

Newsletter

Vancouver Cello Club



January 1990

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MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FOR 1990

Membership subscriptions are now due, please send to:

Judith Fraser, Treasurer
 17 - 1460 Esquimalt Avenue
 West Vancouver, BC V7T 1K7

Please enroll me as a member of the Vancouver Cello Club

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Sustaining Membership	\$25.00	Donation to Scholarship Fund	_____
Family or Individual Membership	\$15.00	Donation to Performance Fund	_____
Student	\$10.00	Donation for General Purposes	_____
Out-of-Town Membership	\$8.00		

The American Cello Council, Inc.

MEMORANDUM to ACC Board of Directors confirming The 4th American Cello Congress scheduled for: Wednesday, June 13th - Sunday, 17th, 1990

Raya Garbousova, Honorary President
 Mstislav Rostropovich, Artistic Director
 Taki Atsumi, Executive Director

School of Music, Arizona State University
 Tempe, Arizona, Co-Sponsor/Host Institution
 George E. Umberson, Director

Arizona Cello Society, Ltd., Co-Sponsor
 Taki Atsumi, Founder/President
 Joe v. Palmer, Representative to ACC Board

Mailing Address:
 T. Atsumi, Prof. of Music & Cello
 School of Music Ariz. State Univ.
 Tempe, Arizona 85287
 Private Phone: 602-965-3298



Founded 1982

"OBBLIGATI FOR VIOLONCELLO PICCOLO IN THE BACH CANTATAS" - by Ernest S. Collins

Most cellists are familiar with J.S. Bach's Sixth Suite, written for 5-string violoncello. The obbligati for violoncello piccolo in the Church Cantatas are, on the other hand, largely neglected - undeservedly so, Ernest thinks - especially since they are all playable on a 4-string cello.

He has therefore put together, in this monograph, some useful information on the arias containing these obbligati, on the cantatas from which they came and on the violoncello piccolo of Bach's day. Much of this information is not easily accessible elsewhere.

Some copies of this monograph are available for anyone interested. Please contact Ernest Collins, 1407 Haywood Avenue, West Vancouver, BC V7T 1V5 Canada. Ph. (604) 922-0266. (\$2.00 to cover postage, and perhaps a \$3.00 donation to Vancouver Cello Club would be appreciated.) For anyone in Ottawa, copies are deposited in the National Library of Canada.

THE CAROLINE E. RILEY SCHOLARSHIP

Mrs. Caroline E. Riley initiated this scholarship in 1975; she added further gifts in subsequent years and finally left a gift in her will.

From the start it was established as a permanent fund to which other donors have generously added.

In March 1977 the Executive Committee confirmed the decision (which had been approved by Mrs. Riley in her lifetime) that the Scholarship be awarded on the result of an audition, and that it be open to members of the Club, 17 years of age or more, seeking advanced study away from home.

In 1980, it became necessary to formalize application procedures; any application was to be made in writing by 1st May; a firm time, date and place for the audition was to be set.

Recent experience shows that it would be desirable to review the conditions of the Scholarship to ensure that it is used for the intended purpose within a reasonable time. The conditions as now reviewed read as follows:

CONDITIONS

1. The purpose of the Scholarship is to assist students leaving their home base for the first time to pursue advanced study of the cello.
2. Any paid up member of the Club aged 17 years or older may apply for the Scholarship if he or she intends, within 8 months after the application, to leave his or her home base for the first time to pursue advanced study of the cello.
3. The application shall be in writing, stating the applicant's proposal for study, and shall be sent to the Club Treasurer to be received not later than 1st May.
4. The Scholarship shall be awarded annually on the result of an audition before an adjudicator nominated by the Club. The date, time and place of the audition shall be set by the officers of the Club and applicants are responsible for making themselves available. The adjudicator's decision is final.
5. If the successful applicant's proposals for study as indicated in the application change in a material particular, the applicant is responsible for notifying the Treasurer of the Club. If the Executive Committee are of opinion that the amended proposals do not fulfill the purpose of the Scholarship, the Executive Committee may require the applicant to return the Scholarship. The Executive Committee may then, according as they see fit, award the Scholarship to the runner-up, call for a fresh audition, or make no award for that year.
6. If, within 8 months after the date of the application, the successful applicant does not proceed with the proposals for study indicated in the application he or she shall repay the amount of the Scholarship to the Club.
7. An applicant who has repaid the Scholarship under para. 5 or 6 above may apply subsequently, if otherwise eligible.
8. The Club retains the right to make no award in any year in which there are no applications, or the applicants' performances at the audition are not of sufficient merit.

The Caroline E. Riley Scholarship

Open to members about to leave their home base for the first time for further cello study. The scholarship will be awarded on audition in May 1990 at the V.A.M.

Written application must be submitted to Judith Fraser before May 1, 1990. Use form below: Applicants are responsible for acquainting themselves with the conditons of the Scholarship (available from the Treasurer).

VANCOUVER CELLO CLUB

TO: Judith Fraser, Treasurer
Vancouver Cello Club
#17 - 1460 Esquimalt Avenue, West Vancouver, BC V7T 1K7

Caroline E. Riley Scholarship

I hereby apply for this scholarship to be awarded in May 1990.

Please check I am a member in good standing of Vancouver Cello Club

or My application for membership is enclosed

I propose to leave my home base for further cello study

at _____ on _____
(approximate date)

Name _____ Phone _____

Address: _____

Postal Code _____

This Scholarship was established in memory of a student member of Vancouver Cello Club whose promising career was cut short by a tragic automobile accident.

Its purpose is to give needed financial assistance to young cellists to enable them to attend a summer music course.

The Scholarship is awarded annually by the Executive Committee on consideration of recommendations by the teachers of the respective students. The criteria are - quality of the student's work during the year, the student's capacity to profit from the course proposed and financial need. If in any year, there are more applicants than can be accommodated with the funds available, the Executive Committee shall make the award to the student or students the Committee considers most deserving.

Both the student and the recommending teacher must be paid-up members of the Club.



(l-r, top) Claude Giguere & Paula Wise, violins,

(l-r, bottom) Marie-Claude Brunet, viola, & Kristl Armstrong, cello.

BABAYAGA

A Bewitching String Quartet

By Paula Wise

What does Babayaga — a witch in a Russian folk tale — have to do with a string quartet whose repertoire consists of jazz, pop and rock music?

Three years ago, four classically-trained musicians based in Vancouver discovered a common interest in moving the string quartet in a new direction and expanding its appeal to a wider audience. The catalyst was an invitation to perform at a Players and Painters soiree - an evening of eclectic art, dance and live music. In their search for appropriate music for such an event they chanced upon Babayaga - a quartet composed by French pop singer William Sheller. Its pop-oriented rhythmic sound inspired the group to continue the search for more music along those lines. The captivating appellation stuck and Babayaga was born.

Babayaga consists of Paula Wise and Claude Giguere, violins, Marie-Claude Brunet, viola, and Kristl Armstrong, cello. Their shared passion for jazz sparked the interest of composers in that field as well as those in the pop and commercial circles. Together they have been developing a unique repertoire which transcends the boundaries of string quartet music.

As well, they have broken away visually from the traditional, classical

mold with a new, modern and vibrant image. Eliminating the formal and constraining chairs, and attired in black Spandex, Babayaga has discovered a new freedom to move and generate an upbeat and electric vitality.

Chuck Israels, a jazz musician and composer who has worked with the Kronos Quartet, describes Babayaga as "a welcome breath of enthusiasm and energy."

Babayaga's innovative approach to music has brought them into the public eye. They have travelled extensively on tours around British Columbia, as well as Washington and Alaska. Recently, after a very successful showcase at the Alberta Contact in Edmonton, new tours are in the works for Alberta and Saskatchewan for their 1990/91 season.

They have imparted their music to people of all ages and have been warmly received everywhere. John White, Director of Visual and Performing Arts in the Burnaby School District, commented on the success of Babayaga's school tours, "Their ability to bring to life the excitement of the string quartet medium and expand our vision for its potential has re-kindled an interest in many of us and has initiated an interest in those who become acquainted with the genre for the first time."

More recently, Babayaga performed at the Du Maurier International Jazz Festival in Vancouver to a full house where they received a warm and enthusiastic response. They have also been featured on CBC's *Les Belles Heures* and *Art Beat*. As well, they are in the process of organizing a CBC recording of original material composed solely for them, in the spring of 1990.

One critic described one of their performances last August at the Glass Slipper in Vancouver as "positively radiating care and attention to detail - without forsaking good, solid entertainment value."

Currently, Babayaga, with the help of a Canada Council Explorations grant, is working in close collaboration with jazz composer Phillippe Lapointe and Sound Engineer Peter Gerencher. This musical exploration has been very exciting for Babayaga and they are eager to share their new material with the public. The project culminated in two live concerts featuring their new repertoire on December 14th and 15th at the Vancouver East Cultural Centre.

ANNOUNCEMENT

Young Artist Recital

May 12 - 7:30 pm

V A M

Stephanie Finn

A GUIDE TO PRACTICING FOR CELLISTS

by Jeffrey Solow

(reprinted from the American String Teacher, Vol.38, No.3 (Summer 1988)
American String Teachers Association)

I have found, as I am sure most teachers have, that within the confines of a weekly one-hour lesson, it is usually impossible to hear everything my students have practiced (or should have practiced) since their last lesson - as well as to teach and discuss new things. This is particularly true if I want to concentrate on some particular technique or to spend most of the lesson on a piece that is being prepared for performance. It occurred to me that I could prepare a Practicing Guide that would help my students to stay on track with what they should be practicing in their own.

My basic philosophy in teaching is that the teacher should become obsolete as soon as possible. Each student must learn to be his or her own teacher as quickly as possible. I have designed my Practicing Guide with this principle in mind. It will be most useful to the student who is strongly self-motivated - who *wants* to improve.

Practicing should be a challenge. For example, it is important to practice scales because you want to learn how to play them well, not because you have been told that it is good for you to practice them. The process of figuring out how to play them correctly, efficiently, and beautifully constitutes the challenge.

Students who are having difficulty with something often tell themselves one of two things - either "I haven't practiced it enough", or "I am not talented enough". What they do not consider is the possibility that they're just not doing it right.

To teach yourself how to do something physically on the cello requires careful observation of what you are doing and what you are *feeling* (physically). A mirror is very useful for this, and a video camera, if you have access to one, is really great. I am sure all cellists know of some shifts or passages that feel comfortable and solid, and others that feel awkward and uncertain. There is always a reason for these different feelings and it usually involves balance, timing, arm or bow position, weight distribution, and the like. Becoming your own teacher means learning to analyze your playing in these situations, to discover and understand the theoretical principles involved, and to identify and clearly distinguish the sensations associated with the correct physical procedure (as well as those associated with the incorrect one!) Then you must convert your consciously controlled actions into habit. My fondness for aphorisms leads me to present two pertinent ones: "What is the best of servants or the worst of masters" (Nathaniel Emmons).

Here are some tips for successful practicing. (Of course, there are many other useful ideas and methods.)

