

# Newsletter

# Vancouver Cello Club



OCTOBER 1995

Editor: Judith Fraser

President: Ian Hampton 939 Ioco Road, Port Moody, V3H 2W9  
 Secretary: Ernest Collins 1407 Haywood Ave., West Vancouver, V7T 1V5  
 Treasurer: Judith Fraser 210 - 235 Keith Road, West Vancouver, V7T 1L5  
 Past President: Audrey Piggott  
 Executive: Kristl Armstrong, Lee Duckles, Heather Hay, Rebecca Wenham, Jean Ireland  
 American Cello Council Delegate: Judith Fraser

### MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FOR 1995-96

Membership subscriptions are now due, please send to:

Judith Fraser, Treasurer  
 210 - 235 Keith Rd.  
 West Vancouver, BC V7T 1L5

Please enroll me as a member of the Vancouver Cello Club:

NAME: \_\_\_\_\_

PHONE: \_\_\_\_\_

ADDRESS: \_\_\_\_\_

Contributing Membership (over \$25.00)	
Sustaining Membership.....	\$ 25.00
Family or Individual Membership.....	\$ 20.00
Student.....	\$ 15.00
Out-of-Town Membership.....	\$ 10.00
Donation to Scholarship Fund.....	\$ _____
Donation to Performance fund.....	\$ _____
Donation for General Purposes.....	\$ _____

Please note increased fees for family, adult individual, and student membership

The Vancouver Cello Club announces the death of *Hans Siegrist*, August 19th, 1995. Hans was a former member of the Montreal, Victoria (Principal) and Vancouver Symphonies. A funeral service was held August 23rd at St. Andrew's-Wesley Church. Music was performed by a cello quartet (Lee Duckles, Christopher Catchpole, Natasha Boyko and Eugene Osadchy) and a string quartet with a cello solo and tribute by *John Friesen*, a former student. Hans will be fondly remembered by his loving wife Marta, and many friends in church and music circles.

### VANCOUVER CELLO CLUB

#### Minutes of the 23rd Annual General Meeting

Held on 12th June, 1995 at the Vancouver Academy of Music

Present: Ian Hampton, President Kristl Armstrong  
 Judith Fraser, Treasurer Jean Ireland  
 Ernest Collins, Secretary Michael Olsen  
 Rebecca Wenham Joel Aird  
 Lee Duckles Lindsay Burrell  
 Meran Currie-Roberts

#### Minutes

The Minutes of the 22nd Annual General Meeting were read and confirmed.

#### Reports

The Treasurer submitted the following accounts:

- General Account
- Summer Bursary Fund
- Caroline E. Riley Scholarship Fund
- Graeme Ingram Scholarship
- Young Performers' Account

(Copies of these accounts are annexed to these Minutes)

Two members received bursaries for summer study at Pacific Rim Summer Festival and Pacific Chamber Music Corp. The Graeme Ingram Scholarship was awarded to Rebecca Wenham for study at J.I.S.A. Victoria. The Caroline E. Riley Scholarship was awarded to Meran Currie-Roberts for study at Toronto.

Membership in the American Cello Council was maintained at a cost of \$293.51. The 1996 Cello Congress will be held in June in Tempe, Arizona.

Three Newsletters were published and were greatly appreciated for the wealth of important and useful information.

The Club received a number of donations, several of a very generous level. These enabled some of the above-listed activities to proceed, particularly the workshops. The Club is deeply grateful to the donors.

Membership total for this year was 50.

A highly successful "Cello Fest" was held at Banff Centre November 25 - 27 in 1994 by the joint efforts of Tom Rolston (Banff), Morag Northey (Calgary) and Judith Fraser. Three van loads of teachers, students and parents went from Vancouver. All who participated had a most instructive and enjoyable time. Much was due to the ready cooperation of all. The net cost to the Club was \$105.80.

Approval of the accounts was moved by Judith Fraser, seconded by Ian Hampton. In passing the motion unanimously, members expressed the appreciation of the Club to Judith for her devoted work as Treasurer.

#### Presentation of Awards

The President presented the following awards and congratulated the recipients:

- Caroline E. Riley Scholarship - Meran Currie-Roberts
- Graeme Ingram Scholarship - Rebecca Wenham
- Summer Bursaries - Joel Aird & Leah Zielinski.

Appreciative letters were received from former scholarship recipients Tim Bartsch and Joseph Elworthy.

#### Membership Dues

It was proposed by Judith Fraser, seconded by Michael Olsen and resolved that membership dues for Adult / Family & Student memberships be increased by \$5.00 as from 1st September 1995, resulting in a new scale of fees as follows:

- |                                  |          |                          |          |
|----------------------------------|----------|--------------------------|----------|
| • Contributing Membership - over | \$ 25.00 | • Student Membership     | \$ 15.00 |
| • Sustaining Membership          | \$ 25.00 | • Out of Town Membership | \$ 10.00 |
| • Adult / Family Membership      | \$ 20.00 |                          |          |

#### Election of Officers

On the motion of Michael Olsen, seconded by Joel Aird, the following officers were elected for the 1995/96 year:

- President ..... Ian Hampton
- Treasurer ..... Judith Fraser
- Secretary ..... Ernest Collins
- VSO Representative ..... Lee Duckles
- Teacher Representative ..... Heather Hay
- Student Representative ..... Rebecca Wenham
- At Large ..... Kristl Armstrong; Jean Ireland

(Audrey Piggott was designated "Past President Emeritus" at the 1990 Annual General Meeting.)

#### Program for 1995 / 96

Possibilities for the 95/96 season were discussed. They included:

- Recital by former scholarship winner Sophie Willer;
- Workshops by Bob Bardston or Marcus Stocker;
- Meeting with Yo Yo Ma or other solo cellists playing with the VSO;
- Scholarship fundraising event honouring Past President Emeritus Audrey Piggott;
- Casino night to raise funds for a workshop - Jean Ireland, Lindsay Burrell and Judith Fraser will investigate this.
- Contract with "Internet Cello Society" - Lindsay Burrell will report on this possibility.

#### Adjournment

8:55 p.m.



#### Orchestra Workshop with Clyde Mitchell

October 28/95

1 pm - 5:30 pm (arrive 15 min. early to set up / obtain music)

St. Andrew's-Wesley Church Gym

1012 Nelson St. (Enter basement through the lane for parking)

\$20.00 for WCAMS; \$25.00 non-members;

\$15.00 for OAP/student -

Irene Percival: 299-5430

Brahms Symphony No.3, Shostakovitch Festive Overture and modern Canadian work

#### Vancouver Cello Club Adult (any level) Play-In

"Play the Cello at the Waterfront"

October 30/95

7:30 pm to ?

2999 Pt. Grey Road (Home of Howard Airey)

Bring a stand: RSVP to 926-2648

We would like this to become a monthly activity at Howard's home (he has lots of space, enthusiasm and a piano!), for cellists of any age, any stage, to play cello ensemble music. Wine and cheese provided for this first launching.

Judy is also in the process of organizing a visit to Kamloops for a weekend of cello playing for approximately 6 female adults at any age, at any stage, to liaise with *Kathleen Hogen*, a wonderful cellist and teacher, and her six female adult students (whom I have heard when adjudicating the Academy of Performing Arts Festival 1995 last June). The Vancouver contingent will be billeted. An exchange visit is also planned. If you are interested, tell Judy at the Adult Jamboree on October 30 - you do not have to wear costumes or bob for apples!!

#### "Minus one part" CDs

Sony Corporation has begun promoting a series of CDs which feature chamber music with one missing part. The piece is first played by the full ensemble, and then repeated with your selected part removed. Each CD package includes sheet music for your part, an "A" tuning reference, and a metronome click track to help time your entrances. String quartets of Haydn, Mozart, and Beethoven are available. For information, call 1-800-374-MUSIC, ext. 2075

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England

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June 22, 1995

Dear Colleague:

I am happy to tell you that the 5th American Cello Congress will be held on May 29 - June 2, 1996 in Tempe, Arizona, at Arizona State University in cooperation with the American Cello Council, Taki Atsumi, Chairman.


We are planning a day which will consist of varied programs presented by dues-paying Club Members of the American Cello Council. Just to refresh your memory, enclosed is a copy of our Cello Club Day at the 1st World Congress.

There will be an American Cello Council meeting in Tempe during the Congress.

Enclosed is a dues notice and we appreciate receiving your check.

Here's to a wonderful summer.

Very sincerely yours,

  
 Esther Prince  
 Executive Director

Honorary President  
 Mstislav Rostropovich

President  
 Takayuki Atsumi

Executive Director/  
 Treasurer

Esther Prince

Secretary

Ronald Cozzani, M.D.

Legal Counsel

Frank Chappet

Consultant

George Moquin

Cello Organizations

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Oregon Cello Society

Pennsylvania Cello Society

Seattle Violoncello Society

Vancouver Cello Club, Inc.

Violoncello Society, Inc.

**ODDS AND ENDS** from Kentucky Cello Club Newsletter (April 1995)

**ODDS AND ENDS**

Did you know... Mendelssohn wrote a cello concerto for the legendary cellist, Piatti? When the composer was finished, he dedicated it to Piatti and sent it to him. But it never reached its destination. It was lost in the mail!

...Beethoven offered to compose a cello concerto for another famous cellist, Romberg. But Romberg told him that he would never study it and that he never played anything but his own compositions. So no Beethoven Cello Concerto was written.

• **Cello Festival in Kronberg**

If you are traveling to Germany this fall, you may want to take in the Kronberg Cello Festival, organized by Mart Casals-Istomin and Mstislav Rostropovich. The festival spans the period Oct. 19-22, 1995. Tickets are available for one day or for the entire festival. There will be a luthiers exhibition, special sessions on Feuermann and duPré, master classes, and concerts by several international soloists. The festival office is the Academy of Chamber Music, Königsteinerstrasse 5, D-61476, Kronberg.

• **CELLO ON THE INTERNET**

The "Internet Cello Society" has been organized by John Michel, who is Assistant Professor of Cello at Central Washington University. Membership is free. To join, simply send an e-mail message to: [CelloTalk@aol.com](mailto:CelloTalk@aol.com) and type "new member" in the subject field. [Of course, you need a computer, a modem, and a way to browse the World Wide Web. If you have one of these, you can still converse with John Michel by writing to him at Central Washington University, Ellensburg, WA 98926.] The Internet Cello Society offers, among other things, international communications between cellists, an archive of cello society newsletters, music bibliographies, articles, and other reference materials, forums for young cellists, professionals, teacher, etc., and the quick transfer of information in the form of text, graphics, movies, or sound recordings. The Internet Cello Society is housed on the World Wide Web at:

[http:// tahoma.cwu.edu:2000/~michelj](http://tahoma.cwu.edu:2000/~michelj)



**THE INTERNET CELLO SOCIETY** (A News Release for Cello Society Publications)

reprinted from Cello News Summer 1995  
 - Editor: Carey Cheney.

**MISSION**

The Internet Cello Society is a virtual community that seeks to share the richness and knowledge of music with cellists and music enthusiasts from around the globe. ICS members are presently from across North America as well as from England, Germany, Italy, Singapore, Austria, Portugal, Sweden New Zealand and Israel. The Internet Cello Society is housed on a World Wide Web site which allows for the quick transfer of information in the form of text, graphics, movies and sounds to anywhere in the world.

**SERVICES**

The Internet Cello Society offers a variety of on-line services for cellists:

- A Cello Introduction; an interactive multimedia presentation
- Tutti Celli: an electronic monthly newsletter
- Library archives provide instant access to cello society newsletters, articles, music bibliographies, and reference materials
- Young Cellists, Professional Performers, Teachers, Cellist-By-Night Forums
- Membership register (optional) that can be searched by name, city, country, teacher & other criteria
- Classified and advertisements
- Links to other Internet music resources

**MEMBERSHIP**

Join the Internet Cello society! Membership is absolutely free. Simply send an e-mail message to [celloTalk@aol.com](mailto:celloTalk@aol.com) and type "new member" in the subject field.

**GETTING STARTED**

All you need is a computer, modem, and a World Wide Web browser like Mosaic, Netscape, MacWeb, or Lynx application, simply open the URL address of the Internet Cello Society WWW site: <http://tahoma.cwu.edu:2000/~michelj>

For further inquiry send e-mail to [CelloTalk@aol.com](mailto:CelloTalk@aol.com) or write to the Internet Cello Society/John Michel, director / Music Dept. / Central Washington University / Ellensburg, WA 98926-7458 or call at (509) 963-2116

## CELLO CHIT-CHAT

Charlene Wilson's new publication called "Key Papers", a companion theory and musical guide for young Suzuki cellists is now available direct from her. "I would be happy to sell and ship copies, and would include an answer key for all Worksheet and Quiz pages for each order of ten books from teachers. I am charging \$10.00 per copy and using the proceeds for scholarships." Her address is Charlene Wilson, Columbia Cello Studio, 11140 SW. Garrett, Tualatin, OR 97062, tel (503) 691-1196.

Congratulations to *Elliott and Carey Cheney* on the birth of their first child, son Elliott Livingston Cheney (Liv) on July 3, 1995. Liv has already been to his first Suzuki Institute at Stevens Point, WI when he was 5/6 weeks old!

*Shauna Rolston* will be going to Knoxville, TN to play the Saint Sæns Concerto (A minor) and Dvorak's "Quiet Woods" in January 1996. Carey will be playing these solos with the Knoxville Orchestra at "run-out" concerts after Shauna leaves. She is busy organizing a master class, which will be great, as we here in Vancouver already know!

Congratulations to the St. John String Quartet (cellist *Sonja Adams*) on the release of their 2nd CD and the announcement of the quartet's Asian tour.

Our past student representative, *Michael Olsen* is the new principal cellist of the Kamloops Symphony. Address: 606 York Avenue, Kamloops, BC V2B 1A5 (604) 554-6977.

