

# Journal of the American Viola Society

Volume 22 Number 2



**The Viola and Cello Duo:  
A History and Survey**

**Montreal Congress in Review**





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# Journal of the American Viola Society

A publication of the American Viola Society

Fall 2006

Volume 22 Number 2

The Journal of the American Viola Society is published in Spring and Fall, and as an online-only issue in Summer. The American Viola Society was founded for the promotion of viola performance and research.

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ISSN 0898-5987

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## COVER ART

*Alto Monumentale* (2006)

### About the Artist

Natasha Turovsky was born in Moscow, Russia. She and her family emigrated to Canada in 1976.

A professional musician, Natasha discovered visual arts about fifteen years ago. Shortly after starting her first drawing lessons, she realized that art would become much more for her than a mere hobby. She decided to pursue professionally her passion for visual arts by enrolling in the Fine Arts program at Concordia University in Montreal in 1992, where she specialized in painting and printmaking.

Being a member and soloist of the chamber orchestra *I Musici de Montreal*, Natasha tours worldwide and has released over forty compact discs. Although she finds both professions equally demanding and important, Natasha is discovering that each discipline nourishes the other.

Natasha's first solo exhibition was in Montreal in 1995. To date, she has had twenty solo exhibitions and many group shows in Canada, U.S., Spain and Hong Kong. Her works are in many private and corporate collections in the U.S., Canada, England, Spain, France, Russia, China and Iran.



# 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 2007.

The American Viola Society wishes to thank AVS past president Thomas Tatton and his wife, Polly, for underwriting first prize in the 2007 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:** \$250, 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

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## 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 PRESIDENT

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It has been an exciting time at the AVS this past summer! Our annual membership drive is in full swing and there is some great news to report. Together with Sandra Robbins (creator) and Robertson Violins in Albuquerque (host venue) we have been able to put in place the foundation of our new VIOLA BANK! The Viola Bank is a program designed to meet the needs of our members whose students are not able to either buy or rent an instrument by providing an instrument to use for free. We hope to serve both beginning students and advanced college or professional players over time and have already started to amass instruments of all sizes and values. For more about this exciting new program please visit the web site: <http://www.americanviolasociety.org/violabank/violabank.html>


There is an introductory letter from Sandy and other important links to sponsoring businesses and we hope to be able to launch the program

officially by January 1st 2007. This is a long range investment for us and we are in the early stages of establishing the foundation- it will take some time to develop to its full potential. But with the help of businesses and donations (we are looking currently for any instruments in any condition to add to the collection) the program should be available for our members by next year. If you have any information about an instrument or would like to contribute, please contact me directly. This is an important step for us at the AVS and has taken much time and energy from everyone involved. But we all believe in the program and it is in direct response to our members needs.

If you have any other ideas about ways in which the AVS can help, please write directly to me at [hcallus@music.ucsb.edu](mailto:hcallus@music.ucsb.edu) and we shall review and consider each request. We want to hear your ideas!

We have several other projects being established and as they come to fruition, I will alert you to their existence. We do wish to reach out to a more diverse membership and want to be able to offer programs for our orchestral professionals as well as university professors and performers and those on the community level. The emphasis has returned to the work of chapters and is important to us. It is one of the reasons we developed the

BRATS program. I have heard from several presidents of our regional chapters who are planning BRATS days events and we shall even have an entire day at our next viola congress dedicated to the BRATS program! We hope it will be the start of a national fostering of little BRATS!

The AVS is working hard to earn your membership and working hard to be the resource that you need. Please tell your friends and students! Its time to rally together and join us! 

Yours,

Helen Callus  
President  
The American Viola Society

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# ANNOUNCEMENTS

## AVS Website Update

Pardon our Dust! The AVS Website is in the midst of a remodel process. If you haven't visited the site recently, you will notice a few changes. The main new feature is a reconstructed navigation system. Links to various areas of the site can now be found on the top navigation bar with new drop-down menus for additional links. Hopefully you will be able to find what you are looking for, and maybe a few pages that you were not aware of! In addition, there are a few new areas to the site that are under development, including pages for the new viola bank.

## Hispanic Network Awards

The Alturas Duo (Guitar and Viola) was honored with a "Hispanic Excellence in Music" Award at the Hispanic Network's 7th Annual Award Celebration, September 23rd in Hartford, Connecticut. The group also performed at the Montreal Viola Congress in June! Carlos Boltes, the violist of the group and AVS member, is on the faculty at the Hartt School Community Division of the University of Hartford, Connecticut.

## Tertis Competition Results

The 2006 Tertis International Viola Competition was held August 12-19. Top prizewinners were **David Kim** from the US (first), **Peijun Xu** from China (second), and **Ewa Grzywna** from

Photo by Tony Lakin.



*First prize Tertis winner David Kim also received an honorable mention at Naumburg.*

Photo by Tony Lakin.



*Peijun Xu was awarded second prize at Tertis.*

Photo by Tony Lakin.



*Tertis third prize winner Ewa Trzywna accepts her award.*

Poland (third). Other semi-finalists were Wen Xiao Zheng from China, Yuko Hara from Japan, Marta Potulska from Poland,

Alexander Akimov from Russia, and Jiri Kabat from Czechoslovakia. This event is held every three years at the Erin Arts Centre on the Isle of Man.

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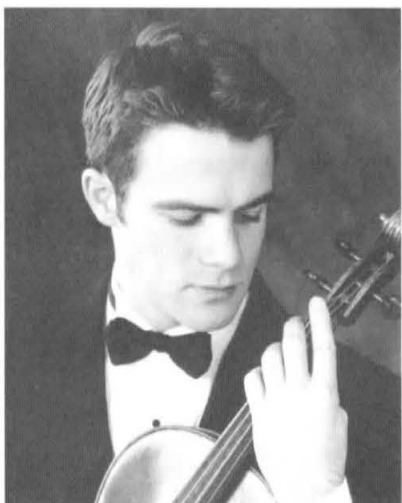
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*David Aaron Carpenter garnered top honors at Naumburg.*



*Naumburg second prize winner Eric Nowlin.*



*Jonah Sirota captured Naumburg's third prize.*

### **2006 Naumburg Competition Results**

The Walter W. Naumburg Foundation sponsored its first viola competition in fourteen years in honor of Eugene Lehner. The event was held October 12-18 in New York City. Top prizewinners were **David Aaron Carpenter** (first), **Eric Nowlin** (second), **Jonah Sirota** (third), and **David Kim** (honorable mention).

### **2007 Dalton Research Competition**

The 2007 Competition's guidelines and timetable will be similar to past year, with a postmark date of May 15, 2007. For more information, please see the announcement advertisement in this issue or the AVS Website. Any further questions should be directed to JAVS Editor Matthew Dane.

### **University of Northern Colorado-First Student Chapter Forms**

Viola and violin students from the University of Northern Colorado have established the first student chapter of the American Viola Society. They have grand plans afoot for the upcoming

school year. Their initial event is to hold a fundraiser. They will sell t-shirts to students in the Western States Honors Orchestra Festival. They will also hold a "lunch-in" to discuss what it is like to study the viola in college. This should prove to be a wonderful opportunity for high school students to learn about college life! The troupe of college violists also plans to form a viola ensemble in order to reach out to the community and play some concerts at retirement homes. In the meantime, they are hoping to secure funding to host a guest artist series and bring in violists to play concerts and give master classes. It proves to be a very exciting time for this group of energetic violists.

If you are interested in sponsoring or helping them with their activities, please contact Heather Buffington, UNCO AVS student chapter president at [violachic918@msn.com](mailto:violachic918@msn.com).

Congratulations to the University of Northern Colorado Student chapter of the AVS! ☺

*— Louise Zeitlin*

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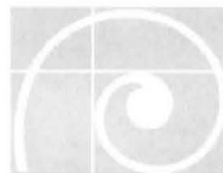
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# 2006 AVS BOARD MEETING

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## MINUTES AND REPORTS

Annual Board Meeting of the American Viola Society  
Tuesday, June 6, 2006  
The University of Montreal, Pavillon de la Faculté de  
Musique, room B-620  
6:00-9:00 p.m.

**Officers Present:** Callus (President), White-Smith  
(President-elect), Zeitlin (Secretary), Kruse (Treasurer)  
**Board Members Present:** Buck, Docter, Ngwenyama,  
Palumbo, Pounds, Steely, Strauss  
**Board Members unable to attend:** Bigelow, Dane,  
Dubois, Fielding, Hamilton, Rodland, Veskimets

Meeting called to order by President Callus at 6:35 p.m.

- I. Final election report presented by President Callus
  1. Secretary: Kenneth Martinson
  2. Newly elected and reelected board members:  
Claudine Bigelow, Carol Rodland, Bernard  
Zaslav, Louise Zeitlin.
- II. Nancy Buck at Arizona State University has the win-  
ning bid for the 2008 American Viola Congress.
- III. Thanks given to Ralph Fielding for all that he did as  
President of the AVS.
- IV. The AVS had a successful booth, increasing AVS visi-  
bility, at the American String Teacher's Association  
convention.
- V. President Callus noted that there was good represen-  
tation from the AVS at the Montreal Congress. The  
AVS will work to continue to boost interest on the  
part of Americans to attend international congresses.
- VI. President Callus has donated her educational pro-  
gram, BRATS, to the AVS for use by its members.
- VII. Zeitlin presented secretary report, June 2006.
  1. Central Texas is a newly formed chapter in the  
last year.
  2. The AVS will continue to work with chapters  
to help build membership and encourage spirit.
- VIII. Kruse presented financial report June 2006.
  1. AVS has received not-for-profit status. This will  
allow the AVS to apply for grants for specific  
projects.
- IX. White-Smith presented E-news report, June 2006.
  1. E-news has been a successful mode for reaching  
out to AVS members.
- X. Steely presented website/technology report June 2006.

Meeting adjourned 9:05p.m.

Annual Board Meeting of the American Viola Society  
Wednesday, June 7, 2006  
The University of Montreal, Pavillon de la Faculté de  
Musique, room B-620  
9:00a.m. -12:00 p.m.

**Officers Present:** Callus (President), White-Smith  
(President-elect), Zeitlin (Secretary), Kruse (Treasurer)  
**Board Members Present:** Bigelow, Buck, Docter,  
Ngwenyama, Palumbo, Pounds, Steely, Strauss  
**Board Members unable to attend:** Dane, Dubois,  
Fielding, Hamilton, Rodland, Veskimets

Meeting called to order by President Callus at 9:10a.m.

- I. Address by President Callus
  1. Callus feels AVS has great promise for future  
endeavors.
  2. Immediate goals are to continue to increase  
membership and find a sponsor for JAVS.
- II. Bigelow presented Primrose Competition report, June 2006
  3. Discussion on copyrighting Primrose  
Competition name.
  4. Long-term goal is to hire an executive director and  
have a single home for the Primrose competition.
- III. Pounds presented Awards and By-law report, June 2006
- IV. Palumbo presented Nominations report, June 2006
- V. Hamilton (in absentia) presented Fundraising report,  
June 2006
  1. Not-for-profit status will allow the AVS to  
begin fundraising endeavors.
- VI. Kruse presented Gardner Composition Competition  
report, June 2006
  1. Discussion about winning piece from the  
Gardner competition being a required piece for  
the Primrose Competition.
  2. Discussion on trying to raise money so as to be  
able to offer larger prize money.
- VII. Pounds presented Dalton report, June 2006
  1. Desire to advertise Dalton Competition to a  
larger market.
- VIII. Committee assignments made by President Callus for  
2006-07 year.

Meeting adjourned at 11a.m. in order for board members  
to see the presentation of the honorary doctorate to Heidi  
Castleman.



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# REVIEW: THE XXXIV INTERNATIONAL VIOLA CONGRESS

## JUNE 2006, MONTRÉAL, CANADA

By Andrew Snow

All Photographs by Dwight Pounds

### Going to the Congress

The Viola Congress is a unique opportunity that provides violists with up-to-date happenings of the viola world. In this annual gathering the newest of compositions are presented, the rising generation of performers display their talent, and professional musicians and premier soloists share their skill and insight through lecture, recital, panel discussion, and master class. If one wants to be connected to the viola world, they are to come to the Congress as it is a place where professional and amateur alike share their passion for the viola on an international scale in one event-filled week.

As a student pursuing a degree in viola performance at Brigham Young University I was uncertain of whether I could afford the experience since I had just returned from a month-long concert tour of the United Kingdom

---

Professionally, it is nice to be part of the viola world and feel like we are citizens of the world sharing the same passion.

*-Antoine Tamestit*

---

sponsored by my university. But knowing that the Congress would help me toward my long-term goals, I pooled together my all but abundant student resources. A quick assessment put on the red warning lights. The situation looked bleak. But what person who has taken the well-traveled road of the university student finds himself at his destination without having also learned to get himself very far on very little? As T. S. Eliot put it, "Only those who will risk going too far can possibly find out how far one can go." How far? In this case, two weeks and five thousand miles. And on how little? Never mind. So through careful budgeting some friends and I made the drive from Provo, Utah to Montréal, Québec in about 85 hours (round-trip), living off peanut butter sandwiches. Assisted by our faculty we arranged to be hosted by families we'd never met; where that wasn't an option we would brave the thirty-



*Heidi Castleman accepts an Honorary Doctorate*



*Henrik Frendin leads an improvisation class*

dollar motel experience. The whole thing rather seemed like some kind of experiment designed to test our abilities to survive; but to us it was worth it! What follows in this article gives a fair representation of my experience at the 2006 34th International Viola Congress in Montréal.

### Master Classes

For a violist who is going to be a graduate applicant soon, a priority



*Steve Larson in recital*



*Barbara Westphal in recital*

should be to attend the congress master classes in order to better understand the teaching styles of the professors that come to participate from the USA, Canada, and Europe. I was very interested in seeing the professional community in action and was grateful that consideration was taken to keep conflicting schedules of master classes, recitals, and concerts to a minimum. When such conflicts did arise, I found myself torn in my decision and some worthy events were victim of my inability to be in two places at once. Perhaps measures could be taken in future congresses to allow for all events to be included in one's experience. Ten master classes were given throughout the week. The masters were Lars Tomter, Michel Michalakakos, Steven Dann, André Roy, Michael Kugel, Bruno Giurra, Henrik Frendin, Roberto Diaz, Siegfried Führlinger,

and Heidi Castleman (who was presented with the University of Montreal's honorary doctorate earlier in the congress). Beyond demonstrating their pedagogy nearly all the mentioned instructors performed in recital or concert. This was a great added benefit to my becoming acquainted with individual styles.

The selected students performing for the master classes came from a variety of locations across the globe, but most were from the University of Montréal. I attended nine of the ten, gleaned instruction and ideas from the very different styles and experiences of the instructors and enjoying the performances of my peers. Perhaps what most caught my attention and that of others who were present at the 2005 International Primrose Competition was the performance of Bo Li who came from Beijing, China. In Michael Kugel's class he presented a stunning and aggressive performance of J.S. Bach/Zoltan Kodály Chromatic Fantasia for Viola Solo demonstrating an impressive degree of progress from the Primrose Competition master class performance he gave the previous year.

### **Michael Kugel in Concert**

The opening concert on Wednesday, June 7 was given by Michael Kugel and was one of four concerts of the Congress given entirely by one soloist. Kugel is a professor at the Ghent Royal Conservatory (Belgium) and at the Maastricht Royal Conservatory (Holland). The diverse program began with Onslow *Sonata in C Minor*, followed by Paganini *Il Carnevale di Venezia* arranged by Kugel. Kugel pointed out that 2006 is the year of Shostakovich, whom he honored in his program's second half. Kugel performed his own composition, *Suite in Memoriam Shostakovich*, which had elements of several works of Shostakovich and finished his program with the Shostakovich *Viola Sonata*.

Kugel's concert was memorable for a number of reasons. His fluid sound was extremely set apart from the other performers by the use of a faster vibrato. This choice of vibrato may be a point of controversy for some concerned with what "fits" the viola tone, but I appreciated it. (This may be because often it is suggested to me by my peers that I use too fast a vibrato at times.) Kugel demonstrated that a fast vibrato can raise the level of intensity to create an emotionally shocking musical statement. On the other hand it can add a touch of playfulness and fun to a piece such as *Il Carnevale*. *Il Carnevale* is unique of all the pieces performed at the congress in that it is purely a showpiece. Based on the tune known to many as "My Hat, it has Three Corners," the melody



---

It is our hope that through the performance of this kind of music, other instrumentalists might begin to explore sounds outside their regular boundaries.

— *Scott Hill*

---

makes its way through variations, demonstrating a full gamut of bow technique. Kugel's performance elicited frequent delighted chuckles and some eye-widening as he coolly performed the obstacle course printed on its pages in Sarasate-esque manner.

Turning from his lighthearted repertoire, Kugel then shared with the audience his profound respect for Shostakovich. In applying an appropriate slower vibrato, he gave a dark and serious finish to his program. Afterward, Kugel related this thought: "For me the music is a very powerful language: sometimes joke (*Il Carnivale*), sometimes tragedy (Shostakovich)."

The concert was an interesting two hours of contrasting mood, with Kugel showing incredible stamina for intense playing. Later, Dwight Pounds joked with me that Kugel's hobby should be raising horses, given the bow hair he went through.

#### **French Virtuoso Concert**

Thursday evening five violists were given opportunity to share their talents: Tasso Adamopoulos, Nicolas Bône, Frédéric Lainé, Michel Michalakakos, and Antoine Tamestit. Six violists were to participate on the program, but Pierre Lenért was unable to be present at late notice. Concerts of

this type are a real treat because they present many players and offer a satisfying sample of each individual's approach to music-making.

The concert consisted of a mixture of viola ensemble and solo. Pierre Lenért was billed to perform Enesco *Concertstück*, but thankfully Tasso Adamopoulos was willing to fill in on short notice to give a creative performance of the piece.

The concert ended with a Tango work for six violas composed by Astor Piazzolla and arranged by Michelalakakos. This fun piece was full of typical Piazzolla features such as instrumental and verbal imitations of the guiro, maracas, and castanets, combined with the players rising up and down in their seats in comic fashion and sequence, shouting for emphasis and as accent to the music. It was a great and well-received crowd-winning finale to an excellent two-hour display of artistry.

#### **Mixed Recital: Canada and South America**

Also of interest was a recital that brought together music of Canada and South America. Steven Dann performed a sonata by Julius Röntgen. Dann explained prior to performing that Röntgen had associations with Joachim and Brahms and today he is accused of being overly derivative. Dann then added with a smile, "Being criticized as

derivative, I think you'll find he borrowed from all the right people." I assume that Joachim and Brahms are some of the "right people" from which Röntgen borrowed, but I also left the recital thinking that Steven Dann has a tone and technique worth learning and borrowing from. Jocelyn Bastien of the Conservatoire de musique de Montréal performed Serge Provest's *Sur les Hauteurs de Buda à la fin du jour* for 12 violas, with the support of eleven student violists. This piece is about Budapest and the Danube river that runs so picturesquely through the city. Having been to Budapest, it was easy for me to recall the sights of the large river as the ensemble grew from a single voice to a thickly textured tutti before the solo entered.

Following was a group called the Alturas Duo which presented a program unlike any other at the congress, with music largely from South America. The duo consists of Carlos Boltes with the viola and charango, and Scott Hill playing the guitar. The charango is a very small guitar, but not at all like a ukulele. Carlos explained the origin of the instrument. South American com-



*2007 International Congress Host  
Keith Crellin*



*Bruno Giuranna in Master Class*

munities wanted to create guitars, but had limited resources. A simpler crafting process was employed that typically used an armadillo shell for a resonating body.

The duo presented a variety of moods and offered cultural insights throughout the recital into the lands from which particular works were brought. When asked why they feel it is important to preserve folk music, Scott Hill expressed himself in the following words; "First and foremost because the majority of the music we are performing at the moment is the result of a composer who is alive today. We have worked closely with several South American artists and encouraged them to create music based on the folklore of their country. This has allowed us to use many different techniques, rhythms and styles that would not normally be available to the average enthusiast of classical music. It is our hope that through the performance of this kind of music, other instrumentalists might begin to explore sounds outside their regular boundaries."

#### **Gala Concert**

The Gala Concert was presented on Friday immediately following the Banquet. I Musici de Montréal Chamber Orchestra played under the baton of Yuli Turovsky. One of

the performers was Lars Anders Tomter who performed Mozart *Clarinet Concerto in A major, K 622* (version for viola).

Anyone who has seen Tomter perform knows why he is nicknamed the "Giant." His commanding stage presence and composure garner attention, but it takes only a moment of his playing to shift that attention to his full tone and musicianship. I hadn't seen him in concert for over five years and the refreshing reminder of his artistry was welcome. When I inquired why he chose to play this concerto he responded by telling of how from his childhood he considered it "one of the most beautiful pieces on earth. Late Mozart, in the crossroad between blissful happiness, cheerful dance, soulful song, moments of melancholy and this operatic side of Mozart makes the stage more real than reality." Tomter explained to me that the transcription was an early one and that Mozart may have been aware of it. In it the melody has been conserved, but the passage work adapted to a more "natural viola idiom." He felt convinced Mozart would approve of the transcription and performed it so. What a

wonderful addition to our classical viola repertoire.

Another performance of the Gala Concert was by Antoine Tamestit. There were many people at the congress to take note of, and even among them Tamestit stood out. An active participant and performer of recent congresses, he is becoming deservedly well-known for his sense of refinement in playing. In the Gala concert he performed Stamitz *Concerto #2 in A Major* for Viola and Orchestra. Significantly more difficult than his first concerto, Stamitz filled this concerto with beautiful and delicate passage work



*Jutta Puchhammer-Sedillot and Elise Desjardins in recital*

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The definition of a gentlemen is someone who can play the viola, but doesn't.  
We are not going to be gentlemen.

— *Michel Michalakakos*

---

that Tamestit executed gracefully and tastefully. When I asked him why he chose the piece he said, "The Classical period viola concertos are sometimes considered as dull or a bit boring, but I think they should be rediscovered with all the knowledge that we now have of period instruments, therefore making it sound more resonant, and most of the time light and playful, with a lot of sensitivity for the slow movements which are often incredibly beautiful. I think violists can have a lot of pleasure playing this, as well as it being a challenge technically." Certainly it was light, playful, sensitive, and simply beautiful.

### Kim Kashkashian

Sunday afternoon Kim Kashkashian was scheduled to perform in concert. Worries that the concert might be under-attended because it was in the last leg of the congress week were soon put to rest as the hall filled quickly and early. The program consisted of Schumann *Fantasiestücke*, Hindemith *Sonata, Op. 11 #4*, and Brahms *Sonata in E-Flat Major, Op. 120 #2*. Living up to her reputation, Kashkashian communicated creativity and artistry in strong musical language, giving unique interpretation to the works she brought.

Her performance was received with immediate applause that brought her return three times for additional bows before treating the audience with an encore: "Spring Time," an Armenian folk song transcribed by Komidas. Dance-like and fluid, the following applause asked Kashkashian to return twice more for bows.

### Barbara Westphal

The final concert of the congress was given by Barbara Westphal who holds professorship at the Lübeck Music Conservatory in Germany. Listening to Kashkashian and then Westphal present full programs in succession was like having one piece of fudge right after the next.

Westphal's program consisted of Brahms *Scherzo in C Minor*, Mignone *Tres Valsa Brasileiras*, Reger *Sonata in B-Flat Major, Op. 107*, Manuel de Falla *Siete Canciones Populares Espanolas*, and lastly Veieuxtemps *Sonata in B-Flat Major, Op. 36*. Again four bows paved the way for an encore. It was a Brazilian piece called "Canção Sertaneja," which can be translated from Portuguese as "Song from the region of Sertaneja."

Westphal described it as being "of perfect charm and wistfulness" composed by Brazil's Camargo Guarnieri. When I asked why she chose this program Westphal responded that they were "Pieces I LOVE!!!

Contrast! It had to be pieces not everyone plays all the time." She expressed that in recent years she has come to love Brazilian music and could have presented an entirely Brazilian program, but reconciled herself to the request of a mixture of familiar and unfamiliar pieces.

### Conferences, Lectures, and Workshops

Viola congresses always offer intellectually stimulating lectures on subjects of interest to the viola world. At this congress, many dealt with issues of health, musicology, history, practice techniques, and alternative music styles as well as other areas of discussion all presented by actively researching experts.

One such event was a recital-lecture given by Bruno Giuranna. For an hour Giuranna shared his expertise on the Brahms *Viola Sonatas, Op. 120*. He explained to me:

*The incredible thematic work behind them deploys itself with such an easi-*



Kim Kashkashian in recital



Emmanuel Vardi



*Tamestit, Adamopoulos, Lainé, and Michalakakos in recital*

ness that, according to Claude Rostand, 'only their poetic essence seems to have been significant to Brahms.' Like all masterpieces, the Sonatas may be approached in a naïve way - just listening and enjoying - or may be studied and deepened during a lifetime. In this case they reveal what they are: an endless source of marvelous treasures.

Giuranna explained his views between the clarinet and viola editions: "In the F-Minor complete phrases - objectively too high for the viola - have been moved down an octave; at the contrary, in the E-Flat Sonata only parts, fractions of phrases have been moved down changing radically the character of the music. Consequently, my suggestion of performing the E-Flat Major Sonata at the high octaves, like the clarinet." This lecture was a significant, if not the deciding factor, in my decision to include the Brahms *E-Flat Sonata* for an upcoming recital of mine in place of Arnold Bax's beautiful viola sonata.

Another such event was a lecture given by Dr. Claudine Bigelow with the assistance of Jennifer Call and Myrna Layton who work with the Primrose International Viola Archive (PIVA), the largest single collection of viola works in the world. This collection is kept in

the library of Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah. In addition to presenting a good deal of history behind William Primrose, the lec-

ture also explained the workings of the PIVA and its benefits and value to the viola world. Interesting for me was the discussion of the various instruments and the time periods Primrose used them and recorded with them. There is a lot to be gained from the resources made available at the PIVA. Beyond these tangible resources there is much to be learned from the legacy left by Primrose for as Yehudi Menuhin stated, "If Tertis was the first protagonist, Bill [Primrose] was certainly the first star of the viola."

### **Congress Closed**

A word of thanks must be said to Jutta Puchhammer-Sédillot. The congress week was filled with events and lectures with relatively little recycling of presenters and performers. Given my circumstances I could not have possibly experienced more per day.

Unfortunate it is that the under-represented American viola community did not choose to participate with greater numbers. The smooth continuity of the events and the orderly manner in which they took place throughout the week spoke most strongly of the care and attention given by Puchhammer-Sédillot in seeing that every minute was provided for. Any violist who has been principal of a section can appreciate the diffi-

culty of keeping 12 or so violists in line. Keeping over 300 violists in order was nothing short of a spectacular and a commendable achievement indeed. Very special thanks were given to Jutta by her students, associates, and friends at the close of the congress.

The congress closed with an invitation to attend the next year's congress in Sydney Australia. Every other year the congress is held outside of North America. My friends and I returned home eating our peanut butter sandwiches, considering the possibilities of attending that 35th congress. For us, new repertoire had been considered, and the old dusted off and made new. We had met new friends from across the world, learned from the best, and certainly renewed our gusto for pursuing our own viola aspirations. At first the experience did not look like it could happen for us, but we found a way and made it work. It was financially difficult and physically exhausting, but worth it. And I still love peanut butter sandwiches!

— *A native of Burlington, Iowa,  
Andrew Snow is a senior at Brigham  
Young University.*

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**For me the music  
is a very powerful  
language: some-  
times joke, some-  
times tragedy.**

— *Michael Kugel*

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# THE VIOLA-CELLO DUO:

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## A HISTORY AND SURVEY

By Claudine Bigelow

At first glance, the basic resources listing viola-cello duos make the genre seem limited to almost no repertoire. Quite frankly, it is a genre that has been overlooked. For example, Cowling's, *The Cello*,<sup>1</sup> and Peter Allsop's chapter on ensemble music in *The Cambridge Companion to the Cello*,<sup>2</sup> fail to mention any. This is not meant as a criticism, just an observation of otherwise very useful books. One of the largest listings of viola-cello duos in general reference materials is in *Literatur für Viola*, by Franz Zeyringer,<sup>3</sup> and it includes approximately fifteen works. A few more are listed in Arthur Cohn's relatively recent four-volume work, *The Literature of Chamber Music*.<sup>4</sup>

There are however, many more duos available for this string combination; over seventy at last count. Composers did not start writing for this specific duo instrumentation until the Classical period, relatively late in musical history. The first documented viola-cello duo was composed in 1783 by Johann Georg Albrechtsberger. The richest sources of viola and cello duo repertoire come from the 18th and the 20th centuries.

We can trace the forerunner of the alto and tenor combination to vocal motets, canzonets and riccere from the Renaissance, including works by Thomas Morley and

Orlando di Lasso.<sup>5</sup> Instrumental compositions are more difficult to identify. Since the development of the string family was in its formative stages at the time, instrumental duos possibly reflected the vocal repertoire of this era. However, typical for Renaissance music, none have explicit instrumentation written in the manuscripts.

One could also look to English consort music for viols as a distantly related predecessor of the viola-cello duo. These composers were interested in exploring counterpoint with at least three voices, so the duo was avoided and arguably, viols represented a different family of string instruments than the viola and cello. However, the viola-cello duos that first appeared in the 18th century bear an important connection to the viol consort music because they share characteristics of equal voicing and the upper melodic lines were commonly in the alto range. Compositions of Orlando Gibbons, John Jenkins or Matthew Locke's Fantasias, for example, would fit this description.<sup>6</sup> As chamber music in the Baroque period evolved, these roles fell out of favor. Instead, the cello became increasingly involved with the responsibility of the continuo role and the viola's alto range was almost always used as an inner voice with less prominence.

Why is the viola-cello duo missing from the Baroque era? Maybe its

absence can be explained by the all-consuming use of continuo during that period; the scoring of the viola and cello was perhaps too spare a color and not in the correct style without a keyboard in the background. Another reason may be that the role of the viola as a solo or upper voice was still in its developmental stages. The concept of the viola's role was primarily as a harmonic voice. The emergence and later great popularity of the trio sonata completely left out the voice of the viola and instead focused on two soprano instruments. Maurice Riley explained:

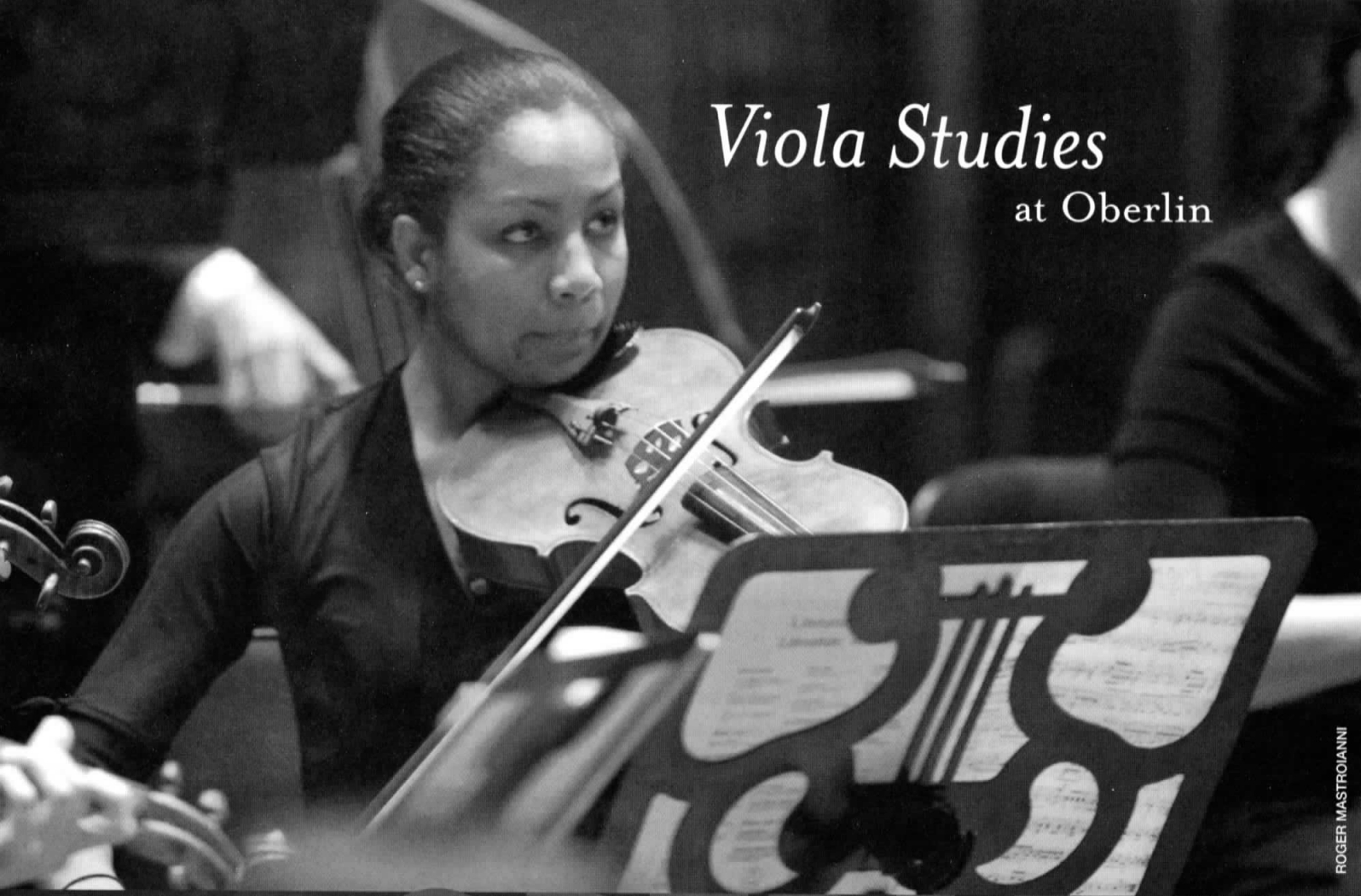
*The omission of the viola from the trio sonata was an unfortunate development that retarded the progress of this instrument in many ways. Not only was the viola excluded from the most prevalent form of instrumental chamber music of the Baroque era, but also composers were failing to recognize it as a solo instrument.*<sup>7</sup>

The end of the Baroque period is when the viola's possibilities in the solo capacity started to emerge. In 1721, Johann Sebastian Bach composed the Brandenburg Concertos. The sixth concerto was scored for the unique combination of two viola soloists with the accompaniment of gambas and cellos.

Georg Philipp Telemann composed one of the earliest solo viola concertos in 1731. He composed many other works that featured

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the viola in non-traditional ways. For example, he used the viola in the trio sonata setting several times. *Scherzi Melodichi*, composed in 1734, contains 7 pieces for violin, viola and continuo and features the viola in a solo voice role. He also composed a concerto for two viola soloists as well as a concerto grosso work for two violins and viola.<sup>8</sup>

Telemann's stature as a major composer certainly must have influenced those around him. These works would have helped any performer, composer or audience recognize the possibilities of the viola in the melodic or solo role.

The transition from Baroque to Classical period was a blossoming time for the string duo in general. A combination of influences changed the ways people were making music. Public concerts became fashionable, involving a larger audience of people than ever before. The rising middle class attended the concerts and generated more interest in art music. This stimulated growth in the publishing industry, anxious to make more music available to the masses. Chamber music for the amateur became a pleasurable pastime. Philip G. Downs said:

*Based upon the evidence of the music printed and sold during this period, [1760-1780], it would appear that the practice of musicmaking [sic] in the home continued to increase and the medium of performance continued to change. The use of basso continuo began to decline in the concert hall, the opera theater, and the church and disappeared almost entirely from private music...*<sup>9</sup>

The increased interest in chamber music demanded other possibilities. Literally hundreds of pieces were composed for the various combinations of two violins, two violas, two cellos and violin and viola. It was during this period that the duo for viola and cello also was born. Downs added:

*The 1760s witnessed the development of the truly modern kind of chamber music combinations without keyboard. The string duet, string trio, string quartet, and quintet, although they may have been used before 1760, come to form a major part of the active life of the cultivated amateur musician as never before. The duet for two violins remained the most popular of the string-duet types, closely followed by the duet for two cellos, while that pairing for which the most famous of all string duets were written--the duets for violin and viola of Mozart--was least popular.*<sup>10</sup>

Note that Downs did not even mention the viola-cello duo. This suggests it was even less popular!

It was the trio sonata that evolved and branched into different types of chamber music in the Classic period, exploring the possibilities of the string duo, the string trio and even the piano trio. Duos primarily served the pedagogue and the amateur. John Herschel Baron explained:

*...most duets seemingly belonged to the private quarters of the performers themselves and not the public sphere. Here were two principal reasons for such duets. For one, the teachers of the 18th century found the duet a*

*useful pedagogic tool to train young or at least uninitiated players in the elementary aspects of the ensemble...For another, two string players of any ability found that getting together alone and informally to make music was an enjoyment unequalled in any other ensemble. It was less complicated than performing with two or more others, and it allowed for the meshing of homogeneous sounds of two string players that was not possible with keyboard or wind.*<sup>11</sup>

Baron said that the duo served two additional functions between 1780 and 1827: making money and showcasing the virtuoso.

*After 1780 there is a flourishing of duet composition serving much the same function, but also with a difference. Publishers, such as Hoffmeister and Pleyel, published many sets of duets to make money; they saw a substantial market in the amateur players of Paris, London, Amsterdam, Vienna and elsewhere in Europe...*<sup>12</sup>

*...A third type of composer of duets was the traveling virtuoso who composed brilliant duet sonatas where the first violin part had excessive virtuosity to show off the composer-violinist and where the second violin was almost unmitigated accompaniment.*<sup>13</sup>

Johann Georg Albrechtsberger's duet for viola and cello had tremendous historical significance; it was the first scored specifically for the viola-cello combination. The manuscript was dated 1783. The duo by Albrechtsberger set a trend for the genre.

Additional viola-cello duos by the following Classical-era composers

include: Ludwig van Beethoven, Johann Friedrich Braun, Antonio Bartolomeo Bruni, Franz Danzi, Carl Ditters von Dittersdorf, Wenzeslaus Pichl, Alessandro Rolla, Joseph Schmitt, Georg Abraham Schneider, Carl Siegmund Schönebeck and Carl Stamitz. Like the Albrechtsberger, these are multi-movement works. Typically in three movements, they usually have a slow movement sandwiched between two *Allegros*. Occasionally some had two movements. Some were composed in sets, such as the Bruni, Danzi, and Pichl duos. Of these, the majority contain three duos per set.

The duos are composed basically in two different styles. The first and most common style has the voices melodically trading roles and places both instruments on an equal footing. The Albrechtsberger, Beethoven, Braun, Danzi, Pichl, Rolla, Schmitt, Schneider, Schönebeck and Stamitz duos fit in this category. The second style features the viola as the solo voice with the cello supporting the basic harmonic motion with an occasional flourish, but basically leaving the virtuosic role to the violist. The Bruni and Dittersdorf duos fit this model.

A rich resource of music from this period is the collection of Ulrich Drüner. His collection focuses on manuscript copies and first editions of music from this period. His main interest is music for strings, particularly the viola. The Primrose International Viola Archive contains microfilms of Drüner's manuscripts for study in

addition to music from the viola collection of Comte Roger d'Adhémar. The duos available to look at include first printings of the compositions by Bruni, Danzi, Pichl and Schönebeck. Additionally, there are manuscript copies circulated around 1856 of the Bruni and Rolla duos. These are probably not in the composers' hand. Rather they were hand-copied by another person for personal use, a common practice at the time. The Rolla is of particular interest, because there are two duos. Only one has ever been in print. This unfamiliar duo especially warrants further study.

There are six additional duos available on the microfilms that are not in print. They were composed between 1795 and 1820 and are by the following composers: Bernard Lorenziti, L. A. Loulié, Joseph-Henri Ignace Mees, J. Müntz-Berger, P.Voirin, and Cajetan Wutky. The duos in the Drüner collection also reflect the two compositional styles previously mentioned. The Müntz-Berger, Voirin and Wutky have the viola and cello equally involved with interplay of the melody. The Lorenziti, Loulié and Mees feature the viola with a cello accompaniment.

Titles for duos in the manuscripts from the Classic period are problematic, because sometimes the word *basse* is indicated instead of cello. This is a problem for identifying several of the duos including those by Bruni, Rolla, Loulié and Lorenziti. The term *basse* is ambiguous. *Basse* can mean a vari-

ety of different things depending on the historical context. The main problem is it can sometimes be used interchangeably to mean cello or bass as well as other instruments. The term can easily be confused with older French usage of the *violone*, *contra basse* and double bass related to the viol family; or in Germany, the bass of the *kleine Geige*<sup>14</sup> family related to the rebec as well as the violin. In the context of 1700-1761, David Boyden defines *basse* as the cello, "The normal bass of the family..."<sup>15</sup> This view is supported by other respected scholars.<sup>16</sup> The author has interpreted *basse* to mean *violoncello* for these particular duos and included them in this study. Excluded are all duos for *contrabasse* or other titles clearly scored for the lower bass instrument.

The absence of the viola-cello duo from the Romantic era is puzzling. The major composers of that generation ignored it; the minor ones virtually did as well. Only one, *Sérénades en 3 Suites pour Alto et Violoncelle* by Charles Douay, was mentioned in all the references for this project.<sup>17</sup> Some of the plausible reasons for the change could be that there was a change of fashion. Duos in general were simply not as popular as they were in their 1760 heyday. The most popular and glorious contributions in the development of chamber music in the duo realm were in the medium of the sonata, particularly for cello and piano. For the violist, the most satisfying chamber music literature was in the genre of the string quartet. At the beginning of the 20th cen-



tury, the duo for the viola and cello appeared again. Why did it return? What circumstances brought about a desire or the need for a comeback? The impetus seems to have had three inspirations, all coming together at the same time. First, there was the arrival and lasting influence of viola virtuosos at the beginning of the 20th century. Second, the viola's possibilities were again explored by composers as a solo voice inspired by these soloists. Third, the violist-composers at the turn of the century took an interest in viola-cello duos and performed them frequently.

The beginning of the 20th century heralded the explosion of viola as a solo instrument. The importance of this occurrence cannot be underestimated; this is most likely what reawakened the compositional ear to placing the viola in the role of the upper or solo voice. Two exemplars precipitated this change: the solo careers of Lionel Tertis and William Primrose helped the viola take a giant step forward.

Two fine composers who also performed regularly on the concert stage at the beginning of the 20th century were Rebecca Clarke and Paul Hindemith. They were fine violists and important protagonists of the viola-cello duo. Concert programs and recordings tell us that they performed with cellists often. Rebecca Clarke frequently performed with the cellist, May Muckle. Clarke composed her *Two Pieces for Viola and Cello* (composed circa 1916) to give them more repertoire to do together. The violist-composer Paul

Hindemith was intimately familiar with the Beethoven "Eyeglass" duo. Hindemith recorded it with his brother, Rudolf, in 1924. This recording is still available on the *History of the Recorded Viola*.<sup>18</sup> His own viola-cello composition was recorded and published in 1934. These two duos were among the first to explore the viola-cello genre again, after almost a century gap in the repertoire.

Clarke's Duo is important because it was one of the earliest duos to be composed in the 20th century. It was the first published by a woman for this genre. Other female composers that wrote for the viola-cello duo genre are Mary Jeanne Appledorn and Thea Musgrave.

The combination of these influences had a significant impact on the greater number of works for the viola, and this was felt in the viola-cello duo genre. There are about fifty compositions for this pairing. Some personal favorites in addition to those listed above include one by Hanning Schröder, a substantial three movement work by the jazz influenced Walter Piston, and a fine transcription by folk-melody influenced Witold Lutoslawski.

## CONCLUSIONS

In 1929, Walter Wilson Cobbett described duets for strings in his *Cyclopedic Survey of Chamber Music* as unimportant musically and primarily only for use as pedagogical material. He "treats sparingly of duets of a type which have not been considered of sufficient chamber musical importance," as he covers duos for two violins. Of

other string duos he says, "The remaining duets for two instruments...are of far less importance."<sup>19</sup> He fails to list any duos for viola and cello at all. Rebecca Clarke says around the same time period:

*It is a curious fact that, although the viola is probably the oldest instrument of the quartet, it has been the longest in coming into its own; and one feels, in reviewing its history in chamber music, that, unlike that of the violin and 'cello, it is indeed, its life history. Many efforts have, it is true, been made to establish it as a solo instrument, but these have been of recent years only; so, although it has always appeared in democratic numbers in the orchestra, its chief scope of utterance as a personal entity has been, and still is in chamber music...*<sup>20</sup>

So we come again to the idea that the viola needed to be seen by the composer as an upper voice. Composers first needed to explore the viola's role as a solo voice with virtuoso possibilities before feeling comfortable with the viola-cello duo genre. Closer examination of the composers of viola-cello duos shows that many had skill performing on the viola and perhaps it took this understanding to see possibilities. For example, Beethoven, Bruni, Clarke, Fürst, Hindemith, Piston, Rolla, Schröder, and Stamitz, all had professional experience playing the viola. Current composers can now look to virtuoso soloists on both the viola and cello for inspiration. For example, wonderful performers willing to play duos include the celebrated duo of brothers Roberto and Andrés Díaz.

So does the duo deserve more attention than Cobbett gave it in 1929 and Arthur Cohn gave it in 1997? Certainly. This repertoire should be looked at closely and valued by violists. Especially for pedagogical usefulness, this repertoire has been underestimated. The opportunities for the student to explore music of the Classic period in particular are wonderful. Here is music with the voice of the viola and cello conceived in the solo role. These instruments do not necessarily need to seek transcriptions for a chance to study the music and style of this era.

Additionally, the exploration of color in the 20th century lent itself well to the genre. This is the century that contains largest number of selections for the genre and contains

repertoire worth more attention. The works are worthy of the consideration of both violists and cellists.

— Dr. Claudine Bigelow is head of viola studies and chamber music coordinator at the Brigham Young University School of Music. In May 2005, she was the host chair for the Primrose Competition and Festival. Currently on the executive board of the American Viola Society, she is also president of the Utah Chapter.

## NOTES

<sup>1</sup> Elizabeth Cowling, *The Cello* (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1975).

<sup>2</sup> Peter Allsop, "Ensemble music: in the chamber and the orchestra," *The Cambridge Companion to the Cello*, edited by Robin Stowell (Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1999), 160-177.

<sup>3</sup> Franz Zeyringer, *Literatur für Viola*, Neuausgabe 1976 (Hartberg, Austria: Julius Schönwetter, 1976).

<sup>4</sup> Arthur Cohn, *The Literature of Chamber Music* (Chapel Hill, NC: Hinshaw Music, 1997).

<sup>5</sup> J. G. Albrechtsberger, *Duo in C-dur für Viola und Violoncello*, edited by Ulrich Drüner (Switzerland: Amadeus Verlag, 1977), forward.

<sup>6</sup> Ernst H. Meyer, *Early English Chamber Music from the Middle Ages to Purcell* (London: Lawrence and Wishart, 1946; reprint, 1982).

<sup>7</sup> Maurice W. Riley, *The History of the Viola, Vol. I* (Ann Arbor, Michigan: Braun-Brumfield, 1993), 70.

<sup>8</sup> Riley, 117.

<sup>9</sup> Philip G. Downs, *Classical Music: The Era of Haydn, Mozart and Beethoven* (New York: W. W. Norton & Company, 1992), 129.

<sup>10</sup> Downs, 147.

<sup>11</sup> John Herschel Baron, *Intimate Music: A History of the Idea of Chamber Music*, (Stuyvesant, NY: Pendragon Press, 1998), 197.

<sup>12</sup> Baron, 279.

<sup>13</sup> Baron, 280.

<sup>14</sup> David D. Boyden, *The History of Violin Playing from its Origins to 1761* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1965; reprint, Oxford: Clarendon Paperbacks, 1990), 45.



Lucia Lin, Steven Ansell, Michael Reynolds, and Peter Zazofsky

### Violin

Lynn Chang  
Bayla Keyes  
\*Lucia Lin  
\*Malcolm Lowe  
Dana Mazurkevich  
Yuri Mazurkevich  
\*Ikuko Mizuno  
Roman Tötenberg  
Peter Zazofsky

### Viola

\*Steven Ansell  
\*Cathy Basrak  
\*Edward Gazouleas  
\*Michelle LaCourse  
\*Michael Zaretsky

### Double Bass

\*Edwin Barker  
\*James Orleans  
\*Todd Seeber  
\*Lawrence Wolfe

### Cello

\*Jules Eskin  
George Neikrug  
Leslie Parnas  
Michael Reynolds  
Rhonda Rider  
\*Boston Symphony  
Orchestra Member  
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<sup>15</sup> Boyden, 324.

<sup>16</sup> See Cowling and Stowell.

<sup>17</sup> From the viola music collection of Dr. Ulrich Drüner, Stuttgart, Germany. It is also made reference to in the forward of J. G. Albrechtsberger, *Duo in C-dur für Viola und Violoncello*, edited by Ulrich Drüner (Winterthur, Switzerland: Amadeus Verlag, 1977).

<sup>18</sup> *The Recorded Viola, Volume I*, Pearl, GEMM CDS 9148, Pavilion Records Ltd., Sparrows Green, Wadhurst, E. Sussex, England, 1995.

<sup>19</sup> Walter Wilson Cobbett, editor, *Cobbett's Cyclopedic Survey of Chamber Music*, (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1929), 340.

<sup>20</sup> Cobbett, 340.

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# BOOK REVIEW

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## A REBECCA CLARKE READER

**Reviewed by Dwight Pounds**

Before examining the *Rebecca Clarke Reader* itself, it might prove useful to place the Anglo-American composer, Rebecca Clarke (1886-1979), in historical perspective. She is a relatively new phenomenon in the viola world as it exists in 2006 and as such it sometimes is difficult for us to imagine that she was a contemporary of our grandparents and great-grandparents. She was six years of age when Johannes Brahms died (1892) and was already a mature woman of 32-33 in 1919 when she entered her viola sonata in the Coolidge Competition. Lionel Tertis, who was at the height of his powers (and with whom she studied viola), and is referenced in the book but William Primrose is not. The vast majority of Rebecca Clarke's career, both as a composer and chamber music violist, was pre-Primrose. Hers was the world of Ralph Vaughan Williams, Arnold Bax, York Bowen, Myra Hess, Gustav Holst, Ernest Bloch, Maurice Ravel, William Walton, Paul Hindemith and Lionel Tertis. She lived to see the onset of international viola congresses but attended none, nor do they appear to be mentioned in any documents released to date by her estate. She died in 1979, the year that Congress VII convened in Provo, Utah, in her 93rd year.

What Clarke referred to as her "mini-revival" began musically with a 1976 birthday tribute broadcast on WQXR Radio that included her Viola Sonata. The performance by Toby Appel (viola) and Emanuel Ax (piano) possibly was its first public presentation in decades. The program also included her Piano Trio and three songs. Toby Appel also presented the first performance of the Viola

Sonata at a viola congress in 1987 at Congress XV in Ann Arbor. The composition quickly proved popular and was performed by Csaba Erdélyi at Congress XVII in 1989 in Redlands, CA, and by Paul Coletti at Evanston in 1993 at Congress XXI. Likewise it quickly spread to student ranks-Kirsten Docter and Kathryn Lockwood played it as part of their Primrose Competition programs at the



*Clarke, ca. 1910, at the Royal College of Music. Used with permission.*

Ithaca (Congress XIX in 1991) and Evanston congresses respectively.

**Prelude to Publication:** The Rebecca Clarke Society released this bulletin on August 15, 2005: *The Rebecca Clarke Society has produced a new printing of A Rebecca Clarke Reader, a volume of writings by and about British-born composer and violist Rebecca Clarke (1886-1979). Previously published by*

*Indiana University Press, the book was recalled from circulation last year in response to threats of legal action from Clarke's estate. This past June, Indiana released its distribution rights to feminist activist and music historian Liane Curtis, the book's editor, who subsequently agreed to make a paperback version available in time for the 119th anniversary of Clarke's August 27 birthday.<sup>1</sup>*

Briefly, the problem in part concerned an "uncomfortable and unfriendly dispute between Ms. Curtis [Dr. Liane Curtis, *Reader* editor and President, Rebecca Clarke Society] and Mr. Johnson [Christopher Johnson, who owns the copyright to Clarke's unpublished music and writings]." Dr. Curtis criticized both his editing

and his stewardship of her works. Johnson countered, totally rejecting her accusations: far from denying access, he asserted that he welcomes scholarly interest in Clarke and entertains any application to see the unpublished materials. He clearly thought that Curtis went too far in the *Reader* with unauthorized excerpts from unpublished works. Curtis countered that *the brevity of the material and its scholarly use in the Reader place it under the umbrella of copyright law's 'fair use' provisions.* The Indiana University Press, citing "errors in the publication of the book," withdrew the just-published *Reader* from circulation, though Curtis refused to return 200 copies in her possession. Legal action is yet pending.<sup>2</sup>

*A Rebecca Clarke Reader*, Liane Curtis, editor.

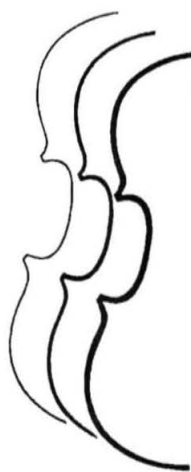
241 pages soft back, 7 contributors  
Published by the Rebecca Clarke Society, 2006

Website: [www.rebeccaclarke.org](http://www.rebeccaclarke.org)

The book essentially encompasses three sections or main topics: recent essays about Rebecca Clarke, her published writings, and her mini-revival as revealed in interviews and program notes on the Viola Sonata three decades before her death.

#### Recent Essays About Rebecca Clarke

The treatment of Rebecca Clarke as a composer and one of the most important violists of her time by the opening essay's author, Nancy Reich, is enlightening. It is here that we



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learn that Clarke was the only woman accepted by Sir Charles Stanford, her composition teacher at the Royal College of Music. Of this, she wrote in her self-deprecating style, "...that I was the only woman he had accepted was a source of great pride to me, *though I knew full well that I never really deserved it* (italics mine)." It was also Sir Charles who urged her to switch from violin to viola, that playing the viola would place her "right in the middle of the sound, and [she] can tell how it is all done." (11)

Also documented are accounts of Clarke's independence, that she supported herself for over two decades playing in orchestras and chamber groups; that she became of the first women to be employed by an major orchestra in London; that her Viola Sonata and Piano Trio each won second place in the 1919 and 1921 Coolidge Competitions respectively and that she was the only woman composer represented in the Coolidge between 1918 and 1939; that she completed a world-wide tour with May Mukle (cellist and good friend) in 1922-23; that she presented a concert of her own works at Wigmore Hall in 1925 "in which she was joined by Myra Hess and other leading English musicians; that she played with an all-woman string quartet, organized and managed the English Ensemble chamber group (piano, violin, viola and cello). Though Reich admits that the composer was "not known as a fighter for women's suffrage or women's rights," (15) she cites a letter written to Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge in which Clarke writes:

*I have been wondering, if, when you said you were undecided about the cellist for*



*The English Ensemble (Piano Quartet), ca. 1928-1929. (L to R) May Mukle, cello; Rebecca Clarke, viola; Marjorie Hayward, violin; Kathleen Long, piano. Used with permission.*

*the cello recital next year, you had ever thought of the possibility of having a woman! I can't help feeling, and I believe you do too, that a great cause is served in putting the work of women executants on an equal footing with that of men—that is, only when it really is equal...* (15)

Editor Liane Curtis cuts to the chase early in her essay, "Rebecca Clarke and the British Musical Renaissance," on the issue of the "woman composer." The term was considered pejorative in Clarke's time and she was careful to distance herself from it, possibly because Ethel Smyth, who was both strident and eccentric and quite the opposite of Clarke in personality and manner, in Curtis' words "might be seen as the negative icon of this 'woman composer.'" Still, she was part of the group of women who in 1911 founded the Society of

Women Musicians. As for Clarke's role in the British Musical Renaissance, Curtis writes:

*Clarke...both contributed to and benefited from a rejuvenation of an English musical tradition and a sense of British national identity. Consideration of Clarke's experiences at the RCM, and her friendships with Stanford's other composition students (Gustav Holst, Vaughan Williams, Frank Bridge, George Butterworth, others), and emphasizes the parallels and possible influences between Clarke and her colleagues.* (25)

Commenting on Clarke's style, Curtis continues:

*But it is in the genre of song that the full breadth of her musical style and development is revealed; her output of fifty-five songs spans her full creative life.* (25)



Clarke in August, 1972. Used with permission.

The essay concludes with a comparison of settings by Clarke and Ivor Gurney to two poems by Yates, *Down by the Salley Gardens* and *The Cloths of Heaven*, and her *Passacaglia on an Old English Tune* (for viola and piano), the only work from her late period (1939-1942) to be published. (34)

Deborah Stein, in the third essay, "Dare Seize the Fire," traces the composer's stylistic evolution in an analysis of Clarke's songs, *Shy One* and *The Cloths of Heaven* (to texts by Yeats), and *Seal Man* (to a poem by John Masefield), and concludes with *Tiger, Tiger* (by William Blake). The fourth essay, "But Do Not Quite Forget" by Bryony Jones, is a comparison of the Trio for Violin, Cello, and Piano (1921) and the Viola Sonata (1919).

### In Her Own Words

#### Clarke's Published Writings

"The Beethoven Quartets as a Player Sees Them" is written strictly as a quartet member with very little reference to anything pertaining to the viola and could as easily have been written by a violinist or cellist. One is quickly jolted into the realization that, although she arguably was one of the most important violists of her time, Rebecca Clarke foremost was a chamber musician who spent thirty years of her life in the medium.

On the quartets she writes,

*It is almost impossible for those who have never played in a string quartet to realize to what an extent those who do have the advantage over*

*them. The difference is as great as between a thing read about and a thing experienced....*

*The Beethoven quartets more than any others are pre-eminently for the player rather than for the listener. Brought into the world as they were by slow and laborious growth it is only by slow and laborious concentration that they will reveal themselves fully. (120)*

To earn this revelation, Clarke gladly allowed the quartets to slowly and painstakingly etch themselves onto her soul over a three-decade period. It is from this perspective that she lovingly shares insights into her dearest and most intimate friendships, the movements, themes and motives—even individual notes of the quartets. These have become so integrated into her thought that they take on personalities: she knows their joys and sorrows, their peculiarities, their preference for brandy and cigars, lace and leather, whether they prefer brie, Swiss, or cheddar, Rembrandt or Holbein, Schiller or Goethe. Clarke discusses these qualities in intimate detail, caressing them with a prose that could only be described as the blended style of a gifted music critic and a poet.

The early quartets receive relatively short shrift as she clearly has her eyes (and ears) on the middle and later offerings. She writes:

*Beethoven has grown enormously in stature; his hand is firmer, his character more formed...the Beethoven of the Rasumovskys [appears] to have sprung full-grown and almost unheralded into existence. ...The quartet*



*in F touches heights immeasurably above anything that had ever before been attempted in this form. (123)*

Her only reference to the viola in the essay concerned the *Allegro* of the third Rasumovsky, in C, which began with a comment on the famous cello run in the 34th measure:

*Above this darkly moving bass the upper instruments wind their plaintive tune till the viola breaks in with a cry of anguish which could have been given to no other instrument. It often seems to me that the personality of the viola has a certain affinity with Beethoven's in its half-awkward sincerity and somber passion... (126)*

Clarke begins her review of the late quartets with Op. 130, in B-flat, and of which she writes "is in many ways my favorite."

*Of its six movements the third, Andante con moto, is the one I love almost best of all. If ever Beethoven wrote music near to the sounds of nature it seems to me he has done it here; the innumerable gentle little phrases, so inconspicuous but so essential a part of the whole, the ever-changing moods, and the deep half-unconscious feeling pervading it all, make this movement unique in chamber music. There is absolutely no end to what can be found in it, every smallest mark having such significance, and every note containing so much meaning. (129)*

Her conclusion with regard to the late quartets as a whole:

*...I feel the chief thing that makes them so absorbing to the player is their very difficulty, both of technique*

*and of understanding. One so quickly comes to the end of music which makes a too easy and immediate appeal; it is all very well for the listener, who has to form his impressions from one or two hearings only, but a musician demands something that gives him a resistance against which he must exert himself... (134)*

Clarke's next essay, "Viola," published in *Cobbett's Cyclopedic Survey of Chamber Music* in 1929, is of interest primarily because of the perspective it lends to the status of the viola in the early 20th century. I did not find it nearly as compelling as that on the Beethoven quartets which exist very much today as they did in her lifetime. The viola on the other hand has experienced a dynamic renaissance of sorts since these observations were penned. One must remember that Rebecca Clarke was a woman of her time and many of her observations seem quaint, perhaps even startling, by what we know of the instrument in 2006. Among her pithier comments:

*Beethoven, who also at one time played the viola, did not write for it with quite the suave brilliance of Mozart. ...Mendelssohn and Schubert were among the great composers who played the viola, but it has no unusual prominence in [their] chamber music. Mendelssohn...looked upon it more as a Bottom-like instrument affording comic relief to his Puckish measures, though he also occasionally gave it a broad and expressive melody. ...Schumann, far more than either Schubert or Mendelssohn, grasped the emotional possibilities that lie in the viola. Schumann's interest in the*

*viola is further shown in his Märchenbilder for viola and piano, a suite of melodious though not entirely effective movements, as well as in some pieces for clarinet, viola, and piano, called Märchenerzählungen. ...In the hands of a fine player nothing could be more beautiful than the viola parts designed by Brahms. (136-137)*

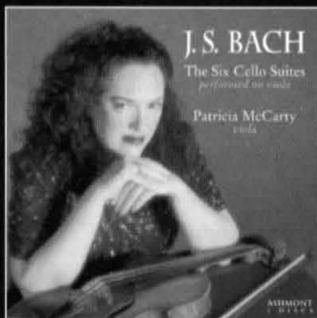
She discusses treatment of the viola by several composers, among them Dvorák, Reger, Schönberg, Bloch, Radnai, Bax, and the major English composers of the time, Dale, Bridge, Warner, Vaughan Williams, Bowen, Honegger, and herself. The only performing violist she mentions by name is Lionel Tertis. Commenting on why sonatas for viola and piano were "few in number" and why that by Rubenstein had stood almost alone up to her generation, she writes:

*This is probably due to the fact that not many viola players have ventured to leave the comparative obscurity of the string quartet for the more searching demands of solos and sonatas. The tone of the viola is apt to become slightly monotonous in an entire recital, as it has not as large or brilliant a range of tone-color as the violin or cello. ...The future may still further bring out its possibilities, and, as long as it is content not to outstep its sphere, it may look forward to a career of continued dignity and importance. (139)*

## The Interviews

The published interviews also present Rebecca Clarke not only in her own words, but her own spoken words. When reading the Robert Sherman, Nancy Uscher,

