

The Mandolin Journal

August 2015 • Volume XXXII #3

CMSA ★ 2015 ★ Austin: Día de las Mandolinas – October 14–18 by Joane Rylander, Host Committee Chair

The state motto of Texas is “Friendship.” The word Texas is from the Caddo Indian word *teyshas*, meaning friends. The folks with the Austin Mandolin Orchestra are looking forward to spending time with friends—old and new—as we host your CMSA 2015 convention in Austin. In fact, the city is rolling out the red carpet by declaring October 1st Austin Mandolin Orchestra Day! We’ll be playing at city hall to spread the news of the convention. We have chosen the theme Día de las Mandolinas, or Days of the Mandolins, and we invite you to join us to make these days to remember.

While some plans are still being finalized, we are excited to have many of the details well in hand, which is largely a tribute to the hard work and coordination of Lou, Sue, and Susan.

Enjoy Austin

Austin is beautiful in October with average highs around 80° and lows near 60° F. A little rain is common, but colder weather is extremely rare. Come early or stay late and enjoy the conference hotel rate. Whether you want dining, shopping, nightlife, museums, or outdoors activities, Austin has something for everyone; and October is the perfect time to visit. The Austin Mandolin Orchestra website at www.amandolinorchestra.com has suggestions for area entertainment, shopping, and dining options.

Logistics

Registration for the convention is now open on the

CMSA website. We recommend that you make your hotel reservations at the Holiday Inn Austin Midtown (6000 Middle Fiskville Rd.) soon, since they may sell out. Call the hotel at 877-834-3613 and identify that you are with the CMSA, or book your room through the CMSA website at <http://classicalmandolinsociety.org/upcoming-convention.asp> to get the special rate of \$114 per night.



Austin Bergstrom Airport is about 11 miles (or 25 minutes in traffic) to the hotel. Unfortunately, there is not a public transportation option that we can recommend for this trip (public buses are available but would require several transfers). For ground transportation from the airport, your best options are taxi, SuperShuttle, Car2Go, Lyft or Uber. If you have special needs or would like us to help you find someone to carpool with, just let us know and we will assist as best we can.

Once you get to the hotel, there are a variety of ground transportation options, including Austin MetroRail and MetroBus, a complimentary hotel shuttle within a three-mile radius of the hotel, and Car2Go (Highland Business Center or One Highland Center).

Pre-Conference Workshops

This year we will be offering concurrent mandolin and guitar pre-conference workshops. These six-hour intensive workshops will begin Tuesday evening, October 13th, and conclude on Wednesday morning.

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Back Issues of the CMSA Newsletter of last year are available for \$3.00 each. As long as copies last, our introductory issue of 1986 is \$1.00 each. We invite suggestions and written contributions to the Newsletter please email them to CMSAJournal@gmail.com.

All material (items, notes, editorials and advertising) must be submitted by the deadline stated within the Newsletter. Items not received by the deadline will appear in subsequent issues.

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Editor's Note

Hello,

It looks like a great line-up for the Austin Convention. Please note that registration is now open on the CMSA website, and see the 3rd paragraph of the cover article for information on making hotel reservations.



This is a rather long issue of the *Mandolin Journal* so we are foregoing the regular Composer's Corner and Mandolin Bridges columns, but they should return in the next issue. Speaking of the next issue, I am extending the deadline to October 25th to accommodate convention related articles. So watch for the November *Mandolin Journal* to arrive in your mailboxes in December. Please email submissions to me at CMSAJournal@gmail.com.

I hope that you enjoy reading this edition as much as I have. Thank you to everyone who contributed!

Sincerely,

Jackie Zito

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Presidents' Message

Greetings!

The summer heat brings on the convention fever, as plans for the 2015 CMSA convention coalesce. This year, Austin brings an exciting new focus with a partnership between mandolin and guitar. We have exciting performers who will bring some of the best of both as we feature Carlo Aonzo and Rene Izquierdo, and Guitarist Elina Chekan. We are also offering scholarships for students of both mandolin and guitar, as well as master classes in both instruments.

The pre-convention master classes in guitar and mandolin will be geared toward the intermediate and advanced skill level, and space is limited to the first 30 participants to give you an extraordinary opportunity for a more personalized experience. You will also have other opportunities to learn from these masters as they will be section leaders and offering workshops during the convention which will touch on the same concepts, but at a level appropriate for all levels.

Additionally, Paul Glasse, Jazz Mandolinist, par excellence, offers a unique 3-part progressive workshop in jazz mandolin technique. To get the most out of this workshop it is advised that you consider attending all three.

Another great aspect of our convention is the late night jamming and reading opportunities. After the concerts, take a look around to see all the different musical genres, which are open to all. We also encourage you to bring your favorite music to share with others—it's a wonderful time to play in impromptu ensembles with others.... just bring copies of the parts!

And for those of you who love to perform solo or with a group of others, consider signing up for the open mic. This year's session will be expanded to accommodate more people, as this is a perennial favorite. So start practicing now!

A new CMSA tote bag will be offered this year. The colorful CMSA logo is embroidered on a durable and long-lasting bag that will store all your convention supplies. These will replace the bags offered in the past, and can be purchased online when you register, or at the convention. Supplies are limited.

We are working to keep the CMSA relevant to our members and are evaluating a variety of initiatives to make sure our organization takes its place within the larger mandolin world. We are always looking for individuals who are willing to work behind the scenes on some of our projects. The general membership meeting will be held on Sunday morning, October 18, and we encourage all of you to come and learn about our plans and contribute your ideas .

SEE YOU IN AUSTIN!

Sue Lesser and Susan McLaughlin, Co-Presidents



Sue Lesser



Susan Mc Laughlin

CMSA Convention Scholarships for Students

by Lou Chouinard

CMSA will be offering scholarships for the 2015 convention in Austin.

The scholarship covers convention registration - including the Technique Master Class - for full time high school and college students, and is available for both mandolinists **and** guitarists.

Requirements include:

- Must attend the entire convention Wednesday – Sunday
- Must play in the En Masse Orchestra at rehearsals (4) and in the Saturday concert.

- Must attend sectional rehearsