to Sir Thomas Beecham with 26, Albert Sammons with 30, and Bernard Shore with 34, the latter three having been more intimately and consistently involved in Tertis' career. There are 20 references to Fritz Kreisler. Composers are not included in this summary but it is worth noting that there are 47 combined personal and compositional references to York Bowen.

– Dr. Dwight Pounds is past Executive Secretary of the International Viola Society, photographer of many violists, frequent contributor to the *Journal of the American Viola Society (JAVS)*, author of *The American Viola Society: A History and Reference* and *Viola for Violinists*, and has served on the AVS Executive Board for almost 30 years.

NEW MUSIC REVIEWS

POUNDS CONVERSION KIT



reviewed by Kathryn Plummer and Julia Hardie

Viola for Violinists: The Conversion Kit by
Dwight Pounds

65 pages spiral bound paper back

Published by the author, Bowling Green,
Kentucky in cooperation with the American
Viola Society, 2006

ISBN 1-886-60101-1

Published in 2006, *Viola for Violinists, The Conversion Kit* by Dr. Dwight Pounds is sure to catch the eye of many teachers and students. Following its vividly colorful cover is a wealth of organized information throughout 65 spiral bound pages of text and musical examples. The book is intended as a practical and useable guide whereby teachers and violinists of any age can acquire skills on the viola. Its only prerequisite is a

reading knowledge of treble clef in first and third positions. For more advanced violinists, the book also offers drills with alternate fingerings for fifth and seventh positions. An added bonus to this guide is a concise compilation of information regarding viola history, literature, great performers and scholars, viola organizations, competitions, and important web sites.

The book's first unit introduces a step-by-step process of reading the treble clef notes of Wohlfahrt Op. 45, No. 1 etude first on the violin in first and third positions and then eventually reading the same treble clef pitches on the viola in first position. This allows the violinist, in his or her initial venture on the viola, to become physically adjusted and comfortable with the larger instrument and encourages the player to explore the deeper and fuller sound while adapting to the different relative position of the strings. The method offers helpful observations and directions to promote a tension-free transition and defers alto clef reading until comfort is achieved with the larger instrument. A bonus at the end of this unit illustrates how simple it is to adapt treble clef reading on the violin to playing the viola while reading bass clef. There is also an introduction to simple transposition. These exercises exemplify Dr. Pounds' philosophy of adaptability and "thinking outside the box."

Unit Two introduces the alto clef, and Dr. Pounds reveals the reason for stressing first and third positions in Unit One: the fingering in third position on the violin corresponds to the first position on the viola and forms a beginning basis for playing the viola while reading alto clef, capitalizing on the very adaptability illustrated in the first unit. In this process, of course, the pitch does not match the established violin note-pitch association, but Dr. Pounds addresses the topic with assurance that eventually the violinist establishes a complete conversion to the new note-pitch association. To that end, there are excellent reference charts representing the four basic fingering patterns, staves showing the commonality between

violin third position and viola first position fingering, tables demonstrating alto clef in first position and accompanying drills on 1st, 2nd, and 3rd fingers to open strings as well as drills with fourth finger combinations. Furthermore there is an informative table notating the relationships of pitches in treble, bass, alto, tenor, and mezzo-soprano staves.

The third unit provides ingenious exercises to improve the reader's note-to-finger skill, solidifying the ability to put the correct letter name with the lines and spaces.

I recommend *Viola for Violinists, The Conversion Kit* and already use the third unit exercises as supplemental material for my viola students. I particularly like the half-step extension exercise and the tri-tone wedge. I have a copy of the book on reserve in the school library. I teach a class, *Viola for Violinists*, and look forward to using the book with students for whom alto clef is unfamiliar. This method may not suit each and every student's learning style. For example, the "sink or swim" method worked well for me at age 11 when I switched to viola; luckily reading came quite easily. That said, I know a thorough, systematic method would have had advantages and provided me a more solid foundation in my youth.

— *Kathryn Plummer, Professor of Viola at the Blair School of Music, Vanderbilt University is a former professor at the Oberlin Conservatory and a former violist with the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra. Trained at Indiana University and the Juilliard School, Ms. Plummer actively performs throughout the United States and Europe.*

Dr. Dwight R. Pounds' method book, *Viola for Violinists: The Conversion Kit*, has much to offer the intermediate violin student who would like to discover the joys of viola playing. I particularly liked Dr. Pounds' one finger etudes with gradually faster note values. They are great for drilling note recognition.

It was my pleasure to try out this book with a 13-year-old violin student in my studio. Her favorite section was the chapters near the end of book on the his-

tory of the viola and famous viola players. It stimulated intelligent questions and the general comment "That part was really cool! I wish my violin books had information like that." Naturally, I sent her home with some books on the history of the violin, but her interest in the viola was piqued.

Though this book has much to offer, I would only recommend that it be used under a teacher's close supervision. In particular, I cannot agree with Dr. Pounds' basic approach to reading the alto clef. I personally was a victim of the approach of pretending your hand is in third position on the violin. I learned it from Harvey Whistler's *From Violin to Viola*. Though I continue to use materials from the Whistler book to help students transition, I cross out the violin third position alto clef explanation, as I will with Dr. Pounds' book. I believe that reading this way encourages musical illiteracy: not knowing what note you are playing, the key signature, etc. Personally, I also found his bass clef reading system confusing.

Reading is certainly very important. Every violist needs to be facile in reading the alto clef. In my experience, reading facility is much easier for some students than others. Recognition of the open string grid, reading by interval, and frequent note naming all help. Some students need more reading drill and supplementary materials than others.

I particularly recommend Dr. Pounds' *Viola for Violinists: The Conversion Kit* as a supplemental resource to provide violin/viola transition materials, under a teacher's direction. Also, his thoughtful chapters on the viola family, choosing an instrument, important violists, and resources for further information about the viola provide a welcome introduction to our viola heritage.

— *Julia Hardie is the founder and director of the Central Texas String Academy, a Suzuki program in Waco, TX, and is an SAA viola Teacher- Trainer. Her viola background includes study under William Preucil, Sr., Bruno Giuranna, and Paul Doktor. She writes frequently for the Suzuki journal, and teaches at Suzuki Institutes throughout the country.*

RECORDING REVIEWS

A Repeal of Reticence: Music by Ernesto Cavour, Thomas Schuttenhelm, Dan Román, Heitor Villa-Lobos, Béla Bartók, Jaime Romero. Alturas Duo (Carlos Boltes, viola and charango), Scott Hill (guitar). BR 149.

It is not the most obvious combination for somebody to play both viola and charango (a South American plucked instrument made of an armadillo shell and sounding like a mandolin gone berserk), but there we are! Carlos Boltes, a Chilean student of Atar Arad, Lawrence Dutton and Steve Larson, now in the faculty of the Hartt School of Music, sounds equally at home plucking his charango and playing his huge viola (17.5 in) by Jean Benoit Stensland. The guitar-and-charango duets, which are interspersed along the CD, belong in the tradition of the folkloric music of the Andean regions (*carnavalito* and *huayno* among others). The arrangements (including the odd shout!) sound authentic enough to my “lowland” ears. The viola takes over for some pieces which are also folklore-inspired, albeit at a further remove. Villa-Lobos’s ubiquitous *Aria* is eloquently played, but Bartók’s *Romanian Dances* lack the fire of the best violin recordings. The CD’s highlights come in some original compositions for viola and guitar. Dan Román’s *El gran*

Mambo and Jaime Romero’s *El Popocho* and *Sangre Latina* effectively draw their material from the folklore of Puerto Rico and Colombia, respectively. Schuttenhelm’s *A Repeal of Reticence* (which gives the recital its title) cannily combines bowed and plucked sonorities to beautiful effect. I remember hearing the Alturas Duo in 2006 at the International Viola Congress in Montréal, where they presented a similar program. It has been a pleasure to renew the acquaintance through this lovingly produced CD.

amberwood – Duos for violin/viola and piano by Ivan Sokolov, Ole Saxe, Jan Viáar. Karen Bentley Pollick, violin/viola; Ivan Sokolov, piano. Ariel Ventures [no series number] www.kbentley.com

Ivan Sokolov, a Moscow-born and trained pianist-composer, has over the past five years written a triptych of piano-accompanied sonatas for string instruments. This CD includes the violin and viola ones, respectively from 2005 and 2006. Interestingly, all three works are based on a similar melodic cell, with which the first movement begins. Another unifying factor, featuring in several movements, seems to be a kind of stylized bird-song. The viola sonata, in a sonorous C minor, is in one multi-sectional but contin-

uous movement of twelve minutes’ duration. The violin sonata is classically divided into four movements and is twice as long. Written in E minor, a blazing coda in the major mode prompted the composer to call it “Sunlight” Sonata. Both works show Sokolov’s credentials as a latter-day Rachmaninov, relishing a succulent piano textures, while treating the respective string instrument idiomatically. Sokolov’s partnership with Karen Bentley Pollick is closely-knit, and she – a violinist – seems to feel quite at home on the larger instrument as well. (Indeed, the dark tone of her Vuillaume violin seems to suggest an affinity!) The CD is completed by an appropriately exotic-sounding *Tango Orientale* for viola and piano by Ole Saxe, and *Lullabies* by Moravian composer, Jan Vicar. The latter keeps the violin and the piano in different keys (A flat and D respectively), which together with a stylized use of the Lydian mode, evokes elements of Moravian folkloric music. The whole CD, which is very attractively recorded and presented, demonstrates that it is quite possible to write good tunes in the 21st Century.

Prokofiev (arr. Borisovsky): Five pieces from Romeo and Juliet; Music by Vaughan Williams, Tchaikovsky, Wieniawski, Bridge, Swain, Tertis,

Schumann and Chopin. Helen Callus, viola; Phillip Bush, piano. ASV CD DCA 1184.

Helen Callus's latest recording features a good old-fashioned program of transcriptions and short encore pieces, such as the Old Timers played as a matter of course, before the Three-Sonatas-Recital became the norm. In Tchaikovsky's *Ardent declaration*, Callus is up against a 1951 recording by the transcriber himself, Vadim Borisovsky, the "Father of the Russian Viola School". Her dark, expressive sound (on a viola by Gabrielle Kundert), compares favourably with that of Borisovsky's huge Gasparo. Callus's virtuosity in *Young Juliet* and *Mercutio*, two

movements of the Suite Borisovsky made out of Prokofiev's ballet *Romeo and Juliet*, is admirable, with every note clearly in place in spite of the break-neck speed. William Primrose is represented by his transcription of Tchaikovsky's *None but the lonely heart* (where Callus doesn't quite match Primrose's singing out in double stops high up on the A string). Lionel Tertis's *Sunset*, a composition redolent of the Edwardian salon, is attractively paired with Freda Swain's *Song at Evening*. In Schumann's *Adagio and Allegro*, Callus and Bush make the most of the first section's harmonic complexities, before taking the Allegro at a very brisk pace indeed. Michael Lieberman's

idiomatic arrangements of Bridge and Chopin demonstrate that the Grand Tradition of transcribing and arranging is very much alive. Hopefully we won't have to wait too long for a second helping.