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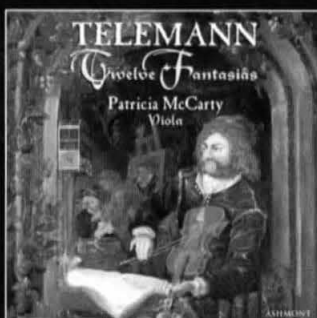
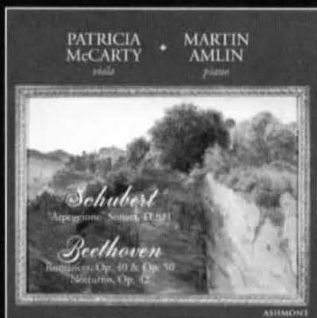
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and Ellen D. Lehrner interviews, please bear in mind that these are transcribed conversations with repeated phrases, redundant words, and pauses which create a rhythm foreign to most formal writing and quite in contrast to Clarke's written style. It will be necessary to read with one's ears as much as the eyes to catch the flow of the conversation-try to imagine yourself sitting in the room with Clarke and her guests and being privy to all that is said. Clarke's speaking style-more English than American-reveals a woman of gentility, charm, grace, humility, intelligence, insight, and experience... to say nothing of eloquence. Continuing, in her own words and extrapolated from the Sherman, Uscher, and Lerner interviews:

## Insight and Experience: Observations by Rebecca Clarke:

On Paul Hindemith as violist premiering the Walton Concerto for Viola and Orchestra: "...Hindemith, obviously, was the kind of player who was a fine musician, but didn't practice. And he was playing with practically no vibrato, and in a way that was quite different from the way Tertis would have wanted to." (216)

On performing Schönberg: "We did the Five Orchestral Pieces of Schönberg-they seem pretty strange even now and they seemed extremely strange then!" (216)

On being one of eight women to play in the Queen's Hall Orchestra and the men's reaction: "...Yes, that was really quite a thrill, because it was considered very, very strange to have women in a symphony orchestra. I remember the men were disgusted, but then they were friendly after we got in, you know [and they got used to us]." (214)

On John Masfield, writer of *The Seal Man*, the poem to which she wrote "her best song": "...And after all, poets, their work is complete. And that somebody else fools around with their words doesn't impress them at all." (218)

On Pinchas Zukerman's appearance in a recording of Sir Charles Stanford's Piano Quintet: "And Zukerman, you know, played it marvelously and fitted in marvelously. It was a little bit too violin-ish...a little bit over vibrato." (193)

On Anthony Trent, Clarke's male pseudonym:

*...I thought it's idiotic to have my name down as composer three times on the program, I'll invent a name. ...And I*

*took the name Anthony because I liked Anthony and I put that piece down as Anthony Trent-and [the composition credited to him] wasn't-I think-as good or any better any than the other pieces of mine that were on the program. ... The funny thing was, the papers all paid much more attention to Anthony Trent than they did to me. ... After that, I just killed Anthony Trent in a painless way because he was of no further use to me, as I got better known. (204)*

**I knew. ...:** The depth of Rebecca Clarke's involvement with the British Musical Renaissance can be measured in part by the people with whom she worked. Here, again in her own words, are some of these people:

*I knew Walton fairly well. I knew Arnold Bax very well, I knew Vaughan Williams very well indeed. I've good a friend here [NYC] called Veronica Jacobs. Viola players get around. (216-217) I studied with Lionel Tertis, who was a very fine viola player, the first really of the fine solo viola players. (109) I knew Suggia [Pablo Casals' consort], I played in a quartet with Suggia for three years. She was Portuguese. ... a very nice colleague, you know, to play with. She was a wild sort of woman. (190, 192) I knew Ravel fairly well. (219) I never knew Delius. (220) Oh, I knew [Gustav] Holst very well. (220) I knew a Belgian composer called Joseph Jongen; did you ever hear of him? (221) I never met [Germaine] Tailleferre. I never met Nadia Boulanger either. I never met Elgar."*

Other Rebecca Clark notes of interest: told Maurice Ravel's fortune

(correctly) at a reception using a pack of Tarot cards given to her by a Hungarian. (178) Read Beethoven's *Ninth Symphony* at sight in a concert because all rehearsal time had been given to Schönberg's Five Orchestral Pieces. (216) Wrote program notes to her Viola Sonata for Toby Appel in 1977 when she was 91. (225) Married James Friskin when they both were 58, some thirty five years after they had met at the RCM. (22)

Robert Sherman conducted two interviews with Rebecca Clarke, the first concerning Dame Myra Hess, pianist, close friend, confidant, and fellow student at the Royal Academy, and the second with regard to her own career as a composer. It was a comment in the first interview, on February 25, 1976, that spawned the "mini-revival of interest in Clarke's music. Sherman asked whether she and Hess had ever performed together. Still discussing Hess, Clarke showed him a program which read, "Wigmore Hall, Rebecca Clarke. Concert of Her Own Compositions. October 21, 1925, Assisted By Myra Hess (165)." In typical Clarke fashion and focusing upon Hess, the fact that the concert featured Clarke's own compositions was entirely incidental to the conversation. The point however was not lost on Sherman, who, quickly returning to the concert, asked whether Dame Myra was interested in contemporary music. Clarke responded in the negative but added:

*She was a very fine sight reader, and-as I've said before-a very fine*

*chamber music player. A joy to play with. Playing my own things with her, I hardly had to say a single thing, she knew at once. (168)*

Thus began the Rebecca Clarke mini-revival.

The second interview, conducted almost four months to the day on June 26, 1976, features discussions between Clarke and Sherman on the 1919 Coolidge Competition, her sincere admiration for Ernest Bloch, her male pseudonym, songs, and her varied reasons for abandoning composition.

In Nancy Uscher's 1978 interview with the composer, Clarke talks about some of the musicians with whom she worked, great and small, as well as a range of well-known composers. Uscher found her "a discreet observer, at the time having outlived almost all her contemporaries, reflecting and observing in a candid, amusing, often illuminating way." Many insights, idiosyncratic to violists, were shared, as was "the development of the viola's reputation as an instrument and their frustration with its oft-maligned status." Clarke also briefly discussed her Grancino viola, her marriage to James Friskin, and her Cobbett article, "Viola."

The 1978 and 1979 interviews conducted by musicologist Ellen D. Lerner, though in some instances redundant with information shared with Sherman and Uscher, expand upon her relationship with other women composers, particularly Ethyl Smith, and her 1976 re-debut on the

WQXR broadcast. Of the latter and consistent with the Clarke penchant for understatement and self-deprecation, Mrs. Friskin said:

*I had a marvelous notice in the [New York] Times, I think I told you, really embarrassingly good, too good, much too good, and all nonsense anyway, saying that if I hadn't been a woman et cetera, et cetera. (217)*

### Conclusions:

Early in the book Nancy Reich listed for very valid reasons why Rebecca Clarke had not been given the recognition she deserved: (1) she composed a relatively small (but choice) body of work, most of which was not published in her lifetime; (2) her last work was composed in the 1950s, though she lived on to 1979; (3) perhaps, because of her dual citizenship, she fell between the cracks and was claimed neither by English nor American scholars of women's history; and (4) she was not a self-promoter, and, like many women, spoke deprecatingly of her own talents.

There is little to add to Reich's observations. I feel that I know Rebecca Clarke better having read this book and have a broader appreciation and insight, not only into the Viola Sonata, but her career as a whole. One suspects that, with A Rebecca Clarke Reader, we have merely scratched the proverbial surface of a rare talent and a compelling personality who is not without contradictions. Most violists are aware that Béla Bartók probably

would have finished his viola concerto had his lifespan been even six weeks longer; conversely Clarke, blessed both with good health and length of years, three decades before her death reached a point beyond which she chose no longer to compose. Why? Many reasons are suggested, i.e., changing interests and time constraints, but no definitive cause seems to emerge. Blaming her lack of recognition on being a woman in a late-Victorian man's world, while legitimate, is also convenient. She freely admitted that she was a poor businesswoman but did not seem to realize the extent of her self-deprecation, which is revealed time and again in this book. However legitimate the reasons, the violist in me ponders what might have been had this marvelously creative mind been inclined to write one or two more sonatas, perhaps a suite, some songs with viola *obbligato*, and some chamber music in her mature years.

In spite of all that has been written about her, Clarke remains enigmatic and there is much yet to be discovered both about the woman and her music. Liane Curtis writes:

*One other major piece of Clarke's writing is unfortunately still unavailable: her memoir "I had a Father, Too; or, The Mustard Spoon" offers brilliant insights into her feelings about music and composing, as well as tracing her maturation as a professional musician, and her "coming of age" as an adult. It continues to be withheld from publication by her estate. Hopefully the legal difficulties*

*between the competing individuals representing the composer's estate and academia respectively will be settled and additional compositions and personal data made available for publication. (104)*

Given the apparent entrenched positions of each party, this regrettably may not happen soon.

### Notes:

1. Published and released by The Rebecca Clarke Society, August 15, 2005.
2. Content reduced and italics quoted from "Silent Treatment" by Richard Byrne, printed in The Chronicle of Higher Education, July 16, 2004.

— Dr. Dwight Pounds worked for six years with Women's Studies at Western Kentucky University. The first of three annual programs featured Kathryn Plummer (viola), and Amy Dorfman (piano), who performed the Clarke Viola Sonata and the Bloch Suite, replicating the 1919 Coolidge Competition program. The second concert was presented by Christine Rutledge (viola) and Boyd Jones (harpsichord) and the third by the Notre Dame Trio with Carolyn Plummer (violin), Christine Rutledge (viola), and Karen Buranskas (cello). The fourth concert, featuring women composers from the Baroque, Rococo, and Classical periods, was presented by Ars Femina. Dr. Pounds' lecture, *The Contribution of Women to the Art of the Viola*, was predicated on the careers of Kathryn Plummer, Kim Kashkashian, Patricia McCarty, and Karen Elaine.



# ALTERNATIVE STYLES

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## DRIVE-BY VIOLA RECITALS



*Kate Vincent, Nat Farny, David Feltner, and Katrina Wreede at venue with awning.*

### **By Katrina Wreede and David Feltner**

The Viola Congress does more than bring together interesting and enthusiastic violists from around the world. It also builds lasting musical friendships. David Feltner and Katrina Wreede met at the Ithaca Congress many years ago (spending many happy meals at Moosewood) and have been finding performance opportunities with and for each other ever

since, including performances for the New Hampshire Composers Conference, King's Chapel in Boston, Rhode Island's Stone House Club, the Harkness Festival, workshops at Boston Conservatory and Berklee College of Music, and most recently, with David's Chamber Orchestra of Boston and Drive-By Violas.

Drive-By Violas is a project of Katie's, playing multiple viola music in unexpected and unusual

locations. Its philosophy is to encourage discussion of art music's place in modern society while creating an opportunity for bunch of violists to have fun hanging out and playing together. The hope is that people passing will consider: is live music permanently relegated to concert halls for the elite and educated, or can it be reintegrated, without dumbing down, into everyday life? On a more spiritual level, Drive-By Violas is an attempt to compen-

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sate for random street violence with random street music. And an excuse for a bunch of violists to hang out and have being silly, something we do so well!

In Boston, the four violists arrived at each location (a corner produce stand, a food court, a pedestrian over-crossing, on top of four pillars near a plaza and at a bus stop) in formal attire topped with orange safety vests, put up a sandwich board explaining the project and also advertising for the Chamber Orchestra of Boston concert the next day, then played *Katie's composition, In Praise of August Sundogs*, rushing away before anyone noticed that they really were not supposed to be there. Katie owns a traffic barricade for dangerous locations, but the performances in Boston with COB violists Kate Vincent, Nat Farny, and David and Katie, were relatively safe-- except for annoying some FOX network security and production staff by crashing a Marge Simpson Mother's Day promotional event (with Marge in attendance along with a bevy of young women in bathrobes passing out roses). At first they believed the music was part of the promotion, but the style and instrumentation probably tipped them off. That particular rendition of *Sundogs* had a lot of extemporaneous cuts and an extra quick pack-up afterwards. The FOX guy in the black leather jacket was kind of big and intimidating.

The COB concert the next day included *Katie's What Goes on in the Ether* for string orchestra, so



the Drive-By events were designed to attract new audience members to the COB concert, too. All in all, it was a very successful expression of art, social commentary, friendship, smart marketing, and the joy of being violists together.

The American Composers Forum helped sponsor the Drive-By Viola project in Boston with an Encore Grant, designed to promote repeat performances of under-performed works, pairing ensembles and composers from different states. *In Praise of August Sundogs* was originally written for a four-viola concert in Northern California several years ago and, like much new music, was premiered and then stuffed in a file cabinet. The Encore Grant and COB created an opportunity to resurrect it and use it in new and different ways. The piece makes use of prepared viola (foil under the strings at the nut to imitate a tambura drone), improvisation in parts 1 and 4, unusual percussive techniques, and a rattle (one made of goat toenails preferably). It can range from 2-8 minutes,

according performers' improvisational inclinations and whether or not they are coming for you. It will be available from MMB Music this fall. ☺

*David Feltner, violist and Musical Director of the Chamber Orchestra of Boston, also plays with the Boston Pops Esplanade Orchestra.*

*Katrina Wreede, violist and composer, teaches viola, jazz, and composition in Oakland and in artist residencies around the country. She is a former member of the Turtle Island String Quartet.*

# In Praise of August Sundogs excerpts

Katrina Wreede August, 1994  
rev. 2006

faster

Viola 1

solo

faster

poco a poco cresc.

sim.

Viola 2

pizz.

faster

poco a poco cresc.

Viola 3

pizz.

faster

poco a poco cresc.

Viola 4

pizz.

poco a poco cresc.

4

Vla. 1

Vla. 2

Vla. 3

Vla. 4

7

3x or more

Vla. 1

3x or more

Vla. 2

3x or more

Vla. 3

3x or more

Vla. 4



11 slower

Vla. 1 *mf*

Vla. 2 slower *pizz.* ring arco

Vla. 3 slower arco *mf*

Vla. 4 slower *mf*

17 faster

Vla. 1 *3* *V* *3* *V* *3* *V* *3* *V* *3* *V*

Vla. 2 faster *poco a poco cresc.* *sim.*

Vla. 3 *molto spicc.* *faster* *poco a poco cresc.*

Vla. 4 *faster solo* *poco a poco cresc.*

*poco a poco cresc.*

21 *V* *V* *V* *V* *V* *V* *V* *V* *V* *V*

Vla. 1 *3x or more*

Vla. 2 *3x or more*

Vla. 3 *3x or more*

Vla. 4 *3x or more*

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# IN THE STUDIO

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## REVISITING COLLÉ

**By Karen Ritscher**

Recently, I was having a lovely Saturday evening dinner at the New York City West Side restaurant, Niko's with my friend and esteemed colleague, Greg Fulkerson. Mr. Fulkerson is one of the most intelligent and thoughtful people I know, as well as being a brilliant violinist and deep musician. I was grateful that since it was just the two of us, we could indulgently shop-talk about string playing and teaching, without boring or offending any of our other friends or spouses. We were happily discussing the amount of finger leading vs. reactivity to various strokes on violin and viola. At some point in our discussion, one of us made the deliberately dramatic observation that "although teaching collé is one of the most useful learning tools we have, there are almost no practical applications!" Then, upon reflection over several weeks, I began to question the veracity of that statement and have since realized that actually there are many more useful outcomes from working with collé than one can consider in a short discussion.

Like most violin-violita techniques, collé for the viola is essentially the same as for the violin, but some of its lessons may be even more important for violists in particular. The difference of articulation for violin and viola seems to be the

amount and speed of initiation of strokes and the amount of follow-through. Viola requires quicker, lighter springing fingers and particularly on the C string, a more vertical pinch. One needs to be able to instantaneously wrap the bow around the string and then, like a startled bird, fly away! Not only is collé helpful for clean attacks and clean projection in viola playing, it is also valuable for developing a warm and "gluey" tone.

