

Newsletter



JANUARY 2009

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Message From The President

Happy New Year! I hope you all survived the 'Great Snows of 2008' and are ready to dig in to the new year – (preferably, without snow shovels!).

Our main event this month is the annual Vancouver Cello Club Play-In at the Academy of Music on Sunday, January 25 at 3:30 pm - (Please note the new time). Bring a friend, bring a floor stop, bring a goodie or something to drink - music and a good time will be provided! The Play -In this year will be held in the upper lobby of the Academy.

The Cello Club is hoping to host a workshop and recital with San Francisco cellist Amos Yang on May 1 & 2, 2009. Those of you who had the pleasure meeting him

when he was last in Vancouver will remember his extraordinary talents as a teacher and performer. The Cello Club is in the process of finding an appropriate venue for his concert and classes and I expect we will confirm the times and place within a few days. In the meantime, put those dates in your calendar. Even if you just wish to audit the classes, they are always very informative sessions.

Also, check out our concert calendar for listings of local cello concerts and events. Best wishes to those attending the Banff Cellofest in February. We look forward to reading your reviews in the next Newsletter.

And finally, a reminder as we enter the season of festivals and competitions, the Cello Club has a bursary fund to assist subscribers of the newsletter with costs related to the Kiwanis Festival and the Caroline E. Riley Competition. Application for fees for accompanists, for example, can be made by teachers to the Treasurer of the Vancouver Cello Club, on behalf of the students. Students must be current subscribers of the Vancouver Cello Club Newsletter.

Best wishes for the New Year. I hope to see you at the Play -In.

Lee Duckles, President

V.C.C. Play-In at the V.A.M.

Sunday, January 25 – 3:30 to 5:30 pm

in the upstairs lobby (where we rehearsed for the "Tribute to Rostropovich" concert)

Please make every effort to attend and participate in this favourite activity of all cello clubs. Refreshments will follow.

KIRBY STRING QUARTET WORKSHOP 2008

In August I was given the opportunity to participate in the Kirby Quartet Chamber Music Workshop. The Workshop was held from August 9 to August 15, and was based at Trinity Western University in Langley. This was the fourth workshop the quartet has presented. The Quartet and the other coaches were outstanding and every one of the participants were delightful as people and musicians. The Kirby Quartet members are violinists Julia Wedman and Aisslinn Nosky, violist Max Mandel and cellist Carina Reeves.

Every day started at 9 am with a human tune-up of stretches, warm up movements and yoga poses led by cellist Carina Reeves. This was a great way to start the musical day-warmed up and ready to go. Then followed the 'Morning Class' led by members of the quartet. The focus of the class was playing chamber music and its many aspects: listening, ensemble playing, agreeing on moods, supporting one another. Other topics were cueing, breathing in the style of the piece, tempo; the response of the other players breathing with the initiator; intonation, bow stroke, etc. etc. The

Kirbies played examples for us for each chamber music playing concept they were illustrating. They walk the talk. On Tuesday the topic was being aware of the indicators for character in music, such as harmony, dynamics, tempo, texture, etc. We watched a Bugs Bunny cartoon in order to listen to the character of music and the actions of the characters. The Kirbies illustrated with the Beethoven Quartet they would later perform, how the music communicates a mood and character if you pay attention. The quartet also played parts of the Bartok Quartet #3 to give examples of the different kinds of sounds string instruments can make and how we respond to them, eg. mutes, a drone, pontecello, ricoche, glissando, pizzes, irregular bar lengths, and of course, the Bartok snap. On Thursday we created a story that would become the basis for a musical composition, keeping in mind all the tools and techniques available to musically communicate ideas. On Friday we composed the music for *The Legend and the Song of Happiness*, which we played for friends and family at Friday evening's final concert.

Every day there were two sessions of coaching for the individual chamber groups,

one in the morning and the afternoon. We had two different coaches each day. Our morning coach was violinist Julie Wedman, and pianist Kathy Bjorseth joined us in the afternoon to make suggestions for the piano part of the Dvorak *Dumky Trio*. Also, every day there was a technique class for each instrument, including piano, which focused on the particular instrument and then also prepared each section for the orchestra pieces that we were rehearsing in the afternoon orchestra session.

The final concert on Friday evening was a great opportunity to present the wonderful music we had worked on during the week, all the individual groups of trios, quartets and quintets, as well as three orchestral pieces and, our own composition. It was a great week. Everyone was so supportive, hardworking and enthusiastic. We had an opportunity to learn new music, listen to all the music the groups had prepared, and a fabulous concert by the Kirby String Quartet.