You should have an idea of what you want to accomplish each time you sit down to practice. Ideally, you should play better and know more about playing when you have finished. Making a checklist can help to organize your goals and focus your concentration. You can make one list to remind yourself of what you want to work on during a

single practice session and another to pace yourself for longer periods of time. You can also use a checklist to keep track of all components involved in specific techniques such as shifting or changing the bow. Since it is difficult to think of more than one thing at a time, looking at a written list can help you avoid forgetting one thing while you are concentrating on another. It is very important to practice *slowly* not just *slower*. Practicing something slowly enough means that: (1) you can notice everything that is going on (hear, feel, and see) and (2) you are *sure* you are doing it right. Remember that you are trying to form habits, to program your brain and nervous system. Each time you play something wrong, you are giving yourself improper programming which must be counteracted before the correct input can take effect. Imagine how much faster you can learn something if you play it *only* right! Be especially cautious when you first reach the stage of being able to play a new piece well enough so that it is fun to play. Don't waste time by merely running through it carelessly and forming bad habits that will plague you later. Stop practicing can also be thought of as working in "slow motion". When practicing something slowly, make sure you are doing everything exactly the same as you do when you play up to tempo. (Think of watching a film of yourself shot with a high-speed camera and projected in slow motion.) Be careful that your physical position is the same (body, arm, hand, and finger) and that your balance is the same. Be sure to vibrate on the same notes. Shift at a speed in proportion to your practice tempo; playing all of the notes slowly but shifting quickly can lead to jerkiness when you eventually speed up. Short trills can also be effectively practiced in slow motion. Determine exactly how many notes will be in the trill at tempo and then practice it slowly as if the notes were all written out. You will be amazed at the relaxation and clarity that results.

Another way to practice slowly is to use vibrato as a relaxation aid. If you slowly play each note of a passage using separate bows and your most beautiful vibrato, it insures that you will be balanced and relaxed. (You can make a really beautiful vibrato only if your arm is balanced.) Then as you gradually approach the real tempo, notice how you automatically streamline your motions - taking care, of course, to maintain your feelings of balance and relaxation.

When you are having difficulty with a shift, a passage, or even a single note, see if you can find a similar example that works well and sounds good. You can use it as a positive role model for the one that does not work as well, both to assist you in your analysis (- what am I *doing* differently in this one than in that one?) and to copy experientially (can I make this one *feel* like that one?).

Consider that there really is no such thing as a difficult note; it is only getting to that note from the previous one that is difficult. With this thought in mind, for practicing purposes you could theoretically take every piece of

music and break it down into sequences of two notes - the first note to the second, the second to the third, etc. These sequences could then be consecutively mastered and reassembled to produce the entire, perfectly learned composition. While it is unlikely that anyone would actually want to earn a whole piece this way, the concept leads to a useful practicing method for melodies, for many difficult passages, and, of course, for shifts. I call this method "play-wait-move-wait-play:"

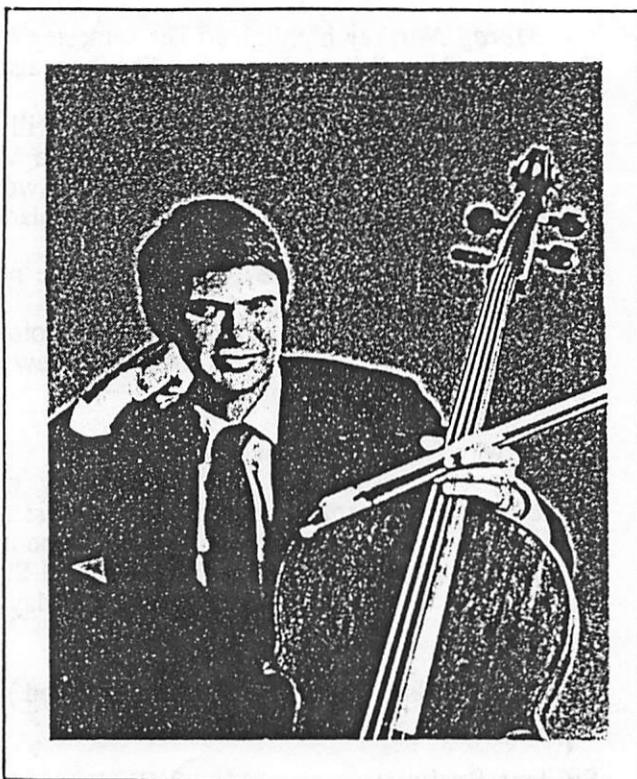
1. Play the first note.
2. Wait - don't move anything!
3. Move your left hand to the next note, whether it be a shift, a string change, or just another finger.
4. Wait *again*.
5. Play the next role.