To review, the word *collé* comes from the French for *glue*. Collé is a finger-initiated stroke. On the down-bow, the fingers move curved to elongated and on the up-bow, elongated to curved. Ivan Galamian in *Principles of Violin Playing* defines collé: "the bow is placed on the strings from the air and at the moment of contact the string is lightly but sharply pinched. Simultaneously with the pinch, the note is attacked, after the instantaneous sounding of the note the bow is immediately slightly lifted off the string in preparation for the next stroke.... It is in action, although not in sound, not unlike the plucking of the string, making as it were, a pizzicato with the bow." (74-75) While violinists emphasize beginning and ending the stroke from the air, the same stroke for viola can easily start from the string as long as their knuckles are active and ready to spring. For all accented strokes on

either instrument, one feels pressure on the bow before the arm moves. For accented strokes on the viola, one needs to let the fingers react more to the arm "grabbing," as opposed to arm following finger initiation. This makes a huge difference in the roundness and clarity of the sound in short strokes, as well as legato playing.

Often in the initial execution of collé, my viola students are able to find the bite of the attack, but are unable to let the tone ring as the bow "escapes" the resistance of the string. Because of the thickness and slower reactions of viola strings, particularly the G and C, the violist needs to have more ballistic or quicker knuckle reaction to the bite.

A teaching technique that I have used to encourage waking up the fingers is the following:

1. Place the bow on the string in the middle, with relaxed arm weight and the fingers alive and "ready." Let the arm feel the resistance of the string. Using the fingers only, do a quick up-bow, but then immediately move the arm down-bow. This motion results in a dotted rhythm: sixteenth followed by dotted-quarter.
2. Do the same thing with the fingers moving down-bow (elongating to the right) while the bow moves up-bow.

3. Then only *pretend* you will play a dotted rhythm, but instead let the bow spring down-bow with a “pop.”

4. Do the same on the up-bow.

As an aside- when I was a student of Karen Tuttle’s, I asked her generally about articulating; she answered, “there is no such thing as articulation, only the breath.” However, like Primrose and other violists, she did emphasize having a reactive spring in the base joint knuckles.

Another exercise that we have found useful for developing clarity and ring is the following exercise that we call the “burp” exercise:

1. Engage bow on string.
2. Let the fingers catch the string, sensitive to the vertical resistance.
3. Then exert horizontal pressure

with the arm, until the bow escapes the string, resulting in a single “burp.”

4. Try the catch or “burp” on all strings in all parts of the bow. This can be practiced with a partner, keeping score. If one produces multiple “burps,” the player must take a point. The player with the most points loses the round.

In teaching the collé, sometimes problems may come up. One always needs to make sure that the thumb stays relaxed, even in the elongated shape and that it never pushes the bow out and in but rather follows the fingers in the down and up bow direction. Also, if the arm is not naturally pronated, with the radius bone leaning on the ulna, a good ring on the bite cannot occur. If the pinky tends to slip off, a good suggestion is to rest the pinky on the ridge closest to the player, not directly on top of the bow.

Working on collé in the viola studio is beneficial for generally waking up and sensitizing the fingers and provides a quick right hand warm-up. It helps the student develop awareness for the different response times of each string. It teaches the brain to feel

out small muscle movement and learn when to use it and when to let the fingers respond to the arm. To develop all staccato attacks and especially the martelé, one must be able to produce a good bite. Studying collé also helps to develop good core-sound contact in legato playing and to gain understanding of the balance of all parts of the bow. Even in thrown strokes such as used in the spiccato excerpt from Mendelssohn’s *Midsummer Night’s Dream*, it is useful to practice each passage as collé. Then when one goes back and plays the passage with a true spiccato, more clarity and roundness results in the sound.

In conclusion, the collé is one of the most helpful techniques we have in our teaching arsenal. Viola, due to its slower response because of its acoustical imperfections as well as thicker strings, needs help in clarity and projection. In order to make a beautiful sound, relaxation tends to be perhaps overvalued, resulting in quite wonderful players who sound too mushy in a hall. A thorough investigation of collé serves to develop the dynamic clarity, as well as the voluptuous sound that all performers are seeking. §

— Karen Ritscher is Associate Professor of Viola at the Oberlin Conservatory and artist-faculty at the Heifetz International Music Institute in Wolfboro, New Hampshire. She is active as a chamber musician and performs and records regularly with the Azure Ensemble.

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# MODERN MAKERS

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## THE CONTEMPORARY VIOLA'S JOURNEY INTO MAJOR QUARTETS

**By Eric Chapman**

Musicians, both professional and amateur, are becoming increasingly comfortable with the musical and financial benefits of performing on contemporary instruments. Lionel Tertis was perhaps the first to make a distinct impact on musician's attitude toward new instruments when he developed his own model viola with English makers, Arthur Richardson and Wilfred Saunders and aggressively endorsed their work. Richardson made his first Tertis model in 1937 and over the years made more than 100. William Primrose championed contemporary makers wherever he could and in 1950 was the only non-Tertis pupil to participate in a special concert introducing Tertis' latest 16 3/4" model. In addition, Primrose played many concerts on a beautiful viola by William Moennig Jr.. At the 1979 Viola Congress held at Brigham Young University in Provo, Utah, Primrose meticulously played every new viola in the VSA exhibit. Late in his life, he played primarily on a contemporary Japanese viola.

Recognition of the quality of contemporary instruments has been slow to develop through most of the 20th century. Players have been taught to "fear the unknown" of how instruments might develop, and major violin dealers have been slow to endorse modern instruments where the profit margin would be less. Once Tertis and Primrose established the viola as

a solo instrument though, the landscape began to change. With the crafts revival of the 60s and 70s in full swing, violin making emerged as a major movement.

In 1972, the Violin Making School of America in Salt Lake City, was founded by Peter Prier in 1972. Three years later, the Kenneth Warren School of violin making, now known as the Chicago School of Violin Making enrolled its first students. A few years later, the North Bennett Street School in Boston joined the club. American violin making began to hit its stride.

With the founding of the American Society for the Advancement of Violin Making (now the Violin Society of America) in 1973, makers now had a major support system. At the International Viola Congress in Ypsilanti, Michigan in 1975, the VSA began its international competitions, this first time only for violas. Two now well-established American makers, David Burgess and David Wiebe, were among the charter medal winners.

Luthiers now had a forum that allowed the top craftsmen to emerge, while players could easily access these top makers who might create a concert instrument for them.

Satisfying a top performer with a solo instrument poses stiff challenges for any maker. Satisfying the player

and three other members of a quartet compounds the complexity of the decision sending it to a new level. When a brand-new instrument joins a world class quartet, it becomes an event; with violas, it now happens with increasing regularity.

The Shanghai Quartet, one of the world's finest young quartets accepted an invitation to serve as tone judges at the VSA International in 2004. While the task of playing and evaluating 48 cellos, 85 violas, and 182 violins is daunting as well as physically fatiguing, the quartet accepted the challenge and spent four days straight judging instruments eight hours a day—an experience which would be termed priceless by Mastercard. Out of that process, the quartet emerged with three brand-new instruments that are now the regular instruments of the quartet. The Gold Medal viola by Nicolas Gilles was the choice of Honggang Li. Based on the contralto violas of Andrea Guarneri, the instrument seemed ideally suited to the player and the composite sound of the quartet. There was only one problem—the instrument had been sold prior to the competition. Having faith in the maker and the model, he commissioned an exact copy that joined the quartet in 2005.

Jonathan Bagg, violist of the Chiompi Quartet at Duke University and John Largess, violist of the Miro Quartet in residence at the

University of Texas, selected Tecchler model violas by French luthier Frank Ravatin. Through the kindness of avid musician and ACMP board member arts Dr. Mark Furth of Chapel Hill, North Carolina, Bagg had access to Dr. Furth's Ravatin viola. This provided the inspiration for the commission of a 16 3/4" Tecchler, which immediately joined the quartet. The Miro Quartet was the beneficiary of an entire quartet of Ravatin instruments, commissioned for their use by Dr. Furth. The viola model selected by John Largess was again a Tecchler model that, like other Ravatin instruments, offers a refined and powerful sound. Hearing four Ravatin instruments play Beethoven was quite an experience not easily forgotten and certainly inspired debate about the virtues of a homogeneous sound from a quartet.

Hiroshi Iizuka, a two time VSA Gold medal winner, works in Narbeth, PA. His violas, particularly what he refers to as his "viola d'amore" model, are in the hands of many prominent violists. Before he retired to launch a second career as an artist and painter, Emanuel Vardi, the only violist to record all 24 Paganini Caprices, was connected with the sound of his Iizuka as is Professor Jeffrey Irvine at the Cleveland Institute of Music.

In 1995, Iizuka made his 17" viola for a client who ultimately found it somewhat large. The instrument was returned to the maker for resale. Who should be in the shop but Guarneri violist Michael Tree, who adopted it with open arms and put away his

great Italian viola by Venetian maker Domenico Busan. What better spot for a maker to have placed an instrument than in the Guarneri Quartet!

Violin maker Geoffrey Ovington, best known for his violas, works in Shushan, NY and is the only maker known to this author who also served as the Mayor of his town. Ovington violas can be found in some very prestigious places. Three violas are in the Vienna Philharmonic. One of Ovington's violas is in the hands of Franz Schessloff of the Joachim Koerchet Quartet based in Munich. Made in 1982, the instrument is inspired by the Gasparo da Salo formerly owned by Louis Kievan. and measures 15 11/16". Like the original, the sound is both compact and sweet.

Sam Zygmuntowicz, a VSA Gold Medalist, graduated from the Violin Making School of America in 1980. Following a number of years of employment at Jacques François Violins in New York, he established his shop in Brooklyn where he has made instruments for many famous clients including Isaac Stern, Joshua Bell, and Walter Trampler. Instruments by Zygmuntowicz have been in the world renowned Emerson Quartet for many years. Violinists Phil Setzer and Eugene Drucker played his instruments along with cellist David Finkel. For a time the hold-out was violist Larry Dutton, who was quite happy with a great Italian viola from the Mantegazza family. That viola was 17" and had a long string length with squared

off shoulders. Zygmuntowicz designed a viola around the Mantegazza concepts, particularly the arching but shortened the body length and the string length and created a more sloped shoulder, all of which increased the user friendly aspect of the instrument. The viola joined the quartet in 2003 and now shares playing time with the great Italian instrument.

World class makers and a major quartet will come together again at the 2006 VSA International competition in Baltimore this November. Quartet judging will be done by the Audubon Quartet, which has endured both a gut wrenching break up and subsequent law suits that forced the present quartet members to sell their instruments in order to satisfy the court ordered financial settlement. While the quartet's instruments were purchased by a patron kind enough to loan the instruments back to the respective quartet members, such a solution to the instrument problem may only be temporary. Given the experience of the Shanghai Quartet (who will return again to judge at the 2008 VSA), there is reason to hope that the Audubon Quartet will have similar luck finding great contemporary concert instruments at very attractive prices.

In Toby Faber's recent book, *Stradivari's Genius*, the author offers a portrait of Stradivari as the greatest maker in history. In answer to the question of continuing the master's legacy, the author turned to Charles Beare of London, generally acknowledged as the world's leading authority on

violins. Faber sums up Beare's view of the trend toward quality in violin making: "Twenty-five years ago, Charles Beare saw luthiers struggling to match Vuillaume, let alone the great Cremonese craftsmen. Now he thinks that standards are finally approaching what Stradivari and his contemporaries achieved."

One day, Faber writes "supplies of the great classical violins will run out. We need a new Stradivari." Many contemporary makers will be vying for that coveted title. As one can hear in many of today's well-known string quartets, the instruments of Ravatin, Burgess, Iizuka, Zygmuntowicz, Gilles, and Ovington are knocking on that exalted golden door.

— 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.

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In our preparation of the familiar viola excerpts, we are often confronted with the common plateaus and impediments. We must never lose sight that in reworking these musical fragments we must capture the artistic essence of the larger work. The usual focus of our practice is intonation, dynamics, pulse, and rhythm. While bringing together artfulness with our technical means is the goal for all of us, pulse and rhythm galvanize these elements into a coherent whole. This becomes especially challenging during a stressful audition situation where success or failure determines our livelihood.

Pulse and rhythm are the fundamentals of musical time, and their exactness is a cornerstone of a successful audition. This is one of the ways an audition committee determines whether or not an applicant would be able to play with an ensemble, be it large or small. The challenge for us is to choose and keep a pulse during any given passage or movement, not only in a practice room but especially throughout an audition.

The first tool of choice utilized for audition preparation is the metronome. It can be very useful in the early stages of

learning a particular passage or movement. Its loud click and blinking light keeps our tempo steady and distills exact rhythmic passages. Even in the final stages of practicing, it can be used to realize a metronome marking given by a composer or help us increase a tempo one click at a time. The problem happens when it is performance time and our metronome is no longer available.

The most reliable help we need to make our pulse rock solid is right under our noses. Try counting out loud while playing! This is something pianists do and it is a mystery why string players do not. It is the surest way to develop consistency in keeping an unwavering pulse and good rhythm during practice. This means actually saying out loud (and I do mean OUT LOUD) the beats in a measure. This will seem quite difficult at first because it is a learned skill and must be practiced. Over time when it gets easier to speak and play at the same time, one can reduce the volume of one's voice to a whisper. Ultimately just mouthing or moving your tongue is enough to exact a precise beat, especially when you need it most during

pressure situations. Be advised that this does require some patience and short cuts do not achieve the same goals. You will see immediately when you are counting out loud the areas where you are prone to erratic tempo changes.

Choosing a starting tempo for a particular excerpt is something that we spend a good amount of time considering. Once we begin the piece, our mind becomes distracted with all sorts of other technical concerns and we lose our temporal bearings. I am going to discuss four passages where these tempo lapses are chronic. I have witnessed many a successful audition where the pulse is lost in these places. Interestingly, these spots occur either right before or right after a technically intricate passage.

The *Roman Carnival Overture* by Hector Berlioz is a selection chosen to highlight a player's ability to produce a beautiful tone and navigate the nuanced dynamic indications. The viola section solo begins at the key change in the third bar after rehearsal #1. Counting out loud while practicing this entire



Example 1: Berlioz- *Roman Carnival Overture*

passage is advised not only for the tempo consistency but also to make sure your dotted-eighth sixteenth note rhythms are precise. The problem area in this excerpt in regards to keeping a pulse starts two bars before #2 leading into the two-and-a-half beat held E note one bar before #2 (See example 1). This held E is never sustained long enough. Perhaps it seems like an eternity after playing the seven sixteenth notes right before, the most active part of this solo passage. As soon as you start to play the E you must count out loud in a subdivided beat until you release the E after the fifth eighth note (1-and-2-and-3-OFF). Continue over the rest and count in the regular quarter note pulse. *Symphony #6* by Peter Tchaikovsky

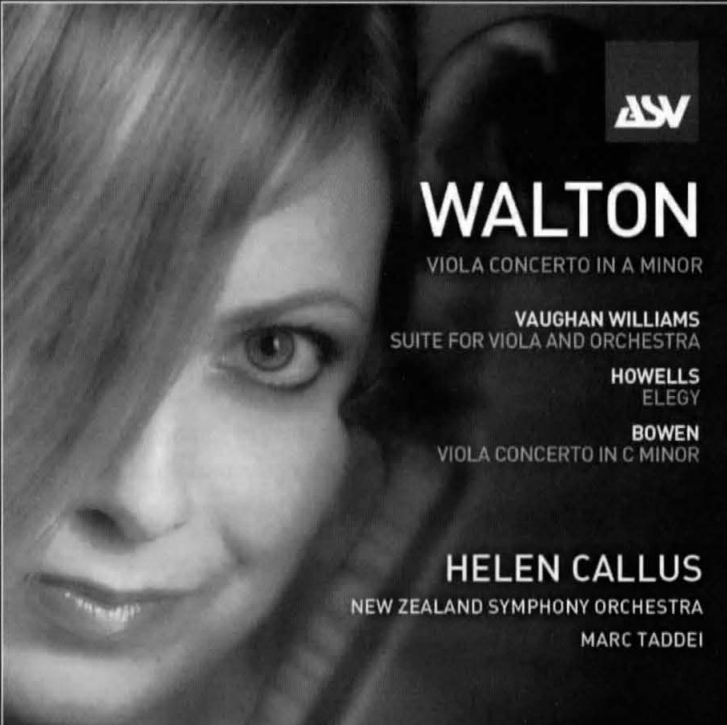


Example 2: *Tchaikovsky- Symphony #6, 1st mvt.*

features the viola quite prominently in the first movement. The entire first page and a half needs careful attention to avoid chronic rushing. The most troubled area for maintaining an honest pulse is at rehearsal letter B (See example 2). It is this humble rest that frequently gets short-changed. In the previous bars we get so consumed with executing our saltando bow stroke, first at pianissimo then at piano,

that we forget to properly count the rests for two and one sixteenth beats. I suggest playing it many times counting out loud during the saltando passage and including the measures after rehearsal letter B.