I highly recommend the Kirby Chamber Music Workshop to anyone wanting to have a week of great music making and making new friends.

Annelies Reeves

MEMBERSHIP RENEWAL FOR 2008 / 2009

Membership subscriptions are now due, please send to: Dawn Binnington, Treasurer, 5638 Wallace St., Vancouver, BC V6N 2A2

Please enrol me as a member of The Vancouver Cello Club:

Name: _____ Phone: _____

Address: _____

Contribution Membership	\$ 50.00
Sustaining Membership	\$ 35.00 – 49.00
Family or Individual Membership	\$ 25.00
Out-Of-Town Membership	\$ 20.00
Subscription to Newsletter (for non-members).....	\$ 20.00

Donation to Scholarship Fund	\$ _____
Donation to Performance Fund.....	\$ _____
Donation for General Purposes	\$ _____
Donation to Summer Bursaries.....	\$ _____

Adult Ensemble Nights At The Academy



I joined the Cello Club Adult Ensemble group after having played cello for less than one year. It seemed like a brave thing to do, but really, I've never been around such a patient, supportive group of people who happily accept-ed my "limited" participation. Playing with this group has given me an opportunity to share my passion with the cello, learn tips, make friends and of course drink a little wine after. It seems like all of those hours of practicing are worth it when you can sit down and play with others. Every time I leave from one of our nights I arrive home feeling great and looking forward to our next evening to play. Our group has had some amazing opportunities to

attend master classes with Amos Yang, Paul Marleyn and John Kadz. We also had the privilege to honor the great Mstislav Rostropovich and share the stage with Vancouver's professional cellists this past June with a tribute concert at St. Andrew's Wesley Church. We were part of a forty-six cello ensemble! I thank Judy and the all of the members of the Adult Ensemble Group who make it a warm, fun, and inspiring evening. If you have a spare Monday once a month I recommend adding these evenings to your schedule! *Leslie Ponich*

Lee Wasalenko

Annelies Reeves



CONCERTS

JAN 10	08:00 pm	Orpheum / VSO Brahms Dble – James Ehnes, Jan Vogler
JAN 21	10:00 am	VAM / Composers & Coffee – Gryphon Trio
FEB 10-13	10:00 am	VAM / Debussy Quartet (France) – Music in the Morning with Katherine Chi
FEB 14	08:00 pm	Orpheum / VYSO & VSO
FEB 15	07:30 pm	Mt. Seymour United Church / Pro Nova Ensemble
FEB 18	07:30 pm	North Shore Unitarian / Pro Nova Ensemble – Schubert Quintet for 2 Celli, Finn Manniche
FEB 22	03:00 pm	Pacific Theatre, 1440 W. 12th Ave. / Pacific Rim String Quartet
APR 1	10:00 am	VAM / Composers & Café – Mendelssohn Octet
APR 19	07:30 pm	Mt. Seymour United Church / Pro Nova Ensemble
APR 22	07:30 pm	North Shore Unitarian / Pro Nova Ensemble

Announcing...

CELLO PLAYING IS EASY!

By Tanya Lesinsky Carey

A curriculum and plan to develop artistry efficiently.

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Cell: 604-657-3443

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1732 Marona Court, Kelowna, BC V1V 2N2
(250) 717-8873

The Caroline E. Riley Scholarship

Auditions to be held in May, 2009. Application are due by April 15, 2009.

Any Canadian citizen or Landed Immigrant (17 years+) who has been a resident of British Columbia for at least two years, may apply for the Caroline E. Riley Scholarship if he or she, within eight months after the application, leaves his or her home base for the first time to pursue advanced study of the cello. The Caroline E. Riley Scholarship is payable directly to an educational institution of the applicant's choice upon receipt of official documentation confirming the applicant's enrollment in advanced cello studies.

✂

Vancouver Cello Club – Dawn Binnington, Treasurer – 5638 Wallace St., Vancouver, BC V6N 2A2

Caroline E. Riley Scholarship

Name: _____ Phone Number: _____

Address: _____ Postal Code: _____

Present Teacher: _____ Date of Enrollment: _____

University / College / Conservatory for Advanced Musical Studies: _____



- ◆ Congratulations to **CAROL TSAI**, winner of the first Annual Concerto Competition for Young Musicians (Cello 2008), sponsored by the BC 150 years Celebration grant program with the New Westminster Symphony Orchestra – conductor Jin Zhang. Carol performed the 4th movement of the Elgar Cello Concerto on November 16, 2008 at the Massey Theatre in New Westminster. She is a student of Audrey Nodwell at the VAM and is principal cello of the VYSO.
- ◆ The Vancouver Cello Club sends very best wishes and congratulations to **PAUL MARLEYN** on his marriage (December 13, 2008) to Qi Ho, in Ottawa. Paul is on the faculty of the University of Ottawa, has adjudicated the Kiwanis Festival, given recitals and masterclasses for the Vancouver Cello Club.
- ◆ Those members who have attended the Victoria Conservatory Summer Strings Academy will be sorry to hear that **DR. WALTER MONY** died in December.

