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VIOLIST oder BRATSCHIST.

Die Stim ist etwas rauh, so die Viole giebet.
Doch heist sie angenehm, dem der sie recht versteht.
Ein Stuck wird edeler geachtet und geliebet,
wann dieser artige Thon zugleich darunter geht.
Rom so die Mutter-Stadt der Music-Künstler heißet,
ists, die mein Instrument als etwas schönes preißet.

Features

American Viola Society

AVS *Chapter of the Internationale Viola–Gesellschaft*

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MY FATHER, CLARENCE B. EVANS

by

STANLEY R. EVANS

My father, Clarence B. Evans, had an interesting career as a violist, resulting in his association with many prominent musicians of his time.

Born in 1888, he began violin studies as a schoolboy in Duluth, Minnesota, but went to Chicago in 1907 to study with Hugo Kortschak of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, who had studied with Sevcik. As with many young music students, this was a period of intense study while living at a subsistence level. Sometimes he would sit in the gallery at Orchestra Hall and hear the orchestra play under Dr. Frederick Stock, thinking how much he would like some day to be a member of that orchestra.

As his skill improved, he began playing jobs in theaters and restaurants. In 1910, at age 22, he played in the Chicago Opera Orchestra for a production of *Salome*, presented in Chicago, St. Louis, and Milwaukee.

In 1912 he was offered, and accepted, the position of principal viola in the San Francisco Symphony. The 1912-13 season would be just the second season of the newly organized orchestra, led by Henry Hadley. Principal players had contracts for the season, but the rest were paid on a per-concert basis. All supplemented their meager symphony earnings by playing at hotels, restaurants and theaters. Evans became concertmaster of the Palace Hotel orchestra.

His diary of that period recorded special musical experiences: enjoying the beautiful voice of Melba, admiring the piano artistry of Ossip Gabrilowitsch, who appeared as soloist with the orchestra, and being deeply moved by the Puccini operas presented by the La Scala Grand Opera Company.

Alfred Hertz became musical director of the orchestra for the 1915-1916 season and brought in Louis Persinger as concertmaster. Evans played with him in concerts of the San Francisco Chamber Music Society. (During that season Paul Whiteman, later to become famous as the "King of Jazz," was a member of the viola section of the orchestra).

Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge

In September of 1915 my father married Louise Murchison, his childhood sweetheart. In May of 1916, he received a letter from Kortschak inviting him to be the violist in a string quartet Kortschak was forming, to be supported by Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge. This was an exciting opportunity and he quickly accepted. After finishing the orchestra season, they left San Francisco, enjoyed a short visit in Duluth and crossed the country to Pittsfield, Massachusetts, where the quartet began rehearsing in July. The music publication *Fiddlestrings* described the arrangements for the quartet:

> "In a secluded spot on the southeastern slope of South Mountain, in the Berkshires, is situated the Berkshire Music Colony, erected by Mrs. Frederick S. Coolidge of New York and Pittsfield, Mass., a prominent benefactress and noted patron of

music. It is to her that the Berkshire String Quartet--for the members of which summer cottages were built at the colony--owes its existence. The stately Berkshire Temple of Music, commanding a beautiful view of Washington and October mountains, is the most prominent building, and here Mrs. Coolidge will hold annually a festival of chamber music."

In addition of Kortschak and Evans, the other two original members were Herman Felber, Jr., second violin, and Emmeran Stoeber, cello. There were several changes in the second violin position and by the time of the first festival in September 1918, Sergei Kotlarsky held that position. Since July 1916, the quartet had rehearsed summers and played a limited number of concerts during the winters, often for Mrs. Coolidge and her guests in her New York home.

The first concert of the festival was played on 16 September 1918. The Temple of Music was filled with a distinguished audience, among whom was Dr. Stock, conductor of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. The first work on the program was the Beethoven quartet in E-flat major, op. 127, performed by the Berkshire String Quartet. Toward the end of the final movement, the viola C string broke. Realizing how disruptive it would be to stop playing, Evans also knew that the remainder of the movement utilized mainly the upper strings of the viola. He kept on playing, going an octave higher for the few parts that were written for the C string. The movement was brought to a successful conclusion and some in the audience were unaware of the problem. Dr. Stock was fully aware, of course, and was delighted by the unusual occurrence!

The festival presented other chamber music groups and introduced compositions submitted for the competitions sponsored by Mrs. Coolidge. The famous Kneisel Quartet would undoubtedly had been invited but it had disbanded the previous year. There was a program by the Letz Quartet headed by Hans Letz, formerly second violin of the Kneisel Quartet.

Kotlarsky was drafted into the army in November 1918, and the diary reported that "after several weeks of try-outs, Jacques Gordon was selected for the position. He proved to be a very excellent player in every way."

Chicago via Detroit

With Gordon now second violin, the quartet played concerts during the 1918-19 season in New York, Chicago, Boston, Washington, and Philadelphia. This was the third season of the quartet and Evans decided to leave the quartet in favor of an orchestral position. He had received several offers and accepted one from Gabrilowitsch, who had become conductor of the Detroit Symphony. He finished the season with the quartet, spent the summer in Duluth, and reported to Detroit in September 1919. After signing the contract for Detroit he had received an offer from Chicago, but had to reply that he was committed to Detroit for one season. (For the 1919 Berkshire Festival Louis Bailly was the violist in the quartet and also performed the Bloch Suite and the Rebecca Clarke Sonata, the top choices in the competition for a composition for viola.)

Although seated in the third chair of violas, Evans was promptly brought into the Detroit Symphony String Quartet with the concertmaster, 2nd concertmaster and principal cellist. A

high point of their season was a performance of the Dvorak Piano Quintet with the piano part played by Gabrilowitsch.

Early in 1920, there was another offer from Chicago to commence in the fall which Evans was happy to accept. From his diary:

> "Gabrilowitsch called me into his room several times to try to persuade me to stay in Detroit; and he had Kolar (asst. conductor), as well as all the quartet, talk to me for the same purpose. When he saw that I would not stay, he urged me to go and play for Stokowski, as he wanted a solo viola; and offered to do anything to help me about it. (Which meant almost certainly that I'd get the place, as G. and S. are great friends and work together a good deal)--but I thanked him and declined."

The old dream of playing in the Chicago Symphony was still strong--and about to come true!