While in London getting my cello overhauled this summer, I picked up a form for a cello club in London, England. Director: William Bruce, 12 Pierrepont Road, London W3 9JH Tel/Fax (081) 248-9067. It's a non-profit organization of young cellists. The Vancouver Cello Club and the Vancouver Academy of Music have tentatively booked the Koerner Recital Hall Feb. 16 - 18, 1996 for workshops (Intermediate, Senior & Adult) and a recital with *Robert Bardston*. Also a noon hour recital with *Heather Hay* at the Vancouver Art Gallery Feb. 16, 1996. T. B. C.

**Steven Isserlis**, cellist with Rena Sharon, pianist  
Q.E. Playhouse  
December 10, 1995  
8:00 pm  
Vancouver Recital Society (604) 736-6034



## BUY &amp; SELL

For Sale:	4/4 cello case Annelies Reeves	(604) 736-6926
For Sale:	4/4 Roth Cello (1948) and 2 bows & hardcase - Albert McLean	(604) 430-2742
For Sale:	4/4 cello bag; bow (4/4) \$1,500 Frechtner: \$2,000 - Christopher Catchpole	(604) 980-1058
To Buy:	4/4 cello up to \$4,500.00 Dave Watt	(403) 220-9860
For Sale:	Joseph Hill circa 1748 (4/4) excellent tone - Jack Downs	(604) 980-5341
For Sale:	4/4 German 1758 small model Wernler - Cheung	(604) 264-9266

## RECORDINGS

Reprinted from: Cello City Ink Spring/Summer '95

Music and recordings of non-traditional cello are hard to find. This ongoing column is for listing CD's, tapes, and sheet music which are currently available. Send us information on your recordings, and we'll include it~ Addresses are given for smaller independent record companies and publishers. The cellist is listed first, then format, title, and year. Leaders and groups are listed in bold. Where possible, a general label of the musical style is given. Most recordings listed as CD's are also available on cassette.

**David Darling\***

-CD *Exile* -1994 **Sidsel Endresen** - Sidsel Endresen-voice, D.D.-cello, Django Bates-piano & tenor horn, Nils P. Molvaer-trpt, Jon Christensen-dr, Jens B. Wesseltoft - kybds.ECM 1524 (see review, p.2)-CD *Eight String Religion* -1993-D.D.-acoustic cello, 4 & 8 string electric cello, piano, voice; Mickey Houlihan-environmental sounds. Hearts of Space -CD *The Tao of Cello* -1993-D.D.-cello. The Relaxation Co. CD 597

-CD *Until the End of the World* -1991- sound track featuring D.D. and other artists (Elvis Costello, Talking Heads, Lou Reed, U2, etc.) Warner Bros. 26707-2

\*David Darling does a course in Cello Improvising in the summer at Hollyhock Farm on Quadra Island.HS11037-2

**Robert Een**

-CD *Music from the Blue Earth* -1989 -R.E.-cello, perc., guitar, Dale Edwin Newton-cello, perc., elec. Bass, synth. Blue Earth Records, 520 E. 12th St.#6B, New York, NY 10009

**David Eyges**

-CD *Here and Now* -1994 -Jeanne Lee & David Eyges- J.L.-vocals, D.E.-cello. Word of Mouth (Canada) WOMCD-1007

-CD *Lightnin' Strikes!* -1992 -D.E.-cello, w/Byard Lancaster-sax. Black and Blue (France)

**Gideon Freudmann**

-Cassette *The Waldo Variations* -G.F. -cello, guitar (cello improvisations w/guitar accomp.) CelloBop (see above)

**Nathan Gershman**

-CD -*Truth* -1959 -Eric Dolphy w/The Chico Hamilton Quartet -(chamber jazz) -sax/flute/b.clar./guit, cello, b. dr. Reissue on Rockin' Chair

-CD -*Gongs East* -1958 **Chico Hamilton Quintet** -same group as above -Discovery -DSCD-831

**Sean Grissom**

-CD *Just Cello* -1990 -All selections written, arr., performed by Grissom. ENDPIN Music Pub.E.P.M. 902-134 W. 73rd St.#3B, NY, NY 10023

-Cassette *Jambalaya Jive* -1991 -Grissom-cello w/trpt, electric bass, & drums. ENDPIN E.P.M. 913 (see above)

-Cassette *From The Street* -1986 (Cajun Cello Live) EMP 001

**Stephen Katz\***

-Cassette *First Person Singular* (original songs and instrumentals) S.K. plays cello, voice, guitar, bass, synth, percussion; others on flute & vin. -Yeron Yerown Records, PO Box 166, S.Kent, CT 06785