- ◆ **STEVEN HONIGBERG**, a member of the National Symphony Orchestra and cellist of the Potomac String Quartet, has completed a monumental biography of **LEONARD ROSE**, his teacher and mentor. Honigberg researched for 5 years with in-depth interviews with over 50 colleagues.
- ◆ Some of us in years past, who attended the Juvenile Musicales Summer Camp at St. Michaels School in Victoria, will have experienced **HARVEY SHAPIRO**. Until I received the Violoncello Society of New York fall newsletter, I didn't know he had passed (1911–2007). Shapiro was a great teacher, committed to realizing each of his students' potential. He enjoyed his whiskey and cigars. Many times, I heard him swear at the students; however, over a summer in Victoria, I talked with him and saw the depth to which he was devoted in bringing out the best in them. He had a remarkable ear and I learned a lot about teaching each student in different ways, according to their physical and musical needs.
- ◆ **ALEX HAUKA** performed "Canticle for an Angel", Opus 104, with the composer Michael Conway Baker at the piano November 16 for Canada Music Week, organized by Dr. Carolyn R. Finlay, coordinator of Canada Music Week, North Shore BCRMTA. This branch of the BCRMTA received the first Bill Andrews Canadian Music Week Award (and cheques) presented by the Canadian Federation of Music Teachers Association.

Amsterdam's Cellobiennale

October 17 – 25, 2008

Judith Fraser, Editor

The artistic director behind the successful first and this second Cello Biennale, is cellist **Maarten Mostert**, whom I would like to have met. The opening statement in the program in English and Dutch in part reads, "The festive feeling of solidarity uniting visitors and performers alike has been a continual source of inspiration in conceiving and realizing the new festival programme." I did observe this solidarity amongst the performers, but sadly I found no place to register, nor any place to have contact with the cellists, either visitors or performers. To me, English is the international language amongst musicians and to have masterclasses and panels held in Dutch was extremely frustrating. Also, so very especially disappointing was one panel at noon on October 23rd, chaired by Anner Bijlsma, with solo cellists of the Concertgebouworkest, Harro Ruijsenaars, Godfried Hoogeveen and Gregor Horsch. It was obviously entertaining and all but two of us were laughing uproariously. However, the panel on October 24th with Colin Carr, Fred Sherry and Hans Woudenberg, was in English, with discussions on Elliott Carter (who was 100 years old on December 11th), the world premiere October 23rd (which I heard) of Vanessa Lann's "Diving Apollo" for solo cello and orchestra, and other new pieces heard on the previous evening's performance. I would have loved to have the masterclasses not back to back, but that is due to my interest as a teacher.

Now, to comment on the excellence of most of the programmes. Mornings started at 9:30 a.m. in the beautiful Grote Zaal (Big Hall) with "Bach & Breakfast" – a performance of one of Bach's unaccompanied Solo Suites. I heard Alexander Rudin in Bach Suite No. 5 – a little too much "air in the hair" and elongated cadences for my taste – and Frans Helmerson doing Suite No.

2 which received a standing ovation. The Grote Zaal is a beautiful hall in a new building of some three years, designed by a Danish architect. The walls (3 sides) look like there are Venetian blinds at different levels, some open, some closed, and behind them is a wonderful warm light. This effect is actually created by wooden boards of about 2 or 3 cm. There is a smaller hall (Barn Zaal) and in an adjacent wing is the Bimhuis, a small hall regularly used for jazz and improvisation.

On October 23rd, after the masterclass (10:15 am) and the panel (12:15 pm), was a most interesting film (1:30 pm) on "Tibor de Rachula", solo cellist of the Concertgebouworkest from 1947 – 1977, made by his daughter Barbara. As you see, no time to eat! At 3:00 pm I heard a concert entitled, "Pohádka" (fairytale) which included the Janáček piece by the same name and Rachmaninoff Sonata performed by Michael Strauss. Also on the program was Cello Sonata in C, Opus 17 by Erin Schulhoff (1891-1942) which was interesting to hear. I really liked a piece called "Les Ombres de Giverny" by a young French composer, Philippe Hersent (1948). Then at 5:00 pm!! "Take Five", Elliott Carter with Fred Sherry/Stephen Gosling. The program was wonderful with conversations filmed with Carter and Sherry. Discussions on the Stravinsky-like marked rhythm in the piano and the romantic Schoenberg cello part. Carter said, "Every note has meaning for him". I heard Figment Two, Elegy and the Sonata. Carter was 100 years old on December 11th. There was something at 6:00 pm – a fringe film, "Labyrinth of Memory" (2) and a 7:30 introduction by Thea Derks (in Dutch!) and I needed a break! So, as I had found a cellist – a friend of my solo harpist goddaughter, Ellen Versney,

and my other goddaughter, Carla Versney, I took them to dinner at the complex. The final concert of the day was at 8:30 pm!, entitled "Letter to a Cellist", including one Netherlands premiere and two world premieres. The piece, entitled "Diving Apollo", by Vanessa Lann, performed by Hans Woudenberg with the combined new music groups Asko/Schönberg (world premiere) was most interesting and very well received. The intermission was included as part of the piece. I also liked Luke Bedford's (1978) "5 Abstracts". This day's activities/concerts was typical of the whole festival including a day devoted to young cellists' interests and stimuli (Cellotape & Scotchtape).

Two concerts I would like to have heard were "A Tribute to Piatigorsky" with Godfried Hoogeveen and Nathaniel Rosen (cellists), Frank van de Laar (piano) – the program included arrangements of works by Piatigorsky, as well as Webern, Martinu, Stravinsky and Menotti (Suite for 2 cello and piano), and Jean-Guihen Queyras in the opening concert performing the cello concerto by Dutilleux in 5 movements. His recent recording of the complete Bach Unaccompanied suites has been met with rave reviews. You will remember Queyras gave a recital a few years ago for Vancouver Recital and did a masterclass sponsored by the Cello Club / Vancouver Academy of Music.

As always, there are many interesting concerts, new cellos to try, new music to hear at these cello conferences. One can audit at all of them and I recommend doing so to anyone, not just those of us in the music business. I have copied several of Anner Bijlsma's articles from the program for our newsletter. One on David Popper follows. ■

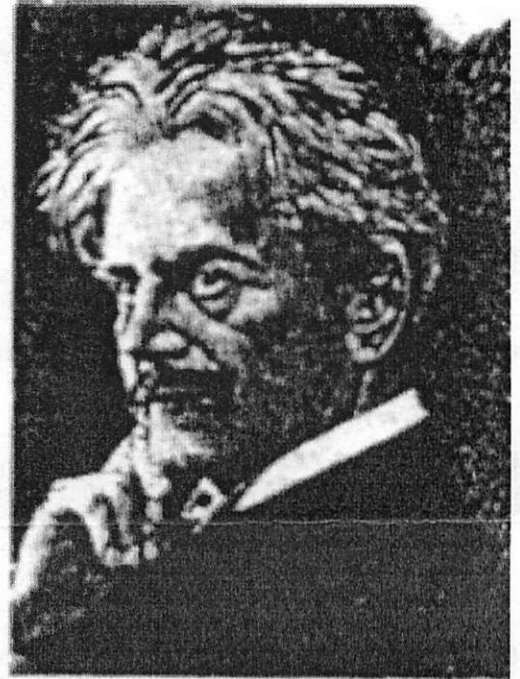
Anner Bijlsma about David Popper

In Steven De'ak's biography of Popper, Casals is quoted as saying: 'I must have played almost everything by Popper.' That's really quite something...four concertos, many, many character pieces (as they used to be called), exercises, chamber music, adaptations, et cetera. Popper wrote his studies as a teacher at the conservatory, and of course for himself, but also in his position as principal cellist of the orchestra - the newly written operas by Wagner were surely no small matter to the cellists of the day, and the studies from the 'Hohe Schule' are still played in our times by everybody - difficult modulations in all registers, very supple bow-arm technique, building up stamina - you name it...Our unsurpassable Tibor de Machula played one of them every day. Once having completed the 40, he started anew.