He finished the season in Detroit and returned to Duluth, intending to spend the summer there. However, he received a letter from Mrs. Coolidge asking him to help her out by rejoining the Berkshire Quartet for the summer and the September festival, since Bailly had other commitments. He accepted and again the cottage near South Mountain was occupied by him, Louise, and their son Donald. The 1920 festival included performances by the London String Quartet, Efrem Zimbalist, pianists Guy Maier and Lee Pattison, and harpist Carlos Salzedo.

Dream Fullfilled

Joining the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in the fall of 1920, Evans was seated in the third chair of the section and was happy to be in the orchestra he had admired since his student days.

The Berkshire String Quartet disbanded after the 1920 festival. Jacques Gordon accepted a position at the Capitol Theater in New York, expecting to remain there for some time. Suddenly, however, he received three offers and accepted the best one: concertmaster of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. He arrived in Chicago on 9 October 1921 and called my father. They met, had a meal together, talked about the orchestra, and from the diary, "at 11:30 p.m. I went back to his room, to see his newly purchased $10,000 Strad violin."

Soon after joining the orchestra, Gordon formed a quartet and asked Evans to be the violist. Because of their former association, this was a very comfortable relationship, and playing in the quartet became a particularly satisfying activity.

Evans was made principal violist in 1926 and held that position to 1939. That period was the peak of his career. In the orchestra he led the section and enjoyed playing the solo parts, both the relatively small ones and the larger ones in the Dohnányi Suite, the Brandenburg Concerto No. 6 and *Don Quixote*, performed with Piatigorsky and other fine cello soloists. He and Gordon played the Mozart Sinfonia Concertante, including an extended cadenza composed by Dr. Stock. At the 1933-34 World's Fair, he played the Bruch Romanze with the orchestra at the Swift Bridge.

During that same general period, Evans was conductor of the Civic Orchestra of Chicago (the training

orchestra of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra) and the Chicago Business Men's Orchestra. During the summer Grant Park concerts in 1936 he was a guest conductor with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and conducted a concert of the Chicago Opera Orchestra featuring Mischa Elman playing the Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto.

Playing in the Gordon String Quartet was also a major activity. In 1927, the 100th anniversary of Beethoven's death, the quartet played a series of concerts in the James Simpson Theater of the Field Museum featuring all of the Beethoven quartets.

Although the Berkshire String Quartet had disbanded after the 1920 festival, the members did play together again. Mrs. Coolidge invited Kortschak, Gordon, Evans, and Stoeber to re-assemble to play at the festivals in 1928 and 1938 (the last festival.) In each of those years, they performed the Beethoven op. 127, the work which had opened the first festival in 1918.

Although all of my father's musical endeavors were challenging and rewarding, I believe he found the greatest satisfaction in being principal viola of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra--the realization of his earliest musical ambition.

Stanley Evans *was born in Pittsfield, Massachusetts, shortly before the 1920 festival. He attended Northwestern University and played viola professionally in the Chicago area before World War II. During service in the Marine Corps, he made the decision to go into law, retaining music as a major avocation. After graduation from Harvard Law School, he practiced law in California and later became a Superior Court Judge. His is now retired in Palo Alto, California and devotes much time to chamber music. His mother, Louise Evans, a pianist and composer, played viola in the Chicago Women's Symphony Orchestra under Ethel Leginska and Izler Solomon. His older brother Donald has played viola in the Chicago Symphony Orchestra for 40 years and Donald's wife, Margaret, has played cello in the orchestra for 37 years. They will both retire after this season.*■

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THE BERKSHIRE QUARTET

ETCETERAS FOR VIOLA PLAYERS

by

WATSON FORBES

We seldom have to use a mute. When we do, we accept the usual one we carry around or, being modern and up to date, we have one attached to the strings beyond the bridge. Yet it is an important adjunct affecting our performance. We tend to give too little thought to the results it is giving, and too little thought to the musical result we are conveying. Now, mutes come in various guises. They are available in a variety of materials. They have different weights. Some have only one prong, some two and others several; some are handy, some are not! When we have to use them, we tend to park them and after use, leave them behind. I have a useful collection which I have picked up from time to time--droppings from the rich man's desk!

I have a tendency to carry around with me a quantity of mutes, and experiment to find out which gives the sound most appropriate to the music I am to play. However handy it is to have one parted ready for use attached to the strings beyond the bridge, I have rarely found it fully rewarding in sound quality. I have used a two-pronged, lightweight aluminium mute (now difficult to come by). The leather ones which I have found in various weights and models are only reasonably satisfactory. For a long time I found the "Heifetz" mute appealing. Some form of rubber or plastic gave good results. Those made of bone I found gave a nasal quality to the tone. The four prong metal one was most self-effacing, and only useful for practice when it was important not to disturb your neighbors. A lot depends on the result you get from your own instrument; a great deal depends also on how well the legs of the mute fit your bridge. My only advice is to collect as many and various mutes as you can find and experiment until you are truly satisfied. But do be critical of the results you obtain, and realize that different musical styles ask for different treatment.

Resin

Resin for the bow is an item of daily use over which we tend to be too lazy to criticize. What is useful and effective for gut or gut covered strings is too weak in tackiness for metal strings. Alterations in temperature require changes of the quality and cling of the resin we use. It is undesirable to use too much resin, but this is a fault too many of us are thoughtlessly heir to. Especially young students ought to be taught to beware of overdoing the application. My own observation is that bow hair lasts much longer than most of us realize. It is fidgety to have the bow rehaired too often, since it takes a day or two for it to work into rewarding use. Only when the hair refuses to take up the resin should it be renewed. Too much resin gives a scratchy sound, too little lends a bland quality to the tone. Three up and down strokes along the hair should be sufficient for general use. Occasionally use the bow without applying resin; this cleans the hair of any excess. Resin is the same as rosin, being interchangeable terms, though resin in technical terms refers to the substance exuding from fir trees, and rosin is the solidified form. Propriety brands are manufactured and treated substances as a rule.

Shoulder Rest

We have been cajoled into using a shoulder rest as a necessary adjunct for comfort in performance. The problem is twofold: 1) how to obtain a comfortable grip on the viola and 2) how to fill the gap between the shoulder and the jaw. People with short necks are very vocal in denying the use of any rest at all. The older generation advocates the cushion under the coat lapel or a cushion attached by an elastic band to the back of the viola. Others advocate the use of a shoulder rest, manufactured in metal or wood plus velvet or other clinging material. There is a theory that the shoulder rest which has the minimum contact with the edges of the viola is to be preferred, since it doesn't dampen the sound in any way. The viola sounds without any impediment. This is an advantage which, I think, is largely imaginary. I have failed to distinguish any tonal advantage.