**Diedre Murray**

-CD *Stringology* -1995 -Diedre Murray Fred Hopkins Quartet -Black Saint

-CD(?) *Clusone Trio* -1992 -E.R.-cello, M. Moore-sax, cl., H. Bennink-dr. Rambo-disc 01 dist. B.V. Haast

-CD *Zwei Nächte in Berlin* -1994 -Reijseger, George Grawe-piano, G. Hemingway-dr. Sound Aspects SaS 049

**Martin Schutz**

-CD *Approximations* -1990 -M. Schutz & Hans Koch (avant) cello, reeds, dr, vcis, vin. Tom Cora also plays cello on 2 cuts. Intakt CD 018 -Intakt Records, PO Box 468, CH 8024 Zurich, Switzerland

**Jami Sieber**

-CD *lush mechanique* -1995 -J.S.-elec. & acous. Cello & vocals, Will Dowd-drums, Luis Peralta-perc., Kim Scanlon-vocals. Out Front Music OFM 1008 PO Box 12188, Seattle, WA 98102

**David Wells**

-CD *Snow Mountain: A Spiritual Trilogy* -1994 -music of Marga Richter -Wells & Richter play "Quanri" Tibetan Variations for cello & piano. Leonardo LE 337

**Mary Wooten**

-CD *Sojourner Truth* -1991 -Soldier String Quartet -Laura Seton, Dave Soldier-vins, Ron Lawrence-via, M.W.-cello, M. Suchorsky-dr, + guests. Newport Classic Premier NPD 85508

**Sheet Music-**

*Liberty* -Fiddling for Cello -from *Solo Cello Encore Series* -solo & three cello accompaniment -ENDPIN (see above)

If you would be interested in reviewing a recording from the NDCA library for publication in *CELLO CITY INK* please let us know!

\*Correction: this listing appeared in the last issue, but the address for Yeron Yerown Records was incorrect.

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## New Directions Cello FESTIVAL Thursday, July 6, 8 pm ... ABOUT THE PERFORMERS

*Cello City Ink (Spring/Summer'95)*

**ROBERT EEN** has been performing his special combination of vocals and cello in most of the alternative music venues in New York for many years. His playing engagements with groups like Yoshiko Chuma and the School of Hard Knocks, Meredith Monk have taken him from North America to Europe and Asia. He has composed soundtracks for such films as 'Dreamland' and 'The Rock'. Een has won grants from the Ford Foundation, the Pew Charitable Trusts, Meet the Composer and many other foundations. He has made several recordings with the Meredith Monk Ensemble. His solo release *Music from The Blue Earth* (see Recordings, p.3) is a recording with cellist Dale Edwin Newton. Robert Een will be performing as a two person trio at the NDCF featuring his cello and voice, and a drummer.

**SEAN GRISSOM** is a Texas born, classically-trained Cajun Cellist. He is a one of a kind performer who has put in his time performing on the streets and in the subways of New York. Sean is also an international performer, having played in Japan, Canada, and throughout Europe and the US. On his stripped-down electric cello he plays a hot jazzy blend of Country, Swing, and Cajun sounds. He has produced and released three recordings: *From the Street* and *Just Cello* feature Sean solo, while *Jambalaya Jive* showcases his hard driving Cajun band. He has published a book of cello duets 'What! For Cello?' as well as a 'Solo Cello Encore Series'.

**ERIC LONGSWORTH** comes to the NDCF from Montreal where he has been active in the music scene since the late 80s. He has played solo acoustic and electric cello as well as with guitarists, dancers, and the groups Contrevent and Icarus. He has played in various festivals in Canada and France, and written compositions for film and video. Longworth studied at Northwestern and Indiana Universities. His recordings include two with Icarus, one with Contrevent, and a solo recording entitled *Flying Towards Atlantis*. Eric will be performing his jazz-inspired grooves peppered with improvisation solo on electric cello for this year's NDCF.

**DAWN BUCKHOLZ** is a cellist, vocalist, and composer based in New York City. She is on the faculty of NYU in the Village. She has collaborated for many years with percussionist Tom McGrath in a duo they call 'CELLOVISION!' Buckholz is currently playing cello with the Soldier String Quartet which performs extensively throughout the U.S. and Europe. At the NDCF she will be performing with 'CELLOVISION!'