Yet Popper's greatest artistry in his day was something else. 'Small pieces' was his thing! David Popper was the Fritz Kreisler of the cello. Every 'trio' in a restaurant played his jewels. Every cellist of note had them in his repertoire. And not only the famous *Elfentanz*, which every unmusical person with a bit of technique can throw off. No, I am speaking here of the Spanish Dances, the Hungarian Rhapsody, the *Gavotte*, the *Harlequin*, the *Papillon* and so many others. That was in those times. Today his influence can only be noticed here and there in Debussy's sonata, or in spots in the cello parts of the works of Ravel and De Falla. Popper is not played any more - old fashioned, a little inferior, or something...

Still, as our teacher Caret van Leeuwen Boomkamp used to tell us, up until the Second World War they were part and parcel of the great enjoyment experienced in any cello recital. And our teacher described how a recital by Pablo Casals would unfold: He would start with an 'old' sonata (thought of as a precursor), Boccherini, Locatelli and the like, played with the piano against the back wall and the lid closed (and it stayed closed afterwards). Casals himself sat up front on a raised platform. Followed by the first Brahms or the third Beethoven sonata...unforgettable. Then intermission. This was followed by short pieces, sometimes not even mentioned in the programme - character pieces: *Après un reve* by Faure, *Gavotte* by Hillemacher, or pieces by Popper. Pure bliss of course. Oh, those tonal colours of the cello, the thousand various ways of starting a note, the timing, the charm, the evocation of anything beautiful and naughty...

After the war everything changed. Maybe people were not so eager for seduction and with democracy in mind, the pianist now also wanted to play with the lid open, and the critics, often composer and pianist themselves, felt that an audience should be taught a thing or two about their bad taste (it was also the time in which the first official committees appeared). Whatever the case - intermission was now followed by another difficult sonata with, in the first place, a lot of piano playing and a cellist performing as loudly as possible, trying to make himself heard. Goodbye, charm! But 'charm' is not mentioned much anymore in 'teaching curricula'. And what could one write about that on one's website?



English translation: Anner Bijlsma

Copied from the Newsletter of the Ottawa/Gatineau Cello Club

Interview With Don Whitton by Joan Harrison

I had the good fortune recently of spending an hour and a half sitting in Don Whitton's studio where he reminisced about his life as a cellist. This article will share the context of our meeting; however it will be impossible to recapture the warmth and genuineness that I experienced in our meeting and for which I am grateful.

Don Whitton, our cello club's honorary patron, is probably best known in the Ottawa-Gatineau area as the first principal cellist of the National Arts Centre Orchestra and also as a fine teacher. His cello career started long before he came to Ottawa in 1969. Don's first experience with the cello was as a little boy when he heard string instruments demonstrated by the director of the after school music program in London Ontario where he lived. (Like his older brother and his sister, he had already been playing the piano.) He favoured the violin and convinced his parents to sign him up for lessons. Fortunately, instruments were provided by the school. However, he was unfortunate in having a last name that begins with "W" and by the time the instruments were handed out to those whose names came at the end of the alphabet, the violins were already spoken for and he was given a cello. After a year in group lessons his family moved to Toronto where his parents found a cello advertised in the newspaper for \$25.00 and lessons resumed. Although this sounds like an absurdly small amount of money to pay for a cello, Don reminded me that this was during the depression and \$25.00 was nothing to scoff at. His first private teacher was Marcel Ray who was a freelancer at the time but later became a cellist in the Toronto Symphony Orchestra (TSO). Don recalled how his teacher performed regularly with his trio in the Imperial room

at the Royal York Hotel - a luxury that no longer exists for either musicians or restaurant guests.

I asked Don if he was forced to practice and if his parents had to bribe him to take lessons. He responded that his parents told him that they would pay for his lessons as long as he practiced. With the exception of one week where he didn't want to take piano lessons anymore, he does not remember a week that he didn't work on his music. Don enjoyed playing the cello but was not considering making it his profession. He explained how circumstance turned him into a professional cellist...

When Don graduated from high school he joined the army along with his fellow graduates in order to serve in WWII. He served his military service in several places in Europe including in the occupation force in Germany where he recalls feeling that he "had enough and had to get out". He was given permission to travel to Holland where a Canadian army show was looking for musicians. He didn't have a cello to practice nor had he played for many months. An instrument was found for him to audition on and after he played he was told that there was not a need for a cello at that time. He recalls being sent back to his original regiment which was scheduled to go home! But, when the Army show that had rejected him two weeks earlier showed up, he was recruited to join them and was sent to England where he performed in the Rhythm Rodeo - a western themed show with cowboys, dancing girls and singers. Although this stint with the military kept him away from home for a longer period of time, it served as the catalyst to reunite him with regular cello practice. When Don returned home to Toronto he enrolled in the University of Toronto where he

graduated with a degree in cello performance. He explained that as a performance major, he was granted a tutor for his academic subjects so he could focus on his practicing. Cornelius Ysselstyn, known by the nickname Kees, was his teacher. He also traveled to New York on numerous occasions to take lessons with Leonard Rose. (Yo Yo Ma's teacher).