*Symphony #35* by Wolfgang Amadeus Mozart poses the same problems with rest counting as the Tchaikovsky symphony. In almost every case after an octave is played



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Example 3: Mozart- Symphony #35, 1st mvt.



Example 4: Mozart- Symphony #35, 4th mvt.

in the first movement theme, the following rest is not given full value. The real problem measure finally appears at eight bars before rehearsal letter B (See example 3). After negotiating all of the trills and octaves for practically the entire exposition, we are confronted with almost a four beat rest. This rest always seems interminable. Take your time here, count four steady beats, and secure your bow for the next passage. In the fourth movement the problem is similar. The opening eight bars are precarious as is the return of the theme [fifteen bars after rehearsal letter D] (See example 4). Measures five through eight are the simplest yet the most treacherous. Here the pitch stays the same and so must the pulse. When performed in auditions, the rests between and after the A notes often become compressed. Make

sure you finish the A in a steady beat before you rush off to the eighth note passage.

Often the most difficult moments in music are the times when we are doing the least. It is at these junctures that our concentration must remain at the highest intensity. Counting out loud while you practice these passages forces your brain to multitask on an active level. It is your internal tempo gauge being brought to the fore. It has advantages over metronome use since you can access it at anytime. The more you completely engage your personal resources during your playing, the more success you can expect to have in stressful situations. Counting while playing is a skill that can see you through to your practice and audition goals.

– Stephen Wyrzynski has been a member of the Philadelphia Orchestra for 15 seasons. He is on the faculty at the Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore and the Aspen Music Festival in Colorado where he teaches both private lessons and an Audition Seminar for Viola Orchestral Excerpts. He has also taught viola orchestral repertoire at the Curtis Institute in Philadelphia and at Mannes College in New York.

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## THE DELECTABLE TALENTS OF JOHN LARGESS

By Lembi Veskimets

In what way is listening to a performance of the Miró Quartet like eating a fresh croissant made from scratch? This is question that makes sense after getting to know John Largess, violist of the award-winning string quartet. At 16, Largess spent 17 hours “rolling and folding and resting chilled butter and dough- all for 15 fantastic little pastries,” only to have them eaten in five minutes. In the same way, the chamber music that one gets to hear his quartet perform on stage, described by one critic as “ravishing,” is the ephemeral product of much preparation and a great many behind the scenes skills (beyond pastry-making!).

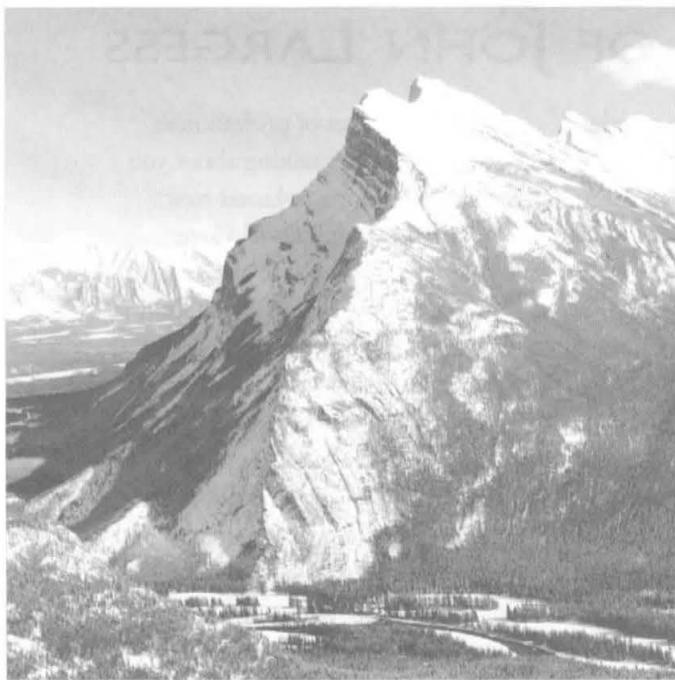
Having only begun the viola at age 13, Largess prepared for a life in music as well as the possibility of a different career altogether. Though he attended the prestigious Curtis Institute of Music, he went on to earn a BA degree in Archeology from Yale University. In addition to acquiring a background in Greek and Latin Literature, he entertained the idea of becoming a lawyer along the way, too. His aptitude for academia led him to present a lecture series at the 2004 Banff International String Quartet Competition (which he will also do in 2007) on such topics as *The Radicalism* and *Long Historical Shadow of Beethoven*, *Musical Reactionism in the Twentieth Century*, and *The Rhetoric of Classical Style*.

This is, however, merely a “side dish” to the primary course his life took when he chose the viola. A student of Gueneri quartet violist Michael Tree and former Principal Violist of the Los Angeles Philharmonic Heiichiro Ohyama, Largess experienced both the chamber and orchestral worlds in his first forays as a professional. He had the chance to fill in for the violist of the Colorado Quartet while she was on maternity leave and then he won the position of Principal Violist of the Charleston Symphony. It was in Charleston, says Largess, that he grew the most as a player, learning to sound his “absolute best” under all circumstances. This toughness came in handy when he traded in his salary for the opportunity to join a budding young quartet about to hit the competition circuit. Though two of the members of the quartet were still in school and the third was all of 19 years old when Largess spent three days playing a trial with them at Oberlin in 1997, he “had a really good idea of what COULD happen with that group.” What did happen was that the Miró went on to win first prize at the 1998 Banff International String Quartet Competition and the 2000 Naumberg Chamber Music Award. Largess is the first to admit that it takes some luck and behind the scenes work to turn the dream of playing string quartets for a living into a reality. In his own words, “Competitions and prizes do very little for your career, except getting

a smaller sub-set of professionals and aficionados talking about you - - not bad, but no ‘winners tour’ launches a string quartet career these days.” What was of value, he asserts, was the group preparation the competitions required. Also, this was a group, which, as Largess emphasized, “showed up to EVERY audition in the early years and played EVERY gig we were offered, regardless of how little it paid.” And whereas orchestras have staff who take on the “schmoozing” aspects of the business, a quartet player spends a lot of time socializing with presenters and audience members alike. As Largess points out, “If you are not extroverted, friendly, and excited to talk with everybody about why you love what you do, you won’t make it in this business.” A turning point came when ICM Management signed the quartet to its roster after a private audition. Touring is different now (involving hotels and flights and sometimes, fantastic restaurants) since the early days when they played a series of concerts on the banks of the Colorado river after rafting through the Grand Canyon for 30 miles a day and setting up their tent for the night. Being a group willing to try anything also endeared the Miró to Isaac Stern. Largess reveals that starting Schubert’s *Death and the Maiden* up-bow was an unconventional idea of Stern’s that they adopted, for instance. They worked with the famous violinist at the “Jerusalem Chamber Music

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Encounters” and found their playing improved under his tutelage. Stern in turn felt a part of their success and arranged for the quartet to perform at Carnegie Hall. The Miró then ended up in the PBS documentary on Stern’s life.

Largess believes that the relevance of the string quartet lies in its communication of a living tradition. Living not only in the quartet’s 20/21st century repertoire, today’s groups develop interpretations of works of Brahms and Bartok informed by knowledge passed on from teachers and mentors, such as the Juilliard Quartet. Such mentors either knew those composers or worked with an earlier generation who did. The Miró Quartet worked with composer George Crumb before recording his *Black Angels*, one of the avant-garde composer’s best-known works, written for amplified string quartet. Notable for its use of unusual timbres and extended techniques, Largess discovered that Crumb wanted “clarity and color and Mozartean detail within a huge dynamic/emotional range -- all in a mystical sound space.” Of course, part of the appeal of hearing a specific quartet perform live is to experience the personality of the group. In his view: “I think it would be accurate to describe all four of us as ‘extroverted’ personalities. We have a LOT of energy on stage.” Largess enjoys and is well-practiced at speaking to audiences from the stage. He finds that this helps to “break the ice” with an audience who might be intimidated by the works to be performed and allows him to reveal his personal feelings about the music. Education in the form of residencies and presentations, to say nothing of their jobs teaching at the University of Texas at Austin, is essential to the quartet’s career. Largess’s contribution to this is especially notable as he directs the chamber music program at the University in addition to writing the quartet’s educational scripts and proposals. Having done outreach concerts all over Texas, he is happily discovering that the state’s string instrumental programs are as big as the “distances, cars, and hair” of that state.

Whether influenced by his dedication to French pastry or not, John Largess plays a 2003 16 5/8” instrument by French luthier Franck Ravatin, who was commissioned to make a matched set for the whole ensemble. “It was exactly what I requested- it’s based on a Tecchler in the Cite de la Musique in Paris- and is practically indestructible on tour.” What is not in doubt is that Largess turns whatever he touches into art, whether it be musical conversation or conversing with an audience.

— *Lembi Veskimets is a member of the Cleveland Orchestra and also serves on the board of the AVS.*

# NEW MUSIC REVIEWS

*This column features recently composed works for Viola and Piano.*

## **Biography (a sonata for viola and piano) (2006)**

- I. Childhood: Simple
- II. The Calling: Andante
- III. Bridges

Difficulty: Level 4

Duration: 19 minutes

Dedication: Laura Brenner

### **By Robert Kerr (b. 1966)**

This refreshing work is written with strict tonality throughout and is easily accessible for the everyday listener. The flavor of this work reminded me of some popular American-sounding choral works I learned in my high school years; as it turns out, Kerr has written several choral works published by Alfred, and has also written music for Universal Studios and Walt Disney World Company. I always wondered why we don't have more instrumental works, especially viola solo works that are written with this musical style, and it seems that Kerr has helped to fill this void in our repertoire.

This work is for the most part fairly sight-readable, and I would have given it a difficulty level 3 if it weren't for the rare double stops and the passage which goes up to a high-D (above the A har-

monic, first partial). The work begins in a very simple "naïve" manner with a viola solo which sounds like an English folk tune, however I don't believe it is a quote of any preexistent tune. The piano then enters with its rolling figures, maintaining a strict 4/4 meter throughout. The second movement is slow Theme and Variations (3 total) inspired by Beethoven. The theme of this movement does sound "Beethovenesque" and is very pleasant. Each variation uses a consistent rhythmic pattern that increases in speed with each following variation (Var. 1 with eighth note triplets, Var. 2 with 16th notes, and Var. 3 with 32nd notes). The last movement Bridges was my favorite movement, and this movement has a popular, "Disney-like" feel to it. It is written in a quick 3/4 meter and is written with very jazzy sounding syncopated rhythms, sometimes accenting the "and" of beat 2, giving the music a temporary feeling of being in two.

After listening to the CD of the world premiere performance, I couldn't wait to give this movement a run-through for myself. The three movements make for a somewhat eclectic coupling for a 3-movement sonata, however as varied as these movements are, the composer's personality is maintained throughout and as a whole makes for a very charming new work.

This piece is available directly through the composer at:  
Robertkerr@cfl.rr.com  
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**Sonata for viola and piano  
(1999)**

Allegro con brio  
Moderato  
Dances

Difficulty: Level 4  
Duration: 17 minutes  
Dedication: Paul Palmer

**By Mary Alice Rich (b. 1955)**

This sonata also maintains firm roots in tonality and is always pleasant to listen to. The first movement alternates between parts with fast, driving syncopated rhythms and parts with longer lyrical lines and rolling piano accompaniments that are somewhat evoking of Saint-Saens. The first

movement is written in a strict 4/4 meter and the viola part stays mostly in first position, only venturing up to the B-flat (just above the first partial harmonic on the A-string) on one occasion. The second movement begins with a beautiful piano introduction which is then imitated in the viola entrance. The chord progressions in the movement are gorgeous and sometimes very unexpected and poignant. The ending was a little bit sudden and it left me wishing I could hear some of the earlier material again. This remark is not a criticism, but a compliment to how gorgeous the earlier material was. The highest note of the sonata happens in the third to last bar of this movement (the D just above the first partial harmonic on the A-string), which gives the impression of the movement floating away into the heavens. The third movement is probably the most compositionally interesting as it is comprised of a series on dance forms that come from highly varied sources in music history such as the Waltz, the Gavotte, the Mazurka, and the Beguine. The work as a whole is written in a much more serious manner than the aforementioned Kerr. Both the viola and piano parts are well-written idiomatically, and the piece is pretty straightforward for the most part and will probably come together very quickly. This work is highly recommended for anyone interested in diversifying their recital repertoire with a fresh, new, rarely-heard work.

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### **Homage a Erik Satie for viola and piano (1972)**

Difficulty: Level 1

Duration: 2 minutes

### **A Piece in Popular Style for viola and piano (1940)**

Difficulty: Level 4

Duration: 3 minutes

### **By Alan Shulman (1915-2002)**

As I was searching on the internet for a picture of Alan Shulman to include on my WebCT Vista resource site for my viola studio (where I have numerous viola recordings for my students to hear), I ran across the official website for Alan Shulman maintained by his son

Jay Shulman. My curiosity drove to look over the complete listing of works by Shulman hoping I might find viola music by him in addition to the famous Theme and Variations for viola and orchestra, which seems to be his most popular work. I was delighted to find the two above mentioned works as well as a *Suite for Solo Viola* (1953), *Variations-1984* (1981) for Viola, Harp and Strings, and *Two Episodes for Viola Quartet* (1978), all of which I will probably review at a later date.

The *Homage a Erik Satie* is a short curious little work written for viola or cello and it begins in contour very similarly to Satie's Gymnopédies No. 2 with the triple meter and the low bass note on beat one and the treble half note on beat

two. The harmonies are very French sounding, but very different as is the melodic line given to the solo player. The viola version is extremely easy to play and leaves first position only once for the G in third position on the a-string. The cello version keeps the same range as the viola, making it being played an octave higher than in position than it would be on the viola. This piece certainly doesn't have much use as a teaching piece in the college studio as the Theme and Variations certainly does (which may attribute to why this piece is hardly known at all). However for the innovative intermediate string teacher, this work could prove to be an interesting vibrato-teaching piece as opposed to the first movement of the Telemann Viola Concerto.

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*A Piece in Popular Style* is another charming work, very different from the *Theme and Variations* and the *Homage a Eric Satie*, and he seems to be utilizing a more popular “Americana” voice with jazzy syncopation rhythms like ones found in Gershwin’s *American in Paris* or Morton Gould’s *Latin American Symphonette (No. 4)*. In this work, Shulman seems to be very attuned to the other American musical styles that were forming and being popularized at the time, such as jazz and boogie-woogie. In this work, he freely embraces them to help define the “American” voice that many composers of his time successfully pioneered. This piece will take some dedicated practice, as the viola writing is a little tricky with the fast notes, string crossings and generous use of “blue notes” and accidentals. The piece is mostly in a four meter, but there are quite a few tempo changes for such a short piece that will need to be rehearsed with the pianist. This piece is certainly a fresh innovative choice for an encore piece, and will certainly “wow” the listeners as it sounds much more difficult than it

actually is (a wonderfully convenient quality as most of us can agree!).