**JEFFREY KRIEGER** is among the new generation of solo recitalists who have incorporated technology into traditional performance practice. Using a T.F. Marrett electric cello, Krieger interacts with computer and video. He was a recipient of a 1993 Solo Recitalist fellowship from the National Endowment for the Arts, and recently received a New England Foundation for the Arts Artist/New Forms Award. Mr. Krieger has performed in locations ranging from elementary schools to universities and museums. He has premiered over 40 works for electronic cello with funding from the Canada Council, Minnesota Composers forum, the Rockefeller Foundation, the Andy Warhol Foundation, among others. Jeffrey Krieger will perform works for solo electric cello and computer at the NDCF as well as give a workshop. (See workshops, p.6)

**CHRIS WHITE** has been playing jazz and improvised cello since the late 70s. He lived in Spain for three years in the early 80s where he played with flamenco, jazz, and singer-songwriters performing in Spain, France and Morocco. Chris studied cello at Ithaca College and he has published articles on the history of jazz cello in *STRINGS* and *down beat*. He has also written a book and tape method for jazz cello. *Chris performed with his jazz quartet at The First World Cello Congress and The Quinzaine de Montreal, and Two Sides of Chris White on his Cello Works Recordings label.* Chris will be performing at the NDCF with his jazz quartet which features Christopher Woitach on guitar, Dave Jacobs on bass, and Al Hartland on drums.

### *Oh, My Aching Back!*

Victor Sazer - Chamber Music Coordinator - California ASTA

Reprinted from "Wolfnotes" (Los Angeles Violoncello Society, Inc.) February '95

#### ASTA

The California Chapter of the American String Teachers Association is launching an educational campaign to bring information about musicians' seating problems to the musical community. It plans to reach professional musicians, students, amateur musicians and music educators.

All of these groups have something in common besides their love of music. They experience a higher rate of back pain than most of the population. The severity of this pain ranges from mere feelings of vague discomfort to conditions serious enough to impair performance.

Over time, those who suffer with this problem tend to accept the pain as normal. Although there are many causes of back pain, much of it is related to *the way we sit* when we play our musical instruments.

#### **Anatomy of Sitting**

Understanding the anatomy of sitting is a vital first step to addressing back pain. Information which has only recently become available can help eliminate pain which is caused by faulty sitting. Today, as you will see, making seats more comfortable is not a difficult task.

In his book, *The Musician's Survival Manual*<sup>1</sup>, Dr. Richard Norris asks, *When is a chair not a chair?* He answers, *when it is an instrument of torture.* He then cites Dr. A.C. Mandel, who found *that the human body was not designed to sit with the hips and knees bent at a 90 degree angle.*<sup>2</sup>

Dr. Norris explains that the thigh bones can only rotate about 60 degrees in the hip sockets. Sitting upright on a flat chair with the thighs and torso forming a 90 degree angle, forces the sitting bones, which should point downward, to tilt about 30 degrees. This reverses the lumbar curve, flattens the diaphragm and collapses the chest, limiting full breathing. *Since the center of gravity is now behind the sitting bones, considerable muscular force is needed to sit upright.* Using this force repeatedly strains the muscles, causing pain.

#### **Comfortable Seats**

Have you ever noticed that most car seats and other comfortable seats are designed so that your upper body leans backward? This enlarges the angle between your thighs and your trunk and eliminates stress to your lower back.

Since most musicians must play their instruments in an upright position, their seats should likewise maintain a wide enough angle between their thighs and trunk to avoid back strain.

#### **Seat Adjustment**

This angle can be achieved by adjusting the seat to be higher in the back than in the front and by always keeping the *knees several inches below the hips.* The sitting bones then face comfortably downward and provide the same structural support for the body as when standing.

It is not necessary to adjust the seat an entire 30 degrees. Most musicians are comfortable with the back of the seat about 15 to 20 degrees higher than the front.

There are several ways to angle a seat. One popular way, is to use a firm wedge-shaped cushion which is about two-and-a-quarter inches thicker in the back than in the front. Or, spacers such as books or boards can be placed under the back legs of a chair.

#### **School Chairs**

A simple and inexpensive way to improve chairs for instrumental music students in schools is to cut 4 x 4 pieces of lumber to fit beneath the back legs of students' chairs. Two holes are drilled in each piece of wood. The holes are spaced far enough apart to receive the chair's legs and deep enough to achieve the desired seat angle. School maintenance departments, wood shop teachers or parents groups are often willing to help out with such a project.

Comfortable students play better and enjoy music-making more.

#### **Height of Chair**

The height of the seat presents another challenge. As Goldilocks of fairy tale fame discovered, comfortable sitting requires a chair of the proper height. No sitting strategy will help if a chair is too high or too low. People come in different sizes, but chairs generally do not.

#### **Tall and Short**

Since standard chairs are too low for many musicians, players with longer legs are most likely to have seating difficulties.

By sitting close enough to the front edge of the chair so that their thighs do not rest on the chair, shorter musicians can find adequate support on a standard chair. Student chairs are also available for children and other small people. Musicians with longer legs and those who sit a little farther back in their chair, need a higher than standard seat.