Don explained to me how acquiring an orchestral position was different in his era than is experienced today. For example, the Toronto Symphony auditioned local players and chose someone who could be nurtured into vacant positions. (He regrets that this is no longer the standard.) Don was the lucky candidate and played in the Toronto Symphony Orchestra from 1950 - 1960. By the 1960's he remembers that the common practice was to *assume* that there was no one in Canada who was good enough for the job and international auditions were opened up, giving an advantage to Americans who often had better training for taking an audition. (This also coincided with some Americans looking to find refuge outside of the USA due to the Vietnam War.) Don smiled as he spoke of his stand partner, Rolly Pack. He thinks of those days as some of the most enjoyable of his career. Rolly also introduced Don to challenges outside the orchestra. Rolly was interested in baroque instruments and offered Don chances to perform with the caveat that he had to team to play the viola da gamba and the tenor recorder. Don laughed as he remembered that he was given two weeks to "master" the instruments before the performance date.

continued on Page 5

After ten years of playing in the TSO, Don quit and became a freelance cellist. He did a stint recording *Classical Gas*, a jazz record with Herbie Helbig. He also played frequently with the Lighthouse band, Canada's rock band that incorporated orchestral timbre into their signature sound, and traveled with them to perform at Carnegie Hall. He loved the excitement of the freelance lifestyle but commented that playing with rock bands was too hard on the ears. When the National Arts Centre orchestra was formed in 1969, Don auditioned. He felt that he needed the discipline of sitting in an orchestra and he anticipated continued comfortable working conditions with music director and founding conductor, Mario Bernardi. When I asked Don to elaborate on the role of a conductor he explained that a conductor must be part dictator to "get the job done" but he didn't have a problem working for that kind of personality as long as he respected their musicianship. He says he loved the early days in the orchestra which was full of young people. He and his longtime violist friend, John Mayer, were the oldest players. When they were not performing, they would go hunting and fishing together.

I asked Don to share the best advice he received from his teachers. He

remembers vividly two suggestions that he feels still apply: From his first teacher, Ray, he was told to consider the penultimate (second to last) note of a piece and hang onto it "longer than you think is possible. If it feels ridiculous it will be about right." And from Viennese violinist, Alexander Schneider for whom Don played Bach in a university master class: "In every bar, pick out the highest note and play that note the loudest and longer than you should" to achieve proper phrasing.

Don spoke of his beloved Lorenzo Guadagnini cello which he used during his tenure with the NACO. This is the instrument that Don holds so proudly in a portrait that hangs prominently in the family room he shares with his wife of 20 years, violinist Gail Halliday with whom he was united while they were both members of the NACO. Sadly, Don reported that five years ago the cello was stolen in Berlin from the cellist who had purchased it from him. Currently, Don plays on a Bernadel cello and his viola da gamba, given to him by his first stand partner in the TSO, rests in a case in his studio.

I was curious to know Don's opinions on contemporary Canadian composers and music that is currently being written for cello. He regrets not having more time to play new music but shared humorous

cartoons and music written by composer, Glen Stuart Morley who wrote *Rhapsody Abandono* for solo cello and orchestra which Don premiered with the Ottawa Symphony Orchestra. (We looked at some of Morley's unpublished works and will be considering publishing them through my company, the enterprising rabbit™ ...we'll keep you posted!)

I appreciated Don taking the time to sit with me and share some of his life stories. Don opens his heart and when he speaks of his three children, I felt the love and respect that he feels for each of them. (Regrettably, his youngest son, Phillip, suffered from Hodgkins disease, and like Don's former stand partner, Rolly, he passed away in his prime.) I felt a genuine sense of respect for this man who graciously fit me into his busy schedule of teaching and his admitted addiction to Sudoku puzzles! Ever since I moved to Ottawa 13 years ago, I have heard Don Whitton described as a warmhearted, dedicated musician with a great sense of humour. I am glad to have had the chance to spend some time getting to know this wonderful man and I encourage others to take opportunities to do the same. ■

"The Social Experiment" provided by Gay Northey

Hi There, I checked this out with Snopes and it is a true story (<http://www.snopes.com/music/artists/bell.asp>).