Both of these works are available at:  
<http://www.capital.net/com/ggjj/shulman>

#### Key to the Difficulty level chart:

- 1 Very Easy
- 2 Somewhat Easy
- 3 Intermediate
- 4 Somewhat Difficult
- 5 Difficult
- 6 Very Difficult

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# SAMPLE SCORE:

## KERR- *BIOGRAPHY* (2006)

### III. Bridges

Bright Pop  $\text{♩} = 68$

Robert Kerr

Viola

Piano

*mf*

8

14

*mf*

V

21

27

27

33

39



45

*mf*

51

*f*

57

62

68

*mf* *f*

74

*f*

80

*f*

86

*f*

92

92

98

98

104

104

110

110

115

Single bass staff (treble clef) and grand staff (treble and bass staves). Key signature: four flats. Measures 115-119.

120

Single bass staff (treble clef) and grand staff (treble and bass staves). Key signature: four flats. Measures 120-125. Dynamic markings: *p*, *mp*.

126

Single bass staff (treble clef) and grand staff (treble and bass staves). Key signature: four flats. Measures 126-131. Dynamic marking: *mf*.

132

Single bass staff (treble clef) and grand staff (treble and bass staves). Key signature: four flats. Measures 132-136. Dynamic marking: *f*.



138

*ff*

144

*ff*

150

*ff*

155

*ff*

161

161

166

166

172

172

178

178

184

6

190

196

202

208

214

220

223



# AT THE GRASSROOTS

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

## University of Northern Colorado- First Student Chapter Forms

Viola and violin students from the University of Northern Colorado have established the first student chapter of the American Viola Society. They have grand plans afoot for the upcoming school year. Their initial event is to hold a fundraiser. They will sell t-shirts to students in the Western States Honors Orchestra Festival. They will also hold a "lunch-in" to discuss what it is like to study the viola in college. This should prove to be a wonderful opportunity for high school students to learn about college life! The troupe of college violists also plans to form a viola ensemble in order to reach out to the community and play some concerts at retirement homes. In the meantime, they are hoping to secure funding to host a guest artist series and bring in violists to play concerts and give master classes. It proves to be a very exciting time for this group of energetic violists.

If you are interested in sponsoring or helping them with their activities, please contact Heather Buffington, UNCO AVS student chapter president at violachic918@msn.com.

Congratulations to the University of Northern Colorado Student chapter of the AVS!

— Louise Zeitlin



*Florida VS finds way to attract inaugural members?*

## Welcome Florida Viola Society!

On Sunday, Oct. 8, 15 Florida AVS members met in Gainesville, FL at Kenneth Martinson's home to form a new chapter "The Florida Viola Society" of the AVS. The first planned event will be on Saturday, January 13 at the University of Florida featuring a master class with Yizhak Schotten and a recital by Kenneth Martinson performing the 3 Hindemith Viola-Piano Sonatas and the "Heckelphone" Trio with pianist Christopher Taylor. The FVS also plans on having a website, a newsletter and a statewide Viola competition. The newly elected board: President Kenneth Martinson, President-elect Harold Levin, Secretary Karin Addis, Treasurer Jim Griffith. At-large members are Kathy Aagard, Kristin Brandt, Laura Brenner, Pamela McConnell, Jean Phelan, Myron Rosenblum, and Pam Ryan.

— Kenneth Martinson

## Local Viola Societies

### Arizona Viola Society

Jacquelyn Schwandt, president  
jacquelyn.schwandt@nau.edu

### Central Texas Viola Society

Ames Asbell, president  
s.ames@prodigy.net

### Chicago Viola Society

Michael Hall, president  
mhall1@iwu.edu

### Idaho Viola Society

Linda Kline Lamar, president  
lkline@boisestate.edu

### Iowa Viola Society

Christine Rutledge, president  
christine-rutledge@uiowa.edu

### Minnesota Viola Society

J. David Arnott, president  
violaman@aol.com

### North Carolina Viola Society

Scott Rawls, president  
srawlsuncg@aol.com

### Northern California Viola Society

Tom Heimberg, president  
smhall@pacbell.net

### Ohio Viola Society

Jeffrey Irvine, president  
jeffrey.irvine@gmail.com

### Oklahoma Viola Society

Matthew Dane, president  
mdane@ou.edu

### Oregon Viola Society

Adrienne Brown, president  
anbviola@aol.com

### Palmetto Viola Society

Constance Gee, president  
cgee@mozart.sc.edu

### The Philadelphia Viola Society

David Yang, president  
philadelphiaviola@earthlink.net

### Rocky Mountain Viola Society

Margaret Miller, president  
margaretm@adelphia.net

### Southern California Viola Society

Jennie Hansen, president  
malibujen@earthlink.net

### Utah Viola Society

Claudine Bigelow, president  
claudine\_bigelow@byu.edu

### Viola Club of MD/DC & VA

Louise Hildreth-Grasso, president  
violaqueenlouise@hotmail.com

### Virginia Viola Society

Johanna Beaver, president

### Seattle Viola Society

LeeAnn Morgan, president  
violas\_rule@msn.com

## Minnesota

The Minnesota Viola Society is now in the business of enlightening young violinists to the sheer joy of the viola. In a concerted effort to help increase the size of viola sections in the two major youth orchestras in the Twin Cities, The Minnesota Youth Symphony and The Greater Twin Cities Youth Symphonies, the MVS has sponsored a viola day for each organization. Members of the viola society bring violas of all sizes to a youth symphony rehearsal and put them in the hands of violinists who might like to try life on the dark side. We create a nurturing environment while extolling the benefits of viola playing and are able to get students to make a decent sound using pieces they all know including such things as Suzuki Book 1. We also introduce the alto clef at these events. We already have several documented escapes from the “ego string” and hope for more in the future.

Respectfully submitted,

—J. David Arnott

## New York

### Activities During Spring 2006

On March 19th, the New York Viola Society presented a recital by Jennifer Stumm, first prize winner of the AVS's 2005 William Primrose Competition. With pianist Elizabeth Pridgen, Ms. Stumm offered us Schumann's Fantasy Pieces, Op. 73, the Rebecca Clarke Sonata and Hindemith's Sonata Op. 11, No. 4, as well as four songs by Fauré in Ms. Stumm's own arrangements. Ms. Stumm also played the fifth solo Fantasie

(originally for violin) by Telemann. The performances of both major works on the program, standards of the viola recital literature, were fresh, clear and inspired, and focused the audience's attention on the composers' highly expressive writing. Each reflected a profound understanding of the structure, lines and nuances of the music. In the Fauré songs and Schumann, the warmest of lyricism was always evident, and Ms. Stumm's playing swept us into the distinctive, highly emotional, worlds of these com-

posers. The Telemann was a delight, suggesting these works be programmed more frequently.

Our final event, the third Collegial Concert of our 2005-2006 season, took place on May 8th. Presented on this occasion were: David Lau (winner of our Harold Coletta Memorial Scholarship) playing the Vieuxtemps Capriccio; Olivia Koppell and flutist Diva Goodfriend-Koven performing Otto Leuning's Duo; Carmela Federman in movements from Brahms' F-



(l-r) bowmaker and NYVS vice-president William (Bill) Salchow, Jennifer Stumm, and viola maker Andrea Hoffman-Simmel.



(l-r) NYVS Vice President Ann Roggen, composer Atli Heimir Sveinsson and NYVS Treasurer Rebecca Osborn

minor Sonata with pianist Yi-Fang Huang; Rebecca Osborn and Dean LeBlanc, clarinet, playing Rebecca Clarke's Prelude, Allegro and Pastorale; Jun Huang and pianist Elizabeth Pridgen with two of Schumann's Fantasy Pieces, Op. 73; Rebecca Clarke's Morpheus performed by Carrie Dreyer with pianist Soyeon Kim; and Mark Holloway in an exceptional rendition of the Parable XVI for solo viola by Vincent Persichetti. Two newer works were also on the program: a beautiful sonata by local composer Alexander Dmitriev, performed by Sander Strenger with Alla Borzova at the piano; and the New York premier of the solo Sonata for Viola by Icelandic composer Atli Heimir Sveinsson (who attended the concert) performed by Junah Chung.

NYVS is pleased to announce the recipients of Rosemary Glyde Scholarships for 2006: Daniel Lay from Ridgewood, New Jersey, a student of Alexander Rees at the JCC Thurnauer School of Music in Tenafly, New Jersey; Isabel Hagen from New York City, a student of Kenji Bunch at The Juilliard School Pre-College Division; and Hari Bernstein, also from New York City, a private student of Kenneth Mirkin, now at The Juilliard School. In addition, this year we offered our first Harold Coletta Memorial Scholarship, a special award intended for more advanced players. This was given to David Lau, who recently finished his undergraduate studies at The Juilliard School under the tutelage of Heidi Castleman and Hsin-Yun Huang. We congratulate them, and wish them success in their musical and other endeavors. We also congratulate their teachers,

who have done such excellent work in preparing these wonderful, talented young people.

For more information about these and our other activities, visit the New York Viola Society's website: [www.nyvs.org](http://www.nyvs.org).

— *Kenneth Johnson*

## Oklahoma

The Oklahoma Viola Society is planning for their fourth Viola Day at Oklahoma Christian University in Edmond, Oklahoma on Sunday, January 28, 2007. Our featured guest will be Roger Chase, who will present a master class and give a recital with pianist Michiko Otaki. A play-in (including new works by our members and area composers), a Feldenkreis class, and an instrument-making demonstration are planned. If you are in the area, please join us!

— *Matthew Dane*

## Southern California

New officers:

Jennie Hansen, President  
Andrew Duckles, Vice-President (President-Elect)  
Mercedes Shamlo, Secretary  
Jamie Griffis, Treasurer

The recently re-organized SCVS chapter, under the enthusiastic direction of studio and performing artist Jennie Hansen, has launched its Fall 2006 lineup of events for area violists. Events occur roughly once a month and include a viola chamber music reading party, a collegial concert, a lecture on a submitted topic, and board meetings where upcoming events are discussed and organized. The newly revamped website- [www.southern-californiaviolasociety.com](http://www.southern-californiaviolasociety.com) - includes

the new SCVS Mission Statement as well as information about upcoming events. All violists in the Southern California area - mid-state, LA area, down to the border - are welcome to join or rejoin the newly energized SCVS.

— *Daryl Silberman*

The Southern California chapter of the American Viola Society proudly opened its 2006-2007 series of events on Oct. 1, 2006 with "Viva Viola!" at the home of Karie Prescott of Eagle Rock, CA. An estimated thirty professional, amateur, and student violists from several counties brought their instruments to read music for violas, socialize and make new friends. Groups ranged from 2 to 12 violas, with three or four ensembles playing simultaneously in different areas of the house. Pieces played included works by Ken Martinson, Benjamin Dale, Francisco Fleta Polo, York Bowen, as well as many arrangements. The evening was highlighted by a visit from famed violist and teacher, Donald McInnes. The SCVS looks forward to a season of viola-oriented fun and educational activities.

— *Nancy Roth*

## Utah

On October 17th, Dr. Ulrich Drüner came to Brigham Young University to give a lecture about his remarkable music collection. Drüner resides in Germany and is a member of the Stuttgart Opera. He is best known for his antiquarian business and has accumulated over three thousand first editions of viola music from the 18th and 19th century. Through his research and preservation of early viola music, he has probably doubled

the viola repertoire! He has championed this genre of viola music by seeking modern publishers to reprint the best works. Drüner and Claudine Bigelow performed some gems from his collection including two viola duos by Bruni and Rolla. With Aaron Ashton on violin and Rachel Harlos on cello added to the group, they also performed a quartet for violin, two violas and cello by Carl Stamitz. Bigelow's favorite piece on the performance roster was a curiosity by Johann Amon. Originally scored for viola obbligato, violin, viola and cello, it resembles a viola concerto for reduced orchestra in the Classical style. Fans of the Stamitz Concerto would really like the work.

Drüner showed slides of some of the treasures in his collection, including autographed music by Stamitz, a letter in Berlioz's hand regarding "Harold in Italy," and the first printed edition of Mozart's Concertante. This piece in particular took him over thirty years to acquire. Drüner also presented the Primrose International Viola Archive with a beautiful gift: an 18th century portrait of Allesandro Rolla!

The Utah Viola Society will host Kory Konkol On November 30th for the annual Primrose Memorial Concert and master class. Konkol is a professor of viola at the University of Minnesota. He also frequently performs with the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra and the Minnesota Orchestra. Konkol will be performing Weavers, a new work with tape, as well the Juon Sonata and some Primrose transcriptions. He will also be mentoring the next generation by collaborating with BYU students in a performance of the Bach Chaconne arranged for four violas, and Turina's Scène Andalouse.

— Claudine Bigelow

## Virginia

The Virginia Viola Society has recently elected new officers:

President: Johanna Beaver  
President Elect: Sarah Rude  
Secretary: Glenn Hecker  
Treasurer: Carsten Clark

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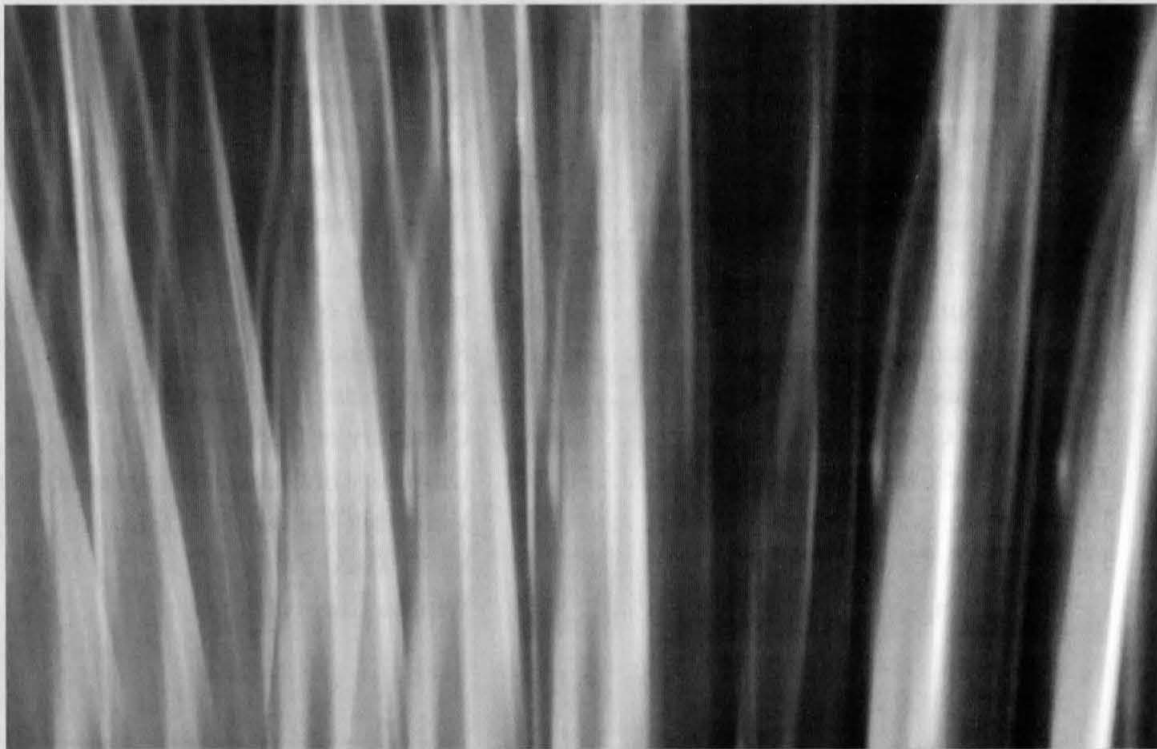
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Photograph of chimes by Ari Young, Shiffman Design.

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☐ From time to time, the AVS makes its mailing list available for other viola/music-related mailings. If you do not wish to receive these mailings, check this box.

## National Teacher Directory Information (teachers, please complete the following)

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