Thicker wedged cushions or firm flat cushions placed under standard wedged ones can be used to raise the height of a chair.

#### **Increasing Awareness**

Orchestras at home and abroad are becoming more aware of seating problems. Increasingly, they are providing ergonomically improved chairs for their musicians.

#### **Los Angeles Philharmonic**

The Los Angeles Philharmonic has adapted chairs for its cello section. These chairs have forward-sloping seats and are set at different heights to accommodate the needs of each player.

#### **Future Chairs**

State-of-the-art hydraulic chairs with easily adjustable seats are now available for other professionals who sit at their work. Let us hope that such chairs will soon be designed to meet the requirements of musicians.

#### **Good Place to Start**

Tilting and adjusting the height of seats will certainly not cure all back problems. It is, however, a logical place to start. Good seating is essential for good body alignment, comfort and health. And poor seats are easily correctable.

#### **Spread the Word**

Share this information with your musical colleagues, friends and students. It can make a difference.

#### References

1. Norris, R. *The Musician's Survival Manual*. St. Louis: MBB Music, 1993
2. Mandel, A.C. *The Seated Man*. Copenhagen: Dafnia Press, 1985
3. Sazer, V. *New Directions in Cello Playing*. Los Angeles: Ofnote, 1994



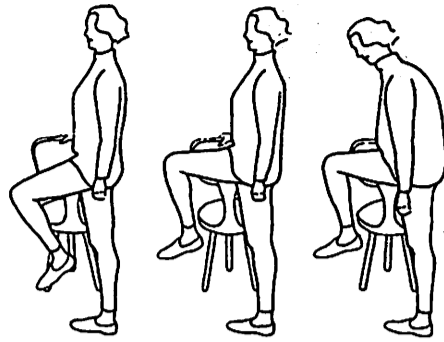
Try this demonstration to feel the difference between proper and faulty body alignment.<sup>3</sup> Breathe deeply as you perform each step.

**Step 1. Stand tall while holding the back of a chair for support.**

**Step 2. Lift your leg so that your thigh is at about a 60 degree angle to the floor.**

**Step 3. While keeping your back erect, raise your leg higher, so that your thigh is parallel to the floor.**

**Step 4. Release your trunk and let your body slouch forward.**



Drawings by Lea Lam Knight

- Observe that when your thigh is at a 60 degree angle to the floor, you feel no discomfort and can breathe freely.
- When your thigh is parallel to the floor and at a 90 degree angle to your torso, you feel your pelvis being pulled under. This strains your lower back. You are also unable to breathe deeply in this position because your lung capacity is reduced.
- Although slouching seems to relieve the strain, it shapes your spine into a letter C. This reverses your lumbar curve and weakens your skeletal alignment. When you try to breathe deeply again, you can feel that your lung capacity is also diminished in this position.

### THE CELLIST OF SARAJEVO

ICS Feature Article: September/October TUTTI CELLI Newsletter

Of all the events of this year one, in particular, stands out. Last April I was invited by the cellist Eugene Friesen to perform with him at the International Cello Festival in Manchester, England. Every two years a group of the world's greatest cellists gathers in Manchester for a week of celebration. It's not a competition or merely a string of performances, but a true celebration of the cello, with workshops, master classes, concerts, seminars, recitals, and parties all day and evening for a week. There is a tremendous feeling of fellowship and friendliness, as well as an incredibly high standard of musicianship. The Patroness of the Festival this year was the Duchess of Kent, and it was an easy, natural blending of royal formality, sophistication, and relaxed camaraderie.

Every evening the entire group of about 600 or so gathered in the Royal Conservatory Concert Hall for the major concert of the day. We sat in the same seats every night, so that by the end of the week you knew all your neighbours and it felt like the lodge at a scout camp. My seat was on the aisle not 20 feet from centre stage, so I had a perfect, unobstructed view of all the proceedings. And what proceedings! Every single note that came off that stage was the polished, burnished work of a master. One after the next, the greatest players in the world came out, took a bow, flattened us with lyricism, poetry, precision and virtuosity, and then yielded the stage for several hours, and sometimes we would break at intermission for a sumptuous buffet in the dining room -- lots of silver, champagne and tuxedos with medals and sashes. Then back to the concert hall for another hour or two. One evening the entire BBC Orchestra was onstage for 4 hours -- playing nothing but cello concertos all night! I was in a musical heaven.

The opening night concert featured un-accompanied cello only. There, on the great stage, sat a single, solitary chair. No piano, no music stand, just a chair. Each performer played only one piece, so the atmosphere was charged with concentration and focus. If ever a chair could be called a hotseat, that was it.