The greatest test is to be comfortable. Efficiency in the handling of the instrument is important. Be flexible in your attitude. After a lifetime of using a "Menuhin" shoulder rest, I have reverted to a pad under the coat lapel as being more comfortable. Having a moderately long neck, I have failed to be comfortable without any help at all. If you don't have a reasonable grasp (not a rigid grip) of the viola at the chin, all sorts of technical feats become an anxiety. Some players have very little grip at the chin and rely on holding the viola with the left hand--not a solution to be recommended, though possible. But don't just follow the prevailing fashion. Experiment fully, and don't forget to include the chin rest in your probe for comfort and efficiency.

Watson Forbes, *distinguished British violist, has written extensively for and about the viola. His editions and arrangements for the instrument number over 100 examples.*■

SCOTT NICKRENZ

by

ROSEMARY GLYDE

Editor's Note: This is the fourth in a series of articles by the author on prominent violists and those who have had influence in our field.

"Get it into your ear--every note alive, every note full of life. Vibrate right through the note to the other with the hand alive. As you practice, I want this beautiful sound. That's it! The hand is *happy*. Practice for that same happy feeling."

It is telling that the very words that Scott Nickrenz spoke to his student could very well describe his own life's activity. The man exudes tremendous optimism and an unbounded and infectious enthusiasm as he talks about his work.

This fall I met and visited Scott for the first time in his teaching studio at the Hartt School of Music in Hartford, Connecticut. It was exciting to put his face together with his voice. When Scott called me earlier this fall to ask me to substitute for him at the school while he was on tour in Australia, I received a miraculous surprise. I was very surprised to hear a timbre, a kind of purr and inflection in his voice very much akin to the voice of the late violinist, Michael Rabin. The same zany humor came over the phone as well. I was anxious

to meet this well-known violist.

When I arrived at his studio, his first student had cancelled owing to illness, so Scott and I had a chance to chat. He has a manner of largesse that invites you to enter. His mind is always on the go, seeming to constantly click off possibilities; his foot undulates up and down with the same busyness.

The student, violist Judith Porowski, arrived and the lesson began. About halfway through the hour, the lesson began to center on sound. I had heard about his concentration on sound from a former student, and I was pleased to have a chance to hear his thoughts first-hand. I will quote from his comments. Notice the words which are underlined for he underscored them himself with inflection; the same words consistently reappeared during the hour:

"Often when you're working very hard, your hand looks traumatized. But I can get a very rich sound because my hand is relaxed."

"More than anything else, I need this richness of sound."

"Keep the vibrato going through the note, get a fat sound."

"Gorgeous--the hand sounds opulent, it sounds balanced."

"If you get one note feeling well, then you add another until they both feel well and so on. Then you're getting a valuable technique."

"It's got to sound like a T-bone steak with security and balance."

Chamber Music Festivals

I left Scott that day only to return to see him again a week later at his penthouse apartment in the East 70's of New York City. I entered a sun-lit, immaculately maintained apartment. Before we settled in easy-chairs to talk, Scott took me down a narrow circular staircase to his office. We passed a bedroom (with a lovely old quilt that Scott says "just won't wear out") and found a little nook that is his office. Scott showed me his folders, each one pristinely kept with entries for his festivals. Scott serves as director of the chamber series at the Festival dei Due Mondi in Spoleto, Italy, the Spoleto U.S.A. in Charleston, South Carolina, and his most recent directorship at the Festival of Three Worlds in Melbourne, Australia. He also has been the director of chamber music at the Brooklyn Academy of Music for the last thirteen years.

This is assuredly Scott's *love*. He almost reverently showed me his work papers for each series. He described his work as being akin to a "chef with a series of menus for the audiences; the artists are the ingredients." He stressed the importance of "getting the right artists without any weak links. The scheduling of artists must be totally democratic with each artist having the same amount of 'red meat'." Showing me his schedule of repertoire, he zealously described his process of working out the combinations for each concert and for each series. He has a busy schedule. After the Charleston Spoleto comes the Italian Spoleto, then a brief vacation, usually to Nantucket, and then to his newly created Australian festival.

His wife, the well-known flutist Paula Robison, entered at this point to call his attention to their bird that had just begun to talk! An attractive, soft-spoken woman, her quiet ways almost belie her outgoing, charismatic figure on the stage.

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We went back upstairs. There, after I asked Scott about the origin of his name, he picked out an old thick volume from his bookshelf. "My roots go back to 1803, back to Sir Walter Scott." Sir Walter Scott was the sheriff of Galashiels, Scotland, and a descendant, Adam Scott, came over to America from the same Galashiels in the early 1800s. The book, dated July 8, 1803 with the inscription Adam Scott, was published in 1793, written by James Ferguson, and the title: "The use of globes and the principle of the art of dialing calculation of the mean times of new and full moons and eclipses." It is an engineering treatise on mechanics, hydraulics, and pneumatics used for the crossing of the ocean, it is presumed. Robert Scott was his grandfather's name. Nickrenz is a Swiss name, probably of Celtic origin.

Scott then took me out onto the wrap-around terrace. On this sunny, fall morning, it held a magnificent view framed by lattice-work in rounded arches. "It was created by three carpenters working for a month." Wonderful plants encircled the terrace, including blueberries, strawberries, a grape arbor, a dwarf peach. I asked Scott how he managed it all (seeing as my raspberries are slightly underpruned at this moment) and he admitted to having a gardener!

Teaching and Competitions

Scott has been teaching at the Hartt School since 1980. "I find it exhilarating and exhausting. Some teachers can go for hours, but I really can't give a great deal. A teacher has to listen, observe, and come up with solutions. An exercise alone will not transform the player; it has to be done for a specific reason."

Scott digressed into a report of a stunning array of chamber concerts coming up, ranging from the Societies at Lincoln Center and Miami, to a benefit at the Turtle Bay Music School, to the adjudication of the Chopin Piano Competition at the Juilliard School. Scott spoke of his desire to promote young artists, that he continues to judge every year after Christmas, the Young Concert Artists Competition. He has also been a judge at The Leventritt, The Naumberg and String Quartet Competition. "I promoted myself when I was young. We have, of course, got to be tenacious and smart. But playing beautifully is the most important component though not the only one. Each generation has to create in its own way. Turning a phrase is important, but you've got to do it in different ways. I asked how he felt about the varying opinions on the value of competitions, in particular, one often heard that competitions are not only unfair but actually are against what the artist stands for. Scott considered this for a moment and then answered. "Yes, it's a responsibility. But competitions do not have the wallop they used to; there have been too many bad choices. Major management often does not attend any more. The selection process has been uneven. But competition can be a way of making your moves. It can reveal your ingenuity, your creativity. Even the professional competitor doesn't bother me. What the heck. It doesn't make you better or worse. If you happen to be the lucky one and get money and concerts, why not?"