Finale: Sonatas for Viola. Dmitri Shostakovich, Grazyna Bacewicz, Aram Khachaturian, Bohuslav Martinu. Paul Cortese, viola; Juan Carlos Garvayo, piano. Crystal Records CD838.

There may yet be some truth to the viola being the best medium for expressing intimations of mortality. This is the latest compilation of last – or at least late – works, conceived by their composers towards the end of their lives. Shostakovich almost didn't make it, finishing his manuscript only days before he died in hospital. His is the largest-scaled and most impressive piece here, and might have been better placed last. There are compositions that tend to become slower over the years, and this is one of them (along with the Walton Concerto and the Bax Sonata). Refreshingly, Cortese and Garvayo have looked again at Shostakovich's metronome markings. In the first movement, they are 2 minutes faster than Yuri Bashmet and Sviatoslav Richter, and they need 6 whole minutes less than their predecessors did for the final Adagio! Conversely, their Allegretto is slightly slower (acquiring a convincingly Shostakovian doggedness), so that the three movements have a similar pulse. That said, there is more to this piece than they find in it, at least on this showing. Cortese's playing is not inexpressive, but the actual tone has a certain... well, monotony. Khachaturian's unaccompanied Sonata is in one movement, which alternates between accented passages in *détaché* and more *cantabile* sections in an Armenian folkloric vein. Cortese sounds more at ease in the latter, his *détaché* including a component of noise that is too high for my taste. Martinu's Sonata was written for Lillian Fuchs during the compos-

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er's exile in America. Like his *Rhapsody-Concerto*, it is imbued by a nostalgic longing that eludes most non-Czech players, and this reading, while never less than beautifully played, is no exception. Grazyna Bacewicz surely shortened her life by a few years when she arranged her unaccompanied Violin Sonata for the viola. She was a virtuoso violinist (student of Carl Flesch) and it shows. Cortese is equal to all the music's demands, which are hair-raising in the final Presto.

American Journeys – Helen Stanley: Concerto Romantico; Newton Strandberg: Concerto; Alfred Hoose: Excursions; William Thomas McKinley: Concert Variations. Karen Dreyfus, viola; Glenn Dicterow, violin; Czech Radio SO; Vladimir Valek, conductor (Stanley); Silesian Philharmonic Orchestra; Jerzy Swoboda, conductor (Strandberg, Hoose); Warsaw National Philharmonic Orchestra; Carl St. Clair, conductor (McKinley). MMC Recordings MMC2149.

Ever-adventurous Karen Dreyfus leads her listeners in "American Journeys" – so this CD's title – of discovery. Three new Viola Concertos by American composers seem almost too much of a good thing, and are best taken one at a time. Helen Stanley's *Concerto Romantico* does its title all honours, from the start at which the "mist of the great gong ... summons the solo viola," as the composer herself puts it. There are more compositorial finesses than meet the ear at first

listening, but the remaining impression is one of dusky Romantic lyricism. There's nothing to beat a good tune played on the viola, and Ms. Stanley provides abundantly for them. Newton Strandberg's score has brighter colours, with percussion prominent. The three movements, totalling less than 10", are over in no time but manage to include just about every instrumental effect in the book, ending in a riot of colour. In contrast, Alfred Hoose's *Excursions* seem to be going nowhere in particular, but take an awful lot of time getting there. The piece comes over as too episodic, for all its nice isolated moments. In McKinley's *Concert Variations*, work of a more ambitious calibre, Dreyfus is joined by her husband Glenn Dicterow, concertmaster of the New York Philharmonic. The recording of this piece was originally coupled with Mozart's Sinfonia concertante, to which the unchanged liner notes continue to mysteriously refer. Both soloists make an excellent case for a beautifully written composition, the formal perfection of which avoids all academicism. In all this music, Dreyfus proves a perfect and eloquent advocate of her chosen composers' very different voices.

William Thomas McKinley: Viola Concerto No. 2; Patrik Bishay: Frameworks X, Sinfonie No.2: Metamorphose. Karen Dreyfus, viola; Silesian Philharmonic Orchestra; Jerzy Swoboda, conductor (McKinley); Moravian Philharmonic Orchestra; Vit Micka, conductor (Bishay). MMC Recordings MMC2148.

A little motive in McKinley's Concerto kept haunting me during most of its first movement, until I just had to stop the CD and work out what it reminded me of. It turned out to be the Romance by Benjamin Dale! I do not want to suggest any kind of large-scale "borrowing" – it was a matter of just a few notes –, but



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the resemblance rightly suggests where McKinley's heart is: his music is unashamedly Romantic, and he seems to enjoy a good tune. What stays in the mind, though, is his masterly use of the orchestra. The very beginning of the Concerto, with its dark, mysterious ascending figures, immediately evokes a primeval atmosphere out of which the extended movement eventually evolves. Throughout the long piece (36"), McKinley's idiomatic use of his forces is constantly to the fore, and this includes the solo viola, which – as the composer has realized – can't be treated like a big violin. The great demands put upon the soloist never compromise the piece's lyricism. There may be a few *tremolando* passages too many, but McKinley's concerto (which has at least two siblings) deserves more than just the occasional airing. Karen Dreyfus is well inside the piece's idiom, and on top of its technical difficulties. Watch out for the last movement's cadenza! The CD is completed by two symphonic compositions by the young German, Patrik Bishay. They are of a rather different hue. If, as the composer says, his music "reflects the social and political status quo in early 21st Century Germany", then that country might be in bigger trouble than we think.

Julius Röntgen: Three Viola Sonatas; Lyrische Gänge for voice, viola and piano. Brahms: Two Songs op. 91. Francien Schatborn, viola; Jeannette Koekkek, piano; Margriet van Reisen mezzo soprano. Etcetera KTC 1297.

Although German-born, Julius Röntgen (1855-1932) has been "adopted" by the Dutch since he moved to Amsterdam as piano teacher and later director of the Conservatoire, and his name adorns the frieze of the Amsterdam Concertgebouw. A son of the Leipzig Gewandhaus Orchestra's leader, Röntgen was a passionate viola player, if only on an amateur basis. His three sonatas, all written in one burst of inspiration between November 1924 and March 1925, show an intimate understanding of the instrument. In spite of these dates, they inhabit a much older, Brahmsian sound-world (this is not a criticism in my book!), and are also from a formal point of view quite conservative. Francien Schatborn was a student of Jürgen Kussmaul at the very conservatoire of which Röntgen was director, and is now principal viola of the Dutch Radio Philharmonic Orchestra. Together with her

regular piano partner, Schatborn makes a very convincing case for this music, the plangent tone of her 1826 Pressenda viola taking ideally to Röntgen's melancholy melodic vein. The second CD includes Röntgen's song cycle *Lyrische Gänge* (Lyric Paths), together with the compositions that probably inspired it: Brahms's Songs for mezzo soprano, viola and piano. With a singer who is alert to the text's nuances, this is a riveting performance of a strangely haunting work. The Brahms songs receive a lighter performance than is usually the case, with the Cradle Song given an agreeable lilt.

Dutch Music for Viola and Piano: Julius Röntgen, Hendrik Andriessen, Henriëtte Bosmans, Géza Frid). Francien Schatborn, viola; Jeannette Koekkek, piano. Etcetera KTC 1255.

Until now, I would have been hard put to name *any* Dutch composers, let alone some who have written music for the viola. This CD goes some way towards bettering the situation, even if the featured composers do include a Hungarian and a German! Even if his early Sonatine (1924) sounds like it, Hendrik Andriessen (1892-1981) was not, as claimed in the liner notes, a student of César Franck (who died two years before Andriessen was born!). However, the one-movement piece is indeed redolent of *fin de siècle* melodiousness, and none the worse for it. Andriessen's Sonata of 43 years later still inhabits the same sound

world, and even has some Franckian fingerprints, e.g. cyclic elements connecting the three movements. The other bona fide Dutch composer included is Henriëtte Bosmans (1895-1952), represented by two agreeable miniatures, transcribed respectively from the violin and the cello. Géza Frid (1904-1989) studied in his native Budapest with both Bartók and Kodály before settling in Amsterdam. His Sonatina (1946) shows their influence, especially in the fiery last movement, which also requires the player to tune the two lower strings up a semitone. Julius Röntgen (1855-1932) came to Amsterdam from Leipzig. An amateur violist, he wrote three sonatas for the instrument, which have been recorded by these artists (see above). The C minor work (1924) is the earliest and most ambitious of them. Francien Schatborn and Jeannette Koekkek have played all these compositions many times in concert. They are a well-attuned duo, and put across the music with great conviction.

Orchestral Excerpts for Viola with Written and Spoken Commentary by Yizhak Schotten. YS 7185.

The prospective of a CD of orchestral excerpts didn't seem awfully exciting, but I must say that it proved an interesting listen. Yizhak Schotten was a section player of the Boston Symphony Orchestra before becoming principal in Cincinnati and Houston, so his credentials are beyond the

shadow of a doubt. He has also taught these excerpts to countless students, and – as very soon becomes clear when listening to him – he just knows what he is talking about. His spoken comments on each excerpt are of necessity short and to the point, and complement the more general notes included in the booklet.

Schotten's delivery of the hardest excerpts (both for the section and solo) is ideally clear: you could write out the music (including all the expression marks) after listening to this CD. Schotten has been in the faculty of the University of Michigan for many years now, and I guess he isn't planning on taking auditions again, so prospective candidates needn't fear finding themselves competing against him!

It might have been possible to include CD-ROM archives of the relevant sheet music to better illustrate Schotten's fingering and bowing tips. Otherwise, I am sure this recording will prove a useful tool for anyone preparing for an orchestral audition.

– *Carlos María Solare is an Argentinian violist and musicologist based in Berlin. He contributes to The Strad, Opera, Classic Record Collector, MGG (Musik in Geschichte und Gegenwart) and Grove Online. He has been a featured performer at several International Viola Congresses, is a member of both the German Viola Society and the Viola d'amore Society of America, and is currently on the board of the International Viola Society.*

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AT THE GRASSROOTS

*Please send items of interest regarding viola activity at the grassroots to:
Louise Zeitlin, AVS Secretary,
LouiseZeitlin@oberlin.net.*

Welcome Alabama!

Just wanted to give y'all an update on what is happening in Alabama. When most of you think Alabama, you probably think of the movie Deliverance and the TV show Jerry Springer. Well now a budding viola community can be added to that prestigious list!

We have elected officers:
Daniel Sweaney, President
Michael Fernandez, Vice-President
Lucina Horner, Treasure
Arvilla Rovit, Secretary

The AVS currently has recital series set up in Tuscaloosa and Birmingham and we are currently in the final discussion stages for setting up a recital series in Jacksonville. Once this final series is established, we will have the entire central part of the state set up as Viola-Central. After that, our next stops will be Montgomery and Auburn (home of Auburn University). This will take care of the central-southern part of the state and after that we will only have two more cities before the entire state will have the beautiful sounds of viola: Mobile and Huntsville. We are also negotiating with one of the state orchestras to join AVS in presenting a concerto night for our inaugural viola day. Many works are on the table and we are yet to see

what will be kept and which will be dropped, but some of the pieces being tossed around include the Howell Elegy for Viola, String Quartet and Orchestra, Bax Phantasy, and concerti by John McEwen, Michael Haydn and JCF Bach. Of course, there are also the standard musical fare being discussed.

The AVS's collaboration with Scrollworks is expected to exceed the original goal of 60 new violists by the start of the '08-'09 school year. We already have shops set up to supply instruments and community businesses, corporations, firms and practices agreeing to fund lessons. In addition, we have recently acquired the names of many children and parents who want to learn more about the viola and are already making plans for our first viola day in October(ish).

As for the arts in Birmingham, the ASO seems to be doing very well as we are going to expand our roster. This information is very new so I cannot say anymore, but the members of the orchestra are excited not only about the prospects but also what the future holds for current musicians.

Finally, the Magic City Chamber Festival is starting to see higher and higher ticket sales. In addition, more modern music is being programmed and for next seasons inaugural event, some of the works being discussed include the Copland Sextet, Penderecki Clarinet Quartet

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Arizona Viola Society
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Southern California Viola Society
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Florida Viola Society
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Virginia Viola Society
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and Messiah Quartet for the End of Time. You may say they are standard fare, but when was the last time you heard a live performance? ;)

So there is an update on the Viola World of Alabama and all that the ALVS has done in the past three weeks. Wish us luck as we move forward and we'll keep you updated!

– Michael Fernandez

Arizona

Arizona violists have had a fun-filled, productive year. On October 20, 2007 the annual Virtuoso Viola Day was held for middle school and high school

members recital at First United Methodist Church in Gilbert, AZ. Both student and professional members performed works by Bloch, Hindemith, Reger, Mozart, and Leclair. It was a great recital which will hopefully become an annual event. Violists who performed were Kara Saunders, Hannah Stallkamp, William Engelsman, Jacquelyn Schwandt, and Jeffrey Norman. Performing with the Arizona Viola Society member performers were Arasch Ertefai, violin, Mandy Bopp, piano, and Nan Van Wie, piano.

On January 14, 2008, the Tempe Symphony Orchestra, under the direction of Dr. Richard Strange, held an evening of ensembles in which symphony members volun-

Concerto No. 6 by J. S. Bach. The personnel involved included eight violas (four on a part), one cello and one bass. The eight violists who performed were Anne Tinklenberg, Karla Tandon, Nan Van Wie, Maia Clak, Karen Hayes, Lindsey Summers, Seth Wiley, and Bill Engelsman. The cellist was Matt Smith and the bassist was Niel Van Wie.

On February 27, 2008, fifteen violists from Arizona went to Chase Field in downtown Phoenix to audition to perform the national anthem at a Diamondbacks major league baseball game. If chosen to play, the violists are hoping to perform at the game on May 31st, which is just before the 36th International Viola Congress (June 4-8, 2008) and the 11th Primrose International Viola Competition (June 1-8, 2008) begin at Arizona State University in Tempe, AZ. Those auditioning were Nokuthula Ngwenyama, Bob Herzog, John Mitchell, Ann Thompson, Al Satina, Susan Morris, Al West, Jeana West, Cindy Baker, Katie Shields, Jack Herriman, Bill Engelsman, Jennifer DeWitt, Harry Fisher, and Dwight Lear.

– Jacqueline Schwandt



Arizona Members' Recital: (top l to r) Jeffrey Norman, Kara Saunders, Arasch Ertefai. (bottom l to r) Hannah Stallkamp, Jacquelyn Schwandt, William Engelsman.

violists in Tempe, AZ. It was a day filled with viola ensembles and clinics, culminating in a large viola ensemble concert.

On December 2, 2007, the Arizona Viola Society held a

teered and organized various chamber ensembles to perform at the Tempe Center for the Arts. Members of the TSO, led by principal violist William (Bill) Engelsman, performed the third movement of the Brandenburg

Southern California

On New Year's Day, did you sit at home, and write your list of "resolutions" for the new year?

We didn't. We played chamber



SCVS reading party.

music instead! Board member Karie Prescott hosted many Southern California Viola Society members in her beautiful home, guesthouse, and garden for VIVA VIOLA!!! '08. Works from Bach to Gershwin and players of all ages mixed and matched and in general had a whale of a good time playing music for "violists only." We particularly enjoyed reading (again!!) Max Raimi's wonderful arrangement of "Mr. Sandman" for six violas and started to work our way through a daunting array of beautiful viola quartet works from the Absolute Zero Viola Quartet in Wales. (Our research department had fun preparing for this event!)

The Southern California Viola Choir will be performing two noon concerts on July 6th and 7th at the IVS Congress in Tempe, Arizona. Come hear us play works by Maria Newman, Bevan Manson, Paul Chihara, and a surprise... The theme is "A Taste of Hollywood -- The Players, the Composers." We hope to see you all there!

Meanwhile, on April 12, 2008, the Southern California Viola Society is hosting "ViolaFest Los Angeles" at Santa Monica High School. This second annual day-long event for kids will include a performance by Colburn Conservatory Professor Paul Coletti, a master-class by USC Professor Pamela Goldsmith, and a world premiere by UCLA Composition Professor Paul Chihara for all the ViolaFest participants to perform together. There will be classes to sharpen skills, and chances to hear and perform works for multiple violas.

Student registration is open to violists in fourth through twelfth grade. A \$20 student registration fee includes a free ViolaFest t-shirt, participation in all events, sheet music and two free tickets to the Gala Concert. Auditor registration is \$10 and is open to any adult educator, teacher, musician, or parent who wishes to participate as an observer. This event is generously sponsored by the American String Teachers Association of Greater

Los Angeles and the American Viola Society. Come join us for this wonderful day!

More information is available on the Southern California Viola Society web site at www.southern-californiaviolasociety.com, where you can download a brochure and application form, and further questions may be directed to gwarnick@verizon.net.

– Jennie Hansen

Florida

The Florida Viola Society has been very active since its inception in October 2006. We had our first event on January 13, 2007 at the University of Florida. The event included a master class given by myself, a viola duet reading event, and a recital with the complete Hindemith Sonatas for viola and piano, and the Trio with Viola, Saxophone and Piano. On March 23, 2007, FVS held a guest master class with Martha Katz at the University of Florida. On November 11, 2007, FVS held an event featuring guest violist John Largess, violist of the Miro String Quartet, in which he gave a master class, and performed a recital. We also held a mass viola ensemble event with readings of the Bach Brandenburg Concerto No. 6, and the Martinson Viola Fantasy for 12 violas. On January 29, 2008, FVS held a BRATS event at Naples High School with guest violists Craig Mumm (Metropolitan Opera), Melinda Daetsch (Hartt School) and Monica Biacchi (Naples Philharmonic), featuring a performance of the Alan Shulman

Viola Quartet. On March 2, 2008, the FVS will host a Gala Viola Concerto Concert Event, featuring AVS founder Myron Rosenblum, viola d'amore and Yizhak Schotten. The concert will include the Graupner Concerto for Viola d'amore and Viola, the Reger Suite for viola and strings, the Telemann Concerto, and Hindemith Trauermusik. The event will also feature a Schotten master class, a viola d'amore lecture by Rosenblum, and a reading of the Richard Lane work for six violas.

– Ken Martinson

Idaho

In October of 2007 Boise State University hosted a visit from Melia Watras, viola professor at the University of Washington. Idaho Viola Society members were invited to attend a viola master class (with students from BSU), and her recital, which also featured violinist Michael Jinsoo Lim. The recital program included Invocation for violin and viola by Robert Mann, Suite No. 6 in D Major by J.S. Bach, Recitativo and Scherzo (arr. for solo viola) by Fritz Kreisler, Come Long Fiddler, from At the Octoroon Balls by Wynton Marsalis, and the Duo Concertante for Violin and Viola by Paul Chihara.

– Linda Kline Lamar

Iowa

In 2008 the Iowa chapter of the American Viola Society and the

University of Iowa will play host to three guest violists. On January 30 and 31 Juliet White-Smith, Professor of Viola at the University of Northern Colorado and President-elect of the American Viola Society, presented a solo

recital and masterclass at the University of Iowa. The program included two works for solo viola: the Bach G major Suite and Maurice Gardner's Tricinium for Solo Viola. Ms. White-Smith played the Bach with wonderful stylistic nuance. The Gardener is a three-movement work for solo viola which explored the qualities of the viola. Ms. White-Smith played with a beautiful, dolorous sound. The concert ended with a work written for Timothy Deighton (Professor of Viola at Penn State University) in 2002 by Paul Barson entitled: Ice Birds for viola and audio. It is for amplified viola and audio. The viola converses with the CD recording of electronic sounds, which evoke a sense of arctic coldness. Again, Ms. White-Smith played this piece with a great brooding and virtuosity.

Upcoming events for the Iowa Viola Society include: a recital at the University of Northern Iowa on February 20 to be given by Denis Kalinikov. On March 4, Luther College viola professor, Spencer Martin, will present a recital and masterclass at the University of Iowa. UNI will also host American Viola Society president, Helen Callus, on March 12 for a chamber music collaboration with the Maia Quartet at the

University of Iowa. While in residence, she will give solo and chamber music masterclasses.