(You can add more steps to this process if you are breaking down a complicated motion.)

When you move, make sure you go right to the next note without searching for it or correcting its pitch. Balance your weight on the new finger as it touches down, not after, and make sure the string is in the desired spot on the pad of your finger. Repeat the sequence as necessary. As you become more secure, start eliminating the silences between the notes little by little. Practicing this way clarifies and improves coordination as well as generally training your left hand to move before your right. It also seems to speed the learning process, perhaps because your brain has to concentrate on only one thing at a time.

Watch other cellists: Try to put yourself inside their skins. Ask yourself what it must feel like for them to look as they do while they are playing. Ask those whose playing you admire what they do or think about when performing or practicing. When you watch cellists who have trouble with the instrument, try to figure out what they are doing (or feeling) wrong.

I frequently remind my students that learning to play the cello is ultimately an experiential process. As with learning to ride a bicycle, no description in words is truly understood until you have experienced the actual sensation. The actions, motions, and coordinations involved are so complicated that any verbal description is necessarily a



Cellist Jeffrey Solow

simplification - and therefore somewhat misleading. Words can come close, but they are really only a guide to help you look for the right feeling.

I also suggest sometimes playing with a different bow and or even on a different cello. Try swapping instruments with a friend for a couple of hours. Unless you have had this experience, it can be hard to distinguish between having difficulty with something and having difficulty with something on a *particular cello*. No two instruments are alike. They vary not only in sound but in size, proportions, shape, and ease of response. Sometimes when I try a student's cello, I find it so hard to play or the measurements so far off that I wonder how the student can play it at all! Those players are not aware of anything wrong because they have had the experience of playing on a comfortable, correctly set up instrument.

One final thought: remember that the most important part of your body to use correctly when practicing is - *your brain*.

CELLO CHIT CHAT

Christmas always brings news of Vancouver cellists who are now far and wide across the continent. *Sonja (de Langen) Adams* is very active with teaching and the quartet in which she and husband David (violin) perform. The quartet was recently coached by the Orford Quartet, so Sonja had a chance to visit with fellow North Vancouver cellist *Desmond Hoebig*. She also gave news of *Sue (Hintz) Weiler*, currently living in Halifax where she teaches music in a French immersion elementary school.

I wish I could reprint the wonderful "Cello News" newsletter put out every two months by *Carey (Eley) Cheney* through the Dept. of Music, University of Tennessee in Knoxville. It is a fine paper and Carey and I do a bit of "raiding" frequently! Last summer Carey taught at Suzuki Institutes in New Orleans, Atlanta, Bristol (VA), Chicago and Portland (OR). She also participated in the Hans Jensen masterclasses at Northwestern University (where *Jason Duckles* is a Jensen student) in Chicago. Carey wrote they did cello ensembles as a part of the week-long masterclasses and she played the solo part in the Klengel "Hymnus" and the 1st part in the Bacchianas Brasilieras No. 1. At the final concert, Carey performed the Boccherini C Major Sonata. Carey Cheney is running for the SAA Board of Directors, so do consider an ex-Vancouverite when you vote!

John Husser writes he is full-time at Virginia Tech. and part-time at Winston-Salem studying with Lynn Peters (Thinking about graduate school). He is playing (bass) with the Roanoke (VA) Symphony. Also thinking about graduate school is John's old side-kick from Cello Club, *Sean Varah*, who will be finishing a degree at Stanford U. this year in composition and cello performance. I had a fascinating lunch with Sean and caught up on his activities. He left me with one of his compositions, "My Second First Cello Piece."

Morag Northey highlighted her semester at U of A Calgary with a performance of the Kodaly Duo with Tom (Mick) Rolston. She has also done most of the main series concerts with the Calgary Phil Orchestra.