The moment of a lifetime followed the performance by Yo Yo Ma. He played a piece called "the Cellist of Sarajevo", written by a contemporary English composer named David Wilde. The program notes told the amazing story behind the piece:

On May 27th, 1992, a bakery in Sarajevo which happened to have a supply of flour was making bread and distributing it to the starving, war-shattered people. At 4 p.m., a long line stretched into the street. Suddenly, a shell fell directly into the middle of the line, killing 22 people outright and splattering blood and gore over the entire area.

A hundred yards away lived a 37-year-old man named Vedran Smailovic. Before the war he had been the principal cellist of the Sarajevo Opera Company -- a distinguished and civilized job, no doubt. When he saw the massacre outside his window, he was pushed beyond his capacity to endure anymore. Driven by his anguish, he decided he had to take action, and so he did the only thing he could do. He made music. Every day thereafter, at 4 p.m. precisely, Mr. Smailovic would put on his full formal concert attire, and walk out of his apartment into the midst of the battle raging around him. He would place a little camp stool in the middle of the bomb-craters, and play a concert to the abandoned street, while bombs dropped and bullets flew all around him. Day after day he made his unimaginably courageous stand for human dignity, for civilization, for compassion, and for peace. As though protected by a divine shield, he was never hurt, though his darkest hour came when, taking a little walk to stretch his legs, his cello was shelled and destroyed where he had been sitting.

The news wires picked up the story of the extraordinary man, sitting in his white tie and tails on a camp stool in the centre of a raging, hellish war zone -- playing his cello to the empty air.

The composer David Wilde was so moved by the report that he wrote the piece which Yo Yo Ma played for us that evening.

Yo Yo sat down quietly on his little stool in his white tie and tails, and began. Quietly, almost imperceptibly, the music started, creating a shadowy, empty universe pervaded by the sense of death. Slowly it built and grew into an agonized, screaming, slashing furor which gradually subsided back into a desolate death rattle -- fading seamlessly back into silence.

When he finished, he remained bent over his cello, bow still resting on the strings. No one moved -- we scarcely dared to breathe. We all felt that we had just witnessed that horrible scene ourselves. After a long period of absolute silence, Yo Yo slowly straightened in his chair, looked into the audience and raised his hand. He beckoned someone to come to the stage -- and we realized it was him -- the cellist of Sarajevo himself! He rose from his seat and headed down the aisle as Yo Yo came off the stage and headed up the aisle to meet him. With arms flung wide, they met each other in a passionate embrace right by my seat. I simply couldn't believe what was happening. At that point, everyone in the hall leaped to their feet in a chaotic emotional frenzy, clapping, weeping, shouting, embracing, cheering. It was deafening and overwhelming. And in the centre of it all stood these two men, still hugging, both were crying. Yo Yo Ma, the suave, elegant prince of classical music worldwide, flawless in appearance and performance. And Vedran Smailovic, who had just escaped from Sarajevo, dressed in a tattered and stained leather motorcycle suit with fringes on the arms. His wild long hair and huge mustache framed a face that looked 80 years old -- creased with pain and wet with so many tears. And this was the first time he had heard the piece. I stared at them, wanting to remember every single detail, so that one day I could describe it to my son, and say, "I was there"! And I thought of the audience -- all the jewels and perfume and sophistication now completely meaningless and forgotten -- all stripped down to the basics, deepest humanity. What a triumph for us all. What a triumph for dignity and compassion. Beethoven's Ninth Symphony pales next to the emotion in that hall that night. And what a triumph for the cello! Here was a room filled with people whose lives had been largely devoted to that simple and unassuming instrument. Here were bow-makers, collectors, amateurs, historians, varnishes, and of course, the great master players. All had come from all over the world to celebrate the cello together for a week. And here, on the first night, they encounter this man who shook his cello in the face of bombs, death and ruin and defied them. It became the sword of Joan of Arc. It became the mightiest weapon of them all.

It's because of experiences like this that I call music my magic carpet. A week later I was back playing for the residents of the Penobscot Nursing Home, where I've played a free concert / sing-along every month for five years or so. And I realized it's all the same. It's the privilege, the blessing, and the solemn responsibility of all of us who make music; to try to make the world a tiny bit better each time we play.

Dear Judy and everybody else involved in the Vancouver Cello Club,

I am writing to say thank you very, very much for awarding me the Caroline E. Riley Scholarship. Without this support it would be very difficult for me to attend the University of Toronto. As it is, I am really excited about studying in Toronto in September. The contacts I've had with teachers and staff there have been really friendly, and it seems like it will be a great learning environment. Once again, thanks again for the Scholarship and all the emotional support. I think the Cello Club is a wonderful organization and if there's any way of repaying the kindness that everybody has shown me, I will gladly do it, if I haven't died from over-practising!

Yours truly,  
Meran Currie-Roberts