Scott rambled back to his love, his entrepreneurial work as artistic director. "In chamber music I've accrued more and more responsibility. I rarely pick anyone [for his series] for their chamber music ability alone. The solo player is the one who'll make a

fine chamber music player. I look for the string personality, someone with an incredible technique, someone with a good sense of humor, not a prima donna. Then I go about getting that person. I haven't made a point of it. That's just how I've always done it."

"Too often the problem is with rehearsals, especially when the person isn't really secure about his instrument. If they are secure, the beauty comes so quickly. With these great young players, there are no fights; it comes together quickly. People often rehearse for the wrong reasons." Scott admitted, "Well, I *really don't like* rehearsing! Organizing the concert is he real work; the playing is the fun!"

His Background

Scott grew up in western New York state. The nearest town had 10,000 people. "I grew up on a farm...with a tennis court. I didn't have a strong cultural base." He started the piano at five. His father, in the food distribution business, was an amateur jazz player. "Art Tatum was his hero. My father had a dance band that played on Friday and Saturday nights at country clubs. They had a wonderful violinist, George Kadera. When I was ten, my parents asked me if I would like to study the violin. I was so crazy about it when I started that I slept with it! When I was thirteen, George died, and I became the violinist in my father's band. I played every Friday and Saturday night until one in the morning. I found out late that George Kadera had had cancer and only two or more years to live at the time when I was asked to learn the violin. I was primed to replace him!

"As a boy I had money because of my dance fiddling. But my parents did discipline me. I had to buy war bonds. I bought stamps for my stamp collection and I bought our first T.V. set as my parents wouldn't buy one. I've been making money since I was thirteen.

"What happened at age fifteen is interesting: I was small for my age, a little blonde kid. Once at a country club, a man took a liking to my playing and invited me over to his house to play in a small orchestra of twelve or so string players. This man turned out to be the late Cameron Baird, a wealthy patron of the arts who owned the beautiful Strad viola that Boris Kroyt used during his tie with the Budapest Quartet. There were 'plants' in the orchestra to audition me. The 'plants' were the members of the Budapest Quartet (who were playing the Beethoven series at the University of Buffalo). Alexander Schneider was to my right!

"Cameron was my angel. He said to Sasha, 'How would you like to take this raw kid and teach him once a month when you come to town?' Baird arranged, too, that I study with him at the Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto in the summer where he had a teaching position. I had a lesson with him every morning. And then I shot up. It happened right then. I suddenly got big. And Sasha said, 'If you switched to viola, you could write your ticket.'"

At seventeen Scott shared a program with another young player at the Royal Conservatory of Music and played his first Bach Suite. Then Sasha suggested he study with Karen Tuttle at Curtis. "I auditioned and was accepted. At that time, unbeknown to me, Tuttle left Curtis, and when I arrived to study with her, found that my teacher had been changed without

my knowledge to Max Aronoff." This was a disappointment which attended Nickrenz for the next three years.

The Lenox Quartet

"Paul Fromm had just founded the Fromm Players at Tanglewood. At the time I was sharing the principal viola with Jesse Levine in the Tanglewood Orchestra. I was invited to be a Fromm player, and out of that came the formation of the Lenox Quartet. That's when I left Curtis. I didn't graduate. In order to support ourselves, the Lenox was in residency at Princeton and Tanglewood, and for two years, were also players with Steinberg and the Pittsburgh Symphony. This was my only orchestral experience. Steinberg was great. I played *Daphnis et Chloé* with Pierre Monteux. I did some of the great literature with the old greats." Scott was not only a violist with the symphony but also the orchestral pianist. "I hadn't lost my skills as a pianist at that point." (He insists he can't play a note on the piano today).

Scott then came to New York. "With the help of Gunther Shuller we formed the Contemporary String Quartet, and with jazz performers such as The Modern Jazz Quintet, we began the 'Third Stream Music' movement, an attempt to cross classical with jazz; the classical musician embracing the improvisational aspects of jazz. This was twenty-five years ago. With the Lenox, I worked with Carter, Copland, Cage, Sessions, and many more American greats."

Then Nickrenz joined the Claremont Quartet. Scott feels *this* is the easiest way to learn the Beethoven quartets--to step in with a group that already knows them very well. "I just fit myself in!" For the next six years the quartet was on the faculty of the North Carolina School of the Arts. This was his first teaching position, and at age twenty-four.

Scott then formed, with Shmuel Ashkenasi, the Vermeer String Quartet in Northern Illinois. Later, Ronald Leonard, cellist, left the quartet and "after changing cellists twice, that was enough for me. Nobuko Imai took my place.

"In my early thirties, it was an absolute coincidence that I ran into Gunther Shuller who asked me to teach at the New England Conservatory of Music. Harvey Lichtenstein engaged me to begin the chamber music series at the Brooklyn Academy, and Leon Kirchner asked me to help do the summer program at Harvard. Then eleven years ago, I became the director of the two Spoleto Festivals, Spoleto and Charleston. After four years at the New England Conservatory, I changed positions and went to Hartt.

"An interesting experiment took place during my years at B.A.M. (Brooklyn Academy). I began a country music series for five years at both B.A.M. and Spoleto. I did it for musical reasons, and later, when I was asked to expand the series with big names, I said no. I didn't want the really big names, I wanted a major venue for cajan, country, black string band, and the 'high lonesome sound' as in Rosco Holcombe from Daisy, Kentucky who died from black lung disease. But it was esoteric. I didn't want it to change, and so I stopped it."

Sixteen years ago Nickrenz had the opportunity to buy Joseph De Pasquale's Gasparo da Salò. "I paid the highest amount for a Gasparo to date. I chose from two Gaspars in the shop of the late Bill Moennig, Sr. The other one

belonged to Karen Tuttle. Tuttle's upper strings were like butter. Joe's lower two strings were like a cello. I chose Joe's. Before that, I played a Nicholas Amati owned by the Corcoran Art Gallery in Washington, now played by the Tokyo Quartet. I also at one time had a modern instrument by Hanel, a Connecticut make, but it was stolen."