Tsuoshi Tsutsumi and all his family will be at Banff this summer for the Masterclasses for Cello, along with *Aldo Parisot*. Auditions in Vancouver will be in February.

Sophie Willer attended the Schneider workshop in New York over Christmas and is busy preparing a recital for February at the Cleveland Institute, and will be performing Elgar in the C.I. concerto competition.

Congratulations on the formation of the new *Varga Cello Quartet* with Laszlo Varga, Thalia Moore, David Budd and Nora Pirquer.

Walter W. Naumberg International Violoncello Competition, May 4-9 1990. Applications: Walter Naumberg, Inc. 144 W. 66th St., New York, NY 10023 (212) 874-1150. Include a self-addressed, stamped envelope.

By the way from "Cello News" --

A possible substitute for those costly tungsten-wound strings made by Spirocore, if you happen to prefer them, as suggested by cellist Andy Bryenton, is a tungsten-wound gut string made by Corelli Strings. These strings cost about 30% less than the Spirocore variety and maybe obtained by contacting:

Concord Musical Supplies
P.O. Box 916, Maywood, NJ 07607
(201) 261-3871

Adult Ensemble Class: February 21 (Wed.) 8:00 p.m. V.A.M. (Rm. 22B)
Mar. 28 (Wed.) 8:00 p.m. "

Student Recitals: Mar. 2 (Fri.) 7:30 p.m. V.A.M. (Library)
April 20 (Fri.) 7:30 p.m. "
April 20 (Fri.) - juniors only "

Canadian Press

MEDICINE HAT

THE GLINT off the silver buckle nine-year-old Justin Kraft won for team roping is almost as bright as the one in his eye.

The young cowboy, born with only one normal arm, carries a quiet pride in the accomplishment and he's learning to play the cello.

"He just won't stop at anything," says his mother, Susan. "He's just a really determined kid."

Justin was born without the portion of his left arm from below the elbow, possibly the result of it having been pushed through the womb or cut off by his umbilical cord.

He was barely a year old when his father, Don, made him a lasso and had him sitting on a toy horse tossing the rope at a wooden cow in the back yard of their home in this southern Alberta community.

Now, he and younger brothers Dalton, seven, and Tyler, three, often while away the time by throwing a lasso around the head or back legs of Skiddy, a miniature cow made of metal in the family's living room.

Justin started competition at age three when he entered a gymkhana, an amateur horse-riding event. Later, he started to practise lassoing real cows on land near a Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration Pasture, which Don manages.

He grabs hold of the reins with the two hook-like pincers of his artificial arm while using his good arm to send the rope around the back legs of the cow. His father, or whoever he is team roping with, lassos the head.

"I was kind of scared the first time because I never chased a steer with a rope," Justin said.

He won the silver buckle Sept. 11 in his first team-roping competition. He was teamed up with Darwin Sluber, a rider who

One-arm cowboy a champ at age 9

roping for children, the youngster pairs off with an adult.

Justin was the first child in his Grade 1 class to learn to tie his shoes — a tricky manoeuvre with one hand.

In Grade 2, with almost straight A's, he was named best all-round student. He's so well accepted that other children usually forget he has a missing arm.

Justin plays almost every sport imaginable, including baseball.

"I would always go pitch because I would never have to catch," he said.

At the end of Grade 3, music teacher Christine Foster demonstrated the cello, violin and other instruments to children ...

ing her class the following year.

"He was just amazed," said Joanne Stickle, who was Justin's home-room teacher that year. Stickle and Foster talked it over and agreed something could be worked out so Justin could learn to play the cello.

"I've never seen him so happy except when he won his buckle," Stickle said. Instead of holding the neck of the cello with his left hand and the bow with his right, Justin reverses the procedure.

"It's just doing it differently," Foster said. "It's going to work out fine."

Susan Kraft said: "We never babied him. He did it all on his own. And I think that has made



JUSTIN KRAFT: he did it all on his own

CANADIAN PRESS