– Christine Rutledge

Ohio

I have only seen a few concerts that were daring enough to program a lot of a great thing, all at once. Now my experiences with Beethoven's three opus 59 quartets, or Beethoven's five 'cello sonatas, or even all twenty-four Paganini caprices will pale in comparison to an even better all-in-one-sitting concert

"How Suite It Is!", the Ohio Viola Society's recent celebration of the six Bach suites, was a fundraiser for our annual competition.

Cleveland Orchestra violists Stanley Konopka, Richard Waugh, Lisa Boyko, Lembi Veskimets, Eliesha Nelson, and Mark Jackobs performed the suites in chronological order to a generous audience in the Cleveland Institute of Music's beautiful new Mixon Hall. The hall's acoustics are adjustable and thus were tailored to the advantage of our unique instrument. Clearly those who would attend such an event are wont to revel in that chocolate sound of which violists are so proud.

The program was ambitious, just two hours in length, but came off like a satisfying six-course meal. While each performance was beautifully presented, the real treat was to hear six rich and richly unique voices, each a fitting part of the overall



How Suite It Is: *Lembi Veskimets, Mark Jackobs, Lisa Boyko, and Stanley Konopka at Ohio VS fundraiser.*

repast but imbued with the individual's personal flair. Such a concert also lent itself to compositional comparisons among the suites: the night was highly educational. For me, it prompted some reconsidering of my current favorites and least favorites among suites and movements. The concert reinforced the wise words of my first teacher, Deborah Price, who will tell you that Bach is music that you will live with for a lifetime. It is endlessly new.

To conclude, the concert was endlessly enjoyable. The fact that Bach left us such extraordinary repertoire to commandeer is certainly worthy of such celebration!

– *Annalisa Boerner*

Rocky Mountains

As a new Board member on the Rocky Mtn Viola Society, I am happy to report on RMVS' upcoming "Viva la Viola." The viola community in this state is a

friendly bunch- many of them contribute lots of their time and talents to this event, which has taken place annually in Fort Collins for many years now. The event kicks off with a members' recital Friday night, April 18th- the program will feature the wide variety of music written for multiple violas, including Borissosky's arrangement of movements from Prokofiev's Romeo and Juliet for two, George Benjamin's Viola, Viola for two, Harbison's Cuccaracia and Fugue for four, among others- perhaps an arrangement of the second movement of Brahms' B-flat Sextet for six violas? Featured on the program will be RMVS and Takacs Quartet member Geraldine Walther and guest Katrina Wreede.

Saturday, April 19th sees the event move into high gear- at present, there are over 120 young violists registered to take part in a full day

of group activities! In addition, this year there will be a group specifically for adult amateurs. Featured guest Mimi Zweig will give masterclasses throughout the day, and there will be an exhibit hall as well.

Should be an exciting day!

– *Matthew Dane*

Welcome Tennessee!

The Nashville skies were grey and the rain heavy, but the weather did little to dampen the spirits of some thirty violists from throughout Tennessee and adjoining states as the Blair School of Music of Vanderbilt University hosted a series of master classes with James Dunham, Professor of Viola at Rice University. In addition to morning and afternoon master classes, there was a lovely luncheon sponsored by AVS and Yang's Violin of Nashville.

The program featured two ensembles coached by John Kochanowski (Kodaly Serenade for two violins and viola and the Schumann Piano Quintet), two Bach solo Suites, Enesco's Concertpiece, the Rochberg Sonata, Schumann's Märchenbilder, Bloch Suite Hebraique, and the Walton and Bartók Concerti. Participants included Caroline Gilbert, student of John Kochanowski; the remaining violists--Dean Whiteside, James Larson, Jordan Warmath, Roberto Papi, Tiffany Morris-Simon, Christopher Lowry, and Andrew Braddock--were all from the studio of Kathryn Plummer.



TVS class with James Dunham at Blair Recital Hall at Vanderbilt. Acoustical tiles include photos of several participants and organizers. Photos and collage by Dwight Pounds.

Visiting viola teachers included Hillary Herndon (University of Tennessee), Sarah Cote (Middle Tennessee State University and Belmont University), Dana Meyer (Franklin, TN), and Dwight Pounds (Western Kentucky University). Several violists from the Nashville Symphony Orchestra and Nashville Chamber Orchestra also attended including Daniel Reinker, Shu Zheng Yang, Mary Helen Law, James Grosjean, Monisa Angell and Clare Yang.

Officers of the Tennessee Viola Society are as follows: Kathryn Plummer: President; Mary Helen Law: Secretary; President-elect: Judith Ablon; Treasurer: Clare Yang; Board Members-At-Large: John Kochanowski and Chris Lowry.

The next meeting of the TVS will be in Knoxville on September 27

at the University of Tennessee and hosted by Hillary Herndon.

– Kathryn Plummer

Central Texas

Based in Austin, Texas, the Central Texas Viola Society was formed as a chapter of the AVS in the winter of 2005. In its first two years, the CTVS offered educational outreach opportunities, including All-Region and All-State audition workshops for area high school students, an open rehearsal with Nokuthula Ngwneyama and the Austin Symphony, and a series of ensemble-playing social events. We kicked off the 2007-2008 season in September by offering our 3rd annual All-Region and All-State audition workshops, taught by CTVS members Ames Asbell, Martha Carapetyan and Bruce Williams. Workshop attendance

increased for the third year in a row, and the students were bright, well-prepared and interested in learning the ins and outs of preparing for auditions. We are proud that most of the students who attended the classes were successful in their auditions. Congratulations to all who participated!