The music was played on a 1713 Stradivarius violin which virtuoso violinist Joshua Bell paid 3.5 million dollars for. The Washington Post, who sponsored the experiment won a Pulitzer in the feature writing category.

An interesting "EXPERIMENT" the perception of Beauty, missed by all in the rush through life – slow down and smell the fragrances. We shall only pass this way one time!!!

From The Effective Club

A man sat at a metro station in Washington DC and started to play the violin; it was a cold January morning. He played six Bach pieces for about 45 minutes. During that time, since it was rush hour, it was calculated that thousands of people went through the station, most of them on their way to work.

Three minutes went by and a middle aged man noticed there was a musician playing. He slowed his pace and stopped for a few seconds and then hurried up to meet his schedule.

A minute later, the violinist received his first dollar tip: a woman threw the money in the till and without stopping continued to walk.

A few minutes later, someone leaned against the wall to listen to him, but the man looked at his watch and started to walk again. Clearly he was late for work.

The one who paid the most attention was a 3 year old boy. His mother tagged him along, hurried but the kid stopped to look at the violinist. Finally the mother pushed hard and the child continued to walk turning his head all the time. This action was repeated by several other children. All the parents, without exception, forced them to move on.

In the 45 minutes the musician played, only 6 people stopped and stayed for a while. About 20 gave him money but continued to walk their normal pace. He collected \$32. When he finished playing and silence took over, no one noticed it. No one applauded, nor was there any recognition.

No one knew this but the violinist was Joshua Bell, one of the best musicians in the world. He played one of the most intricate pieces ever written with a violin worth 3.5 million dollars.

Two days before his playing in the subway, Joshua Bell sold out at a theater in Boston and the seats average \$100.00 each.

This is a real story. Joshua Bell playing incognito in the metro station was organized by the Washington Post as part of a social experiment about perception, taste and priorities of people. The outlines were: in a commonplace environment at an inappropriate hour: Do we perceive beauty? Do we stop to

appreciate it? Do we recognize the talent in an unexpected context?

One of the possible conclusions from this experience could be: If we do not have a moment to stop and listen to one of the best musicians in the world playing some of the best music ever written, how many other things are we missing?

News from Barcelona

I'm definitely happy to be here in Barcelona, but I'm also missing the comfort of home right now. Too many things to sort out (phone, internet, visa, registration) and not enough language to really do it easily. Actually, I've been sort of pleasantly surprised at how things that sound like Spanish sometimes come out of my mouth at the right time. Other times, no such luck.

I met my teacher, Lluís Claret, yesterday to have dinner and watch the soccer game on TV at his home. It was definitely a nice welcome to watch a Barca game along with a dozen other family and friends all yelling in Catalan. I understood nothing but had a great time! Mr. Claret is playing Brahms Double this weekend with his twin brother at the Palau de Musica. They're celebrating their 40th year of professional life. I guess they both started in the Symphony here at 17. I'm looking forward to it, and it should motivate me to get down to work. Lessons start October 1st.

My summer at Tanglewood was very good and definitely a very different experience for me, compared with the master classes and chamber music festivals I usually gravitate to. Playing in an orchestra definitely requires a very different set of skills from solo and chamber (... and also for winning the audition, I think). I definitely felt pretty incompetent for the first while... I think it's really just that you can't hear yourself in the same way. You have to know your instrument so perfectly up and down... which I think I used to... when I did my Starker exercises... so I think it was a good wake up call for me.

It was also amazing to play with top notch conductors like Levine and Haitink and Rafael Fruhbeck de Burgos. It's kind of sad, actually, the difference they make. Mostly the just tell us to do things we SHOULD be doing already, but I guess it just takes someone with the knowledge and control to say and do the right thing at the right time, and they definitely do. I think I would be really happy to play under such a great musician as a profession... unfortunately, the next step down from a great conductor is a big one, I think. Either an orchestra is inspired or not (attitudes are very contagious) and an uninspired orchestra is no fun at all.

Anyhow... that's about all the news I've got, and my time is running out on my internet.

Michael Unterman

Highest Pedigree Yields No High Bids for Cello

By Kathryn Shattuck

It was a remarkable cello, with an equally remarkable pedigree, and by all accounts it was primed to draw a record price as serious bidding began Friday morning on the Web site of Tarisio (tarisio.com), auctioneers of fine stringed instruments and bows. Sure enough, the cello, made in 1717 by Antonio Stradivari and named after Amaryllis Fleming, the half sister of Ian Fleming, quickly attracted a record bid of \$1.35 million. But then, silence.