The Family

Scott has been married to Paula Robison for fifteen-and-a-half years. They have a daughter, Elizabeth, who is ten. She serves as his private secretary--she very proudly states--when you call on the phone. Scott lovingly describes her as his young actress and poetress. He has another daughter Erika from a previous marriage. A pianist, she has begun to make her way successfully at the age of twenty-four as a member of the Eroica Piano Trio, and will tour next season with music from Marlboro.

Of Paula, he talks with pride. "Paula is 'high profile,' pretty, charismatic with her goldflute, and a wonderful concert hostess. Oppositely, I'm really an inner voice, and I'm an organizer. This suits my personality. Paula's solo persona suits her. It's a really good relationship."

Scott closed by saying: "For eleven years I've had tremendous love and enthusiasms for my festivals--beautiful halls, beautiful players, music-making of the highest level. Doing this work makes me busy even when I'm not busy. What makes things work for me is that I'm organized. I cannot bear doing things at the last minute. It's real love, *not* survival. Players, programs are always hitting me. I haven't run dry yet. But I often wonder if I will. Year after year, trying to maintain this level." I told him I would bet if he sensed a plateau that he would suddenly zig-zag in a new direction. Indefatigable as he appears to be, drying-up does not seem to be a possibility.

I called him while preparing this article to check on a few facts, and he told me with zeal that he was preparing programming for Australia while watching the New York Giants. "I LOVE doing two things at once!"

Rosemary Glyde *received her doctorate of Musical arts from the Juilliard school under Lillian Fuchs. She was violist in the Manhattan String Quartet and has appeared as soloist with the Houston Symphony and other orchestras. Ms. Glyde is the treasurer of the American Viola Society.*■

WILLIAM LINCER: VIOLIST AND TEACHER

by

Marcia Ferritto

William Lincer, professor of viola and chamber music at the Juilliard School, has been an inspiration and mentor to students for the past sixty years. On April 6th, 1987 more than 150 students, former students and friends gathered at the Juilliard School to celebrate his 80th birthday. Juilliard president Joseph Polisi addressed the gathering with the highest praise for Lincer as an outstanding teacher and human being. The celebration was highlighted with performances by students including Bach's Brandenburg

Concerto No. 6 and a special arrangement of Happy Birthday. The ceremonies were concluded with the presentation of a silver bowl inscribed "To William Lincer on his 80th birthday, in appreciation for over half a century of teaching us to be better musicians and people. With affection from your students everywhere."

Prior to coming to the Juilliard School in 1969 he taught at the Manhattan School of Music for nine years, and for several summers at Kneisel Hall, Blue Hill, Maine. Later, and for many years, he was on the faculty of the International Congress of Strings. Lincer was a former principal violist of the Cleveland Orchestra and went on to spend thirty years as principal violist of the New York Philharmonic. A member of the Gordon String Quartet for seven years, he was awarded the Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge Individual Gold Medal for Chamber Music.

Recipient of the American String Teachers Association's 1986 Artist-Teacher of the Year Award, Lincer continues teaching and playing, ever concerned about the total well-being of his students. With immense strength of commitment and high intellectual standards, he draws on a wealth of personal study in developing his teaching skills. Insights from such subjects as mathematics, history, logic, psychology, physics, anatomy, physiology, kinesiology, relaxation techniques and concentration exercises--to mention a few--are brought to bear on the ever challenging process of seeking the best way to communicate with each student on an individual basis and to unlock a student's special talent.

A Gentle Powerhouse

I have had the privilege of being a student of William Lincer early in my career and have continued a bond of devotion and friendship over many years. In person, he is a gentle powerhouse, a reservoir of intuitive understanding and compassion.

Wonderfully articulate, he stimulates a sense of discovery and connection with music and instrument that allows development toward a sense of physical and mental freedom. He emphasizes organized thinking and a systematic approach in mastering skills which basically serve as tools for expression. It is above all important to him that playing be a state of true awareness and that we open ourselves to music so that we feel we have really experienced what's happened. He has helped so many students to transcend self-imposed limitations and achieve a joy and confidence in their playing.

One can find his students in major orchestras and music schools around the world. Among them, three are in the New York Philharmonic, and others are performing in orchestras in San Francisco, Los Angeles, San Diego, Chicago, Dallas (principal), Nashville (principal), Jacksonville, Alabama, Pittsburg, Phoenix, San Antonio, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra (principal), the Ohio Chamber Orchestra (principal), An Die Musik in Switzerland, Singapore, Australia, Germany, Italy and France.

In the words of George Szell, William Lincer "is not only a top-ranking representative of his instrument, but an exceptionally intelligent and erudite musician." Practical experience and work over six decades has led Lincer to the conclusion that traditional teaching methods don't adequately teach certain principles important in music performance. He says, "Emotion...that to me is the essence of music." He

states his objective simply as "helpingstudents develop into healthy individuals who are capable of functioning in a creative way." Perhaps his greatest gift to me in addition to offering sound instrumental training is sharing his deep respect for the underlying nature of things and his sense of humor expressing, as poet Stephen Levine calls it, "that sense of the absurd which honors the miracle of even being here to do work together."

Marcia Ferritto, *a graduate of Bryn Mawr College, is presently on the faculty at the Cleveland Institute of Music and at Baldwin-Wallace Conservatory. She is active as soloist and recitalist and is principal violist of the Ohio Chamber Orchestra.*■

A REAL PROFESSIONAL

by

MICHAEL PONDER

April this year saw the 75th birthday of Frederick Riddle, Britain's most distinguished living viola player and one of the most illustrious principal viola player in the world, having held that position in the London Symphony, London Philharmonic, and Royal Philharmonic Orchestras during the course of his long career. It wouldbe a fair assumption to say what Lionel Tertis did for the viola--and indeed the solo viola--Frederick Riddle undoubtedly did for the orchestra viola. All those stories about viola solos and jokes about viola players are immediately dashed to the ground with the mention of Fred Riddle's name, for hardly a more immaculate professional musician, and indeed world class viola player, ever sat in an orchestra.

It was from his father that Fred Riddle was to learn his won formidable brand of self-discipline and professionalism that he is famous for. His father was a band sargeant, and horn player in the marines band stationed at Chatham in Kent. This is where Fred grew up and learnt the violin at an early age from a local teacher. By the time he entered the Royal College of Music at the age of eighteen he had learned and played all the major violin concertos. His teacher at college was Maurice Sons, himself a pupil of Henri Vieuxtemps. However, Fred's conversion to the viola was caused through the need to fill in the viola part in an ensemble. With his strong violin technique he found himself a cut above most other viola players around and by the age of twenty had joined the London Symphony on the 4th chair. The conductor was Hamilton Harty on whom the young Fred Riddle must have made his mark, for, when the reigning principal violist left, Fred stepped into the job. Fred's no. 2 partner was the old viola veteran, Albert Hobday, well known as Lionel Tertis' rival during the early years of the century.

Variety and adaptability have always been the hallmark of the English music profession and before long, Fred was involved in playing light music with such groups as the Gershom Parkingham Quintet and forming a quartet with violinist Harry Blech, later founder of the London Mozart Players.

The Blech Quartet had echoes in its formation of the Griller Quartet in that all the members lived together in the early years of rehearsing and were coached by a distinguished musician, in the case of the Blech Quartet by Humphrey Proctor Greg. This life style

didn't really suit Fred and he eventually left. Quartet playing never really became a major part of Fred's career, although, he did form another a few years later with violinist Henry Holst, with whom he made records on the Columbia label. Fred was later to advise students: "Never join a quartet as you'd probably all end up hating one another."

A Call From Tertis

In 1938 Fred was to receive a phone call from Lionel Tertis who suggested he ought to learn the Walton concerto. A few days later Decca rang up and asked him to record it within the month with the LSO and Walton conducting for £25 and *no* royalties.

This recording, made on 78s, is arguably the most authentic and possibly still the best of all the recordings of this concerto. Listening to it today one is aware of how straight the tempi are and how well defined the structure of the work is, especially the writing between the viola and orchestra. Fred himself takes great pains to point out that it is a concerto for viola and orchestra not viola *with* orchestra as he feels it often becomes in performances he hears.

1938 also saw the start of a major influence and relationship in Fred's life. Sir Thomas Beecham was to ask him to become principal violist of his London Philharmonic. Fred still remembers his first encounter with Beecham in Beecham's bedroom, with him sitting up in bed and asking: "How much money do you want?" Fred had heard that Leon Goossens was paid 20 guineas a week and that all the other principles were paid 12. So Fred asked for 20 and got 18. Beecham was to remain Fred Riddle's favorite conductor--"he was a genius"--and their relationship lasted to the Royal Philharmonic and his death in 1961. During the later years of Beecham's life, Fred was often described as Beecham's "right-hand man" regarding his advice on orchestral running and personnel. This coupled with his supreme authority as principal violist, his stunning sight-reading ability and his formidable orchestral discipline, he earned the title of "God" from his fellow professionals.

Fred's fifteen years as principal violist of the London Philharmonic ended in a big upheaval when in 1953, he made the front page of the Daily Telegraph: "The distinguished viola player and Vice Chairman of the London Philharmonic is not of the Communist persuasion."

Beecham having long since left the orchestra, it became self-governing. A member of Fred's section, Thomas Russell, eventually became Managing Director and secured the orchestra's future and work through the 1940s and 50s. But he was a member of the Communist Party and, when it was heard he was going to China on a holiday, the London County Council threatened to withdraw some of the orchestra's grant money. Various factions of the orchestra wanted him sacked and an extraordinary general meeting, chaired by Fred, was called. Some quite underhanded business went on and in the end Russell lost his job by five votes. Fred Riddle, together with fourteen other members, all immediately resigned on account of the gross intrusion into the man's personal liberty. Beecham, hearing of all this, invited Fred yet again to become principal violist of his latest orchestra, the Royal Philharmonic, where Fred remained until his sixty-fifth birthday, a period encompassing both the reigns of Beecham and Rudolf Kempe.

Although Fred first and foremost thinks of himself as an orchestra musician, he has had an extensive career as a soloist. He never boasted of his concerto appearances because for Fred, playing a concerto was all very much part of a day's work. He gave many performances of the Walton and other standard viola concertos along with concertos by Bax, Rubbra, Fricker and the arrangement of Elgar's cello concerto. He had music written for him, though he points out he never commissioned anything. "I am not one of those viola players who goes around writing letters all the time, you know. I was far too busy earning a living." He gave first performances of concertos by Elisabeth Lutyens, Martin Dalby, Justin Connolly and Alan Hoddinott and sonatas by Alan Rawsthorne and Malcolm Arnold. "A lot of bloody work for only one performance," is what he says about some of these pieces.

Riddle's Recordings

Over the years, he has made a considerable number of gramophone records. Only one of his records is in the current catalogue: Vaughan Williams' Suite and Flos Campi made in 1977 with the Bournemouth Sinfonietta on the Chandos label. But, if there is one recording besides the Walton that he is proud of it is the set of recordings he made of practically the entire string trio repertoire with fellow London Philharmonic members, violinist Jean Pougnet and cellist Anthony Pini, back in the 1940s. A Dr. Listz of the American Westminster record company decided it was time to record most of the string trio repertoire. He chose London musicians to do the job and sent them off to Vienna for a week to record all the trios of Beethoven, Mozart, Hindemith, Jean Francaix, Lennox Berkeley and Dohnányi.

Listening today, these recordings have indeed acquired a legendary status, not only for their stunning playing but for the fact that they were recorded within a week on rehearse record sessions by a group that hadn't rehearsed together before. But then it is these qualities of accuracy, quickness, adaptability and the ability to create the best possible performances in the shortest available time that have given British musicians an enviable reputation.

When Fred started teaching at the Royal College of Music in 1948, it was these very principles, so much part of the English profession, that Fred was to instill so strongly in his students. Thirty-eight years later, and still teaching, Riddle students always stand out above the crowd, even today with so many British viola students studying abroad with big named teachers. They are known for their strong and reliable techniques, quickness at reading and their ability to sort out the most difficult passages instantaneously, for their immediate ability to adapt to the large variety of music and styles they will play, and their ability to play the score as it is marked.

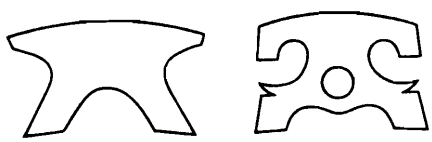
Fred teaches through a diet of standard repertoire pieces, scales and arpeggios and Kreutzer studies. He tries to instill good intonation, good rhythm and a good viola sound into his students; coupled with a need for the student to think for himself, use his "common sense" and always ask himself: "Is that the best way of playing something?" He can be uncompromisingly tough on students, especially those who have false illusions about their own playing and what is required from them for the profession. His remarks to students have indeed become famous. One student who played through the first movement of

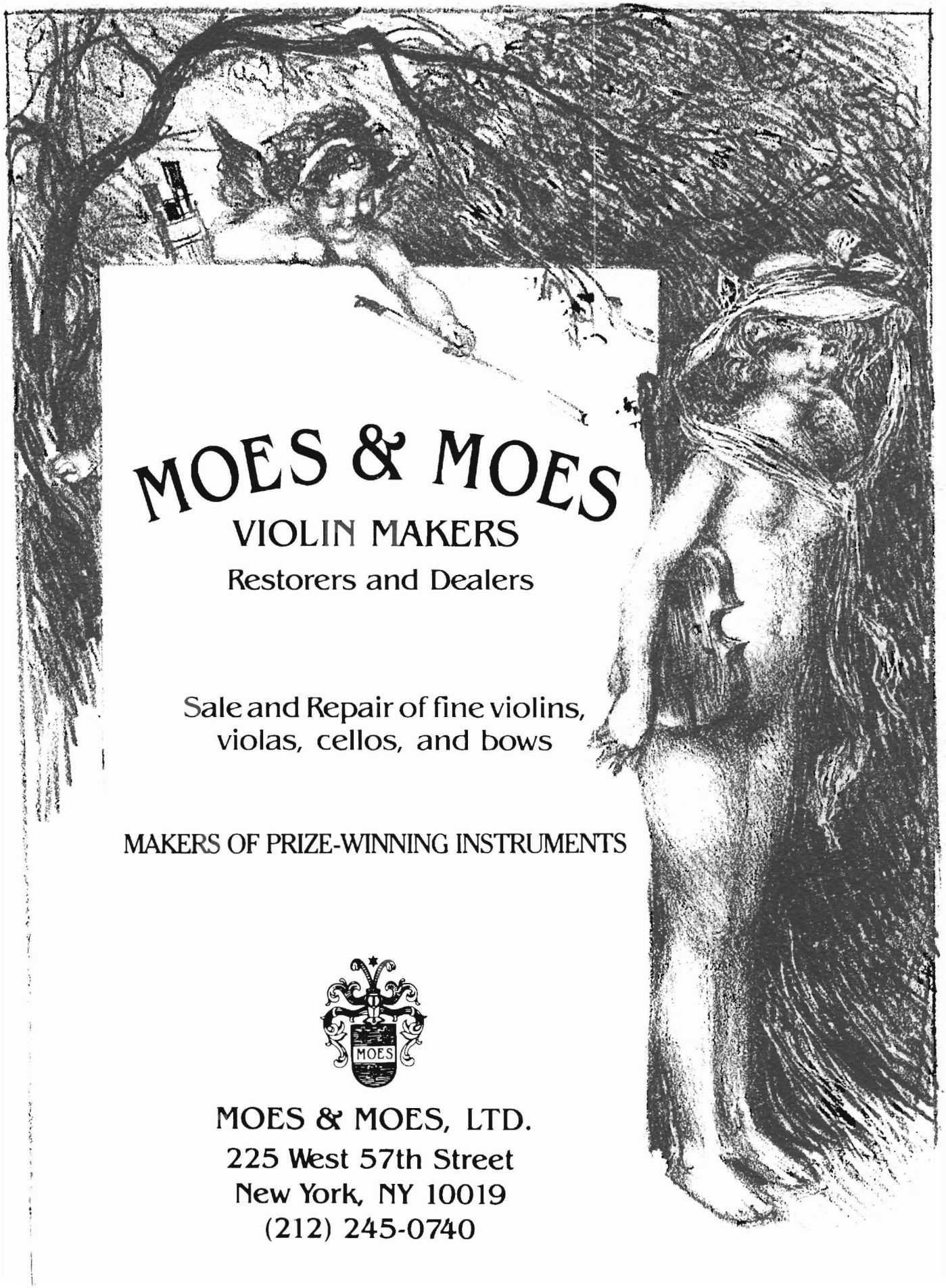
the Brahms E-flat sonata was greeted by: "Well I don't know, it's a shame you don't like how the rest of us play," being one of the more printable remarks.

Ultimately though, what makes Fred such a good teacher is that all his students are so well groomed for the profession. As one principal of the London orchestra was to remark, if an auditioner had written "student of Riddle" on his application, you knew he was gong to be one step above the rest.

For over fifty years Fred Riddle has remained at the very top of the music profession in Britain, despite its ever changing fortunes. A man who embodies many of the older values--of loyalty to his section, keeping his word and never making false promises--he can't help making a distinct impression and effect on anybody sitting in the same orchestra. Is there anybody with such logically musical bowings and fingering of the entire orchestral repertoire or anybody who can play the orchestral solos and the concertos so stunningly and indeed have such a unique concept of the viola line in orchestral music, as Frederick Riddle?

Michael Ponder *was for thirteen years a member of the Philharmonic Orchestra. A frequent recitalist, he has made a number of recordings of English viola music. He is presently a freelance violist in London and contributor to THE STRAD, from which this article was taken.*■





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Of Interest . . . .

XV INTERNATIONAL VIOLA CONGRESS

The XV International Viola Congress will be held 16-19 June 1988 at Kassel, West Germany. This will be the twenty-year Jubilee Congress of the founding of the International Viola Society. A preliminary list of participants has the following artists, lecturers, and ensembles participating: Paul and Christoph Angerer, Christian Euler, Raphael Hillyer, Jerzy Kosmala, Günter Ojstersek, Dwight Pounds, Hariolf Schlichtig, Franco Sciannameo, Martin Straakhalder, Barbara Westphal, Ann Woodward, Franz Zeyringer, David Dalton, the Düsseldorf Viola Quartet, Habá Quartet of Frankfurt, Schönberg Ensemble of Amsterdam, and the Verdi Quartet from Cologne.

A travel agency which can be helpful to North Americans wishing to attend the Kassel Congress and travel afterward is:

Bassett Travel
3290 Genesee Street
Buffalo, NY 14225
Tel. (1-800-828-7166)

Further information can be gotten from the host chairperson:

Uta Lenkowitz von Zahn
Ahorn 9
D-5308 Rheinbach
West Germany

NEXT NORTH AMERICAN CONGRESS

An agreement has just been reached between the Presidency of the American Viola Society with an institution regarding the 1989 International Viola Congress. The University of Redlands, Redlands, California will host the XVI Congress probably in June. This will be the first time that a congress has taken place on the West Coast. More details will be forthcoming.

FRANCIS TURSI SCHOLARSHIP FUND

Francis Tursi, artist violist, Eastman professor and member of the American Viola Society Board, has been undergoing a period of ill health for the past several years. It has become necessary for Francis to take medical leave from his position at Eastman.

The Eastman School of Music, in response to a request from the American Viola Society, has established the Francis Tursi Scholarship Fund in his honor. Members of the American Viola Society are invited to contribute to the fund. Everyone is also invited to express appreciation to Francis in the form of a personal letter which will be forwarded to him. All contributions are tax-deductible.

Proceeds from the fund will be used to assist talented graduate students in their studies. Students receiving assistance from the fund will be identified when they appear in recital. Names of contributors will be published in *Eastman Notes*.

Francis has made an important contribution to the music world through his performing and teaching. His unique personality--one who loves and cares for his fellow man--sets him apart.

The Francis Tursi Scholarship Fund will serve as a lasting reminder of the esteem and deep affection in which Francis is held by his students, friends and colleagues.

Contributions and letters should be sent to:

The Francis Tursi Scholarship Fund
c/o Kirsten Benson Hampton
Eastman School of Music
26 Gibbs St.
Rochester, NY 14604

Appreciation is expressed to Robert Oppelt, a former Tursi student, who was instrumental in establishing this fund through the Eastman School.

VIOLA WEEKEND

Under the sponsorship of the Canadian Viola Society of the IVS, a *Bratsche Bash*, will be held at Aeolian Hall, London, Ontario on March 19-20. Various performers and lecturers will be featured. For further information, write:

Baird Knechtel
103 North Drive
Islington, Ontario M9A 4R5

Competitions . . . .

WINNER AT GENEVA

Hong-Mei Xiao, violist, was named First Prize Winner at the Geneva International Competition for Musical Performers, held 28 August-16 September 1987 in Geneva, Switzerland. Seventy violists worldwide entered the competition. She received her Master's degree from the State University of New York at Stony Brook in 1986, where she was a student of John Graham. She is now working toward the DMA degree at the University of Iowa where she studies with William Preucil.

LIONEL TERTIS INTERNATIONAL VIOLA COMPETITION

The Third Lionel Tertis International Viola Competition and Workshop will take place at the Isle of Man, U.K., 27 August-3 September 1988. The competition is open to viola players of all nationalities born on or after 1 March 1961. Awards of $5,000 will be available to the Jury.

THE WORKSHOP: Players of all abilities and non-playing observers are invited to attend. Each day will consist of a morning recital and master class, an afternoon of ensemble classes, master class and lecture, an evening recital or informal concert.

In addition to the official events, there will be opportunities for private tuition, informal recitals and sightseeing. There will be a minor repair clinic, a club and a concert by the BBC Philharmonic Orchestra (conducted by Janos Fürst)

Write for full details to:

Mananan Festival Office
(Tertis Competition and Workshop)
Port Erin
Isle of Man
British Isles

About Violists . . . .

IN MEMORIAM

Peter Schidlof (1922-87), violist of the prestigious Amadeus String Quartet, died from a heart attack in Sunderland, Cumbria, England in August. Austrian and Jewish, he fled the Nazis in 1938, and settled in England where he studied with Max Rostal, and also served in the British Armed Forces. After the War, Rostal helped organize the Amadeus Quartet, composed of two other refugees, violinists, Norbert Brainin and Siegmund Nissel, and the English cellist Martin Lovett. For almost forty years this group gave concerts worldwide, and also recorded all of the quartets by Mozart, Beethoven, and Schubert. Schidlof will be remembered as one of the finest and most dedicated ensemble violists of the 20th century. The Quartet has now disbanded.

Morton Feldman (1926-87), experimental and sometimes avant-gard composer, died in September in Buffalo of cancer. He had a particular interest in writing works for the viola, four of which were written for violist Karen Phillips. All four were titled *The Viola in My Life.* They were composed and published by Universal Edition between 1970 and 1973. He also composed *Rothko Chapel* for Viola Solo, Soprano, Alto Chorus, Celeste and Percussion (1971-73). In 1980 he composed *Trio* for Violin, Viola and Cello. Both the Trio and Rothko Chapel were published by Universal Edition.

CLEVELAND QUARTET

James Dunham is the new violist replacing Atar Arad in the Cleveland Quartet which is based at the Eastman School of Music.

New Works & Recordings . . . .

PRIMROSE VIDEO

A TV production of the master violist in his prime was produced at Brigham Young University in the spring of 1987 and premiered at the XIV International Viola Congress in June. With an introduction and closing commentary by David Dalton, it features Primrose playing in a 1946 film the "Polacca" by Beethoven, "Ave Maria" by Schubert, and the "Caprice No. 24" by Paganini. Color and Black and White, the videotape runs 21 minutes and is available for $31.95 from:

Shar Products Co.
2465 S. Industrial
P.O. Box 1411
Ann Arbor, MI 48106
Tel. 1-800-482-1086

NEW BOOK ON THE VIOLA

Franz Zeyringer, president of the International Viola Society, announces the imminent release of a new book in German entitled, "Die Viola da braccio," published by Heller Verlag, Munich. This volume has been five years in the writing in which the author addresses and finds solutions for important problems concerning the viola. Such subjects of general interest as the development of the instrument, history of viola performance, the problem of size, a small lexicon of viola terms, judging an instrument and the bow, etc. are handled. The first edition, clothbound, contains 280 pages written in German. Those subscribing to the book by 30 April 1988 will receive the volume at a reduced rate of $52.00 (Regular price, $73.00). Order forms can be acquired from:

Rosemary Glyde
P.O. Box 558
Golden's Bridge, NY 10526

ROAD TO HAMELIN

Paul Ramsier, "Road to Hamelin," for Solo Viola, Narrator, Piano (or flute, oboe, clarinet, bassoon, horn, trumpet in C and percussion; or piano and strings). Published by Boosey & Hawkes, $17.00; duration 18 minutes.

Gary Karr, double bass, performed and recorded this work with the Toronto Symphony in 1978. The present arrangement was published in 1986. Orchestral part are available on rental, or this piece can be performed from the edition listed in the title of this review. The viola part is difficult enough to require a performer of more than average ability (not necessarily an artist). Double stops, harmonics, and spiccato bowings constitute the most difficult demands on the violist.

The narrator's part is adapted from Robert Browning's story "The Pied Piper of Hamelin." Twelve short movements for solo viola intersperse the narration. This allows the violist to feature different aspects of the solo instrument in each section, in which lyrical and technical passagework are contrasted with registers, colors, and idiomatic devices.

This composition is well written and worthy of performance. It has built-in audience appeal and would be rewarding to the soloist.

Review by Maurice W. Riley

American Viola Society

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