In November, the CTVS hosted its first visiting artist. Christine Rutledge, Associate Professor of Viola at the University of Iowa, gave a master class on baroque viola playing, followed by a demonstration-recital. A fascinating look into the world of solo baroque viola performance, it was a delight for all who attended to see and hear Christine's skilled and enthusiastic presentation. She explained the differences in baroque and modern instruments, and demonstrated on her own baroque viola how baroque compositions call for completely different physical and musical techniques than those of the modern era. Each of the master class performers made significant changes and were inspired by their new understanding of baroque performance practice.

In December, members of the CTVS and friends gathered to do some "Viola Caroling" at two local convalescent homes in Austin. At each one, we talked with residents and answered questions, as many were unfamiliar with the instrument. These performances were meaningful not only to our audiences, but gave members a way to bring our ensemble playing into the wider community.

In 2008, the CTVS looks forward to many varied activities including seminars on improvisation for violists and movement techniques for healthy playing. Coming up soon in March, we are helping to promote an upcoming viola duo recital with Miro Quartet violist John Largess, on the faculty of the University of Texas School of Music, and guest artist Kenneth Martinson of the University of Florida.

At present we are primarily composed of violists in the Austin metropolitan area, but hope to include communities within driving distance. At the crossroads of many different types of music and performers in Austin, the Central Texas Viola Society is making its own mark and offering valuable opportunities to violists interested in learning more about their instrument, its repertoire and performance possibilities.

— *Martha Carapetyan*

Virginia

The Virginia Viola Society is looking forward to three big events this Spring. Coming in March, certified Feldenkreis teacher and massage therapist, Melanie Lepper, will work with members in a unique event dedicated to physical health and well-being. Our former President, Connie Gee (current President of the South Carolina chapter) will collaborate with Johanna Beaver in a recital and master class at the University of Mary Washington and, rounding out the school year in May, we'll have a Viola Day in Charlottesville including recitals and master-classes given by Univ. of Virginia viola faculty Ayn Balija, Daphne Gerling, and other accomplished violists, as well as plenty of viola ensemble playing.

— *Johanna Beaver*

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Personal Information (students, please use your permanent address)

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- Do you wish to be included in the online and print teacher directories? Yes No
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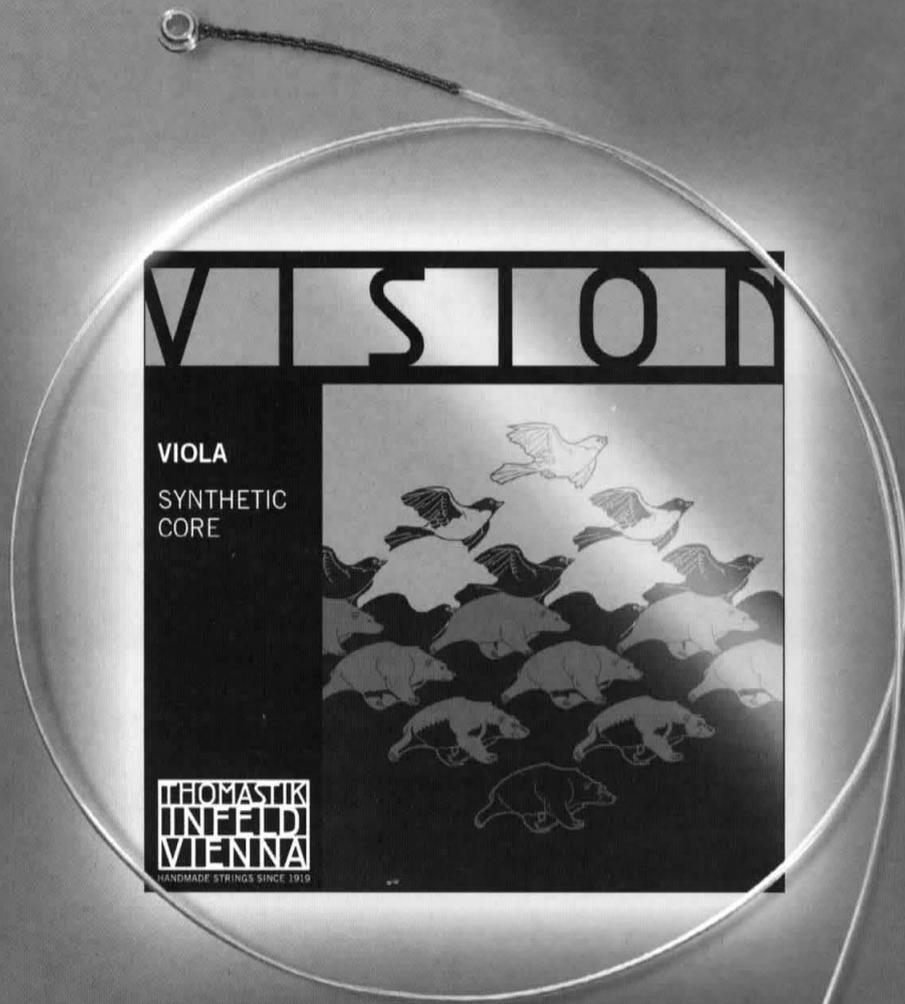
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