As the minutes ticked by Jason Price, a partner in the company, refreshed the screen of his Mac PowerBook and fidgeted with his iPhone, his hopes of a higher figure — or better yet, a bidding war — slowly evaporating. Even more nerve-racking, the one bid in hand, about \$600,000 higher than the record paid for another Stradivari cello sold by Sotheby's in 1988, failed to meet the reserve price, which was kept confidential by Tarisio and the Fleming family. The cello had been valued at \$1.48 million to \$1.97 million.

"We're down in the zero-second range," Mr. Price, 32, said just before the bidding closed at 1 p.m. "We're getting closer."

At the stroke of 1 p.m., the words "bidding has ended" flashed on his screen. "Now we begin," he said, closing his Manhattan office on West 54th Street to visitors and initiating a series of phone calls he hoped would result in a postauction agreement between the bidder and the Flemings. As of Sunday afternoon, negotiations were continuing.

"I think we are in uncharted territory with our economy, and I think that puts the fear of God into a lot of people who a year ago weren't fearful," Mr. Price speculated later as he packed for an evening flight to London to return the Fleming, which had its own ticket and seat.

Made in Cremona, Italy, the instrument is one of only 60 or so Stradivari cellos in existence. It is patterned on the B-form like the Davidoff, which Jacqueline du Pré bequeathed to Yo-Yo Ma, and the Dupont, played by Mstislav Rostropovich. Ms. Fleming, who died in 1999, was the daughter of the painter Augustus John and apparently had both a passion for Bach and a reputation as a femme fatale. She bought the cello in the 1960s and used it to perform and teach. (Her students included Raphael Wallfisch.)

The Fleming's value might have increased five-fold had the cello's top and head not been replaced in the mid-18th-century by the Spanish luthier José Contreras, said Simon Morris, a director of J & A Beare, the company that would certify the cello upon its sale.

"I think it's just very unfortunate timing," said Mark Messenger, head of strings at the Royal College of Music in London, where Ms. Fleming had studied and taught, and which is to benefit from the sale. "We couldn't have foreseen that people would have been so reluctant to invest money."

Despite the failure to find a buyer, Mr. Morris called the market for antique stringed instruments "a fantastic investment."

"Nobody needs a calf in a tank of formaldehyde for £8 million, but if you think you can buy a violin by the best craftsman that ever lived, it looks pretty reasonable," he said, referring to Damien Hirst's "Golden Calf," which sold in September at Sotheby's for \$18.6 million.

For decades investors have been tempted by the creations of master Italian craftsmen like Stradivari, Giuseppe Guarneri and Nicolò Amati, instruments whose escalating value is fueled by craftsmanship that can't be replicated, and myth — was the instrument heard by Mozart or Beethoven? — scarcity and need. Until Friday, the allure only seemed to be increasing.

In 2005 Maxim Viktorov, a Russian lawyer, paid \$1.05 million for a Bergonzi violin made around 1720 and once owned by Paganini; earlier this year he paid \$3.9 million for a 1741 Guarnerius, after which he flew the violinist Pinchas Zukerman to Moscow, where the violin was played publicly for the first time in more than 70 years. More recently Ian Stoutzker, a London banker and philanthropist, is said to have consigned his own 1741 Guarnerius for a reported \$20 million to the Chicago dealer Geoffrey Fushi, of Bein & Fushi.

Tarisio was founded in 1999 by Mr. Price, who studied cello and later violin making in Cremona and Parma; Dmitry Gindin, a London-based dealer and author; and Christopher Reuning, a Boston dealer and restorer. In the eBay era, the partners hoped to take advantage of the ease and privacy of online bidding while providing the services — viewings, valuations and guarantees — of brick-and-mortar auction houses. In 2003 they were awarded the sale of the Isaac Stern estate, which grossed \$3.3 million. Last year Tarisio, which also brokers private sales, did close to \$12 million in gross sales, Mr. Price said.

After months of showcasing the Fleming's luscious tone and vibrant beauty at viewings in London, New York, Boston and Cremona, Mr. Price spent the weekend "trying to put people in touch and make things happen" on the cello's behalf, though he said there was no rush.

"I think it takes a magical relationship between an instrument and the right person," he said with a mixture of wistfulness and pragmatism. "It's like matchmaking. You can't always be sure to find your match."

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Top, the cellist Amaryllis Fleming, in an undated photograph, with the Stradivari cello. Below, Jason Price, of Tarisio auctioneers, with the cello in the firm's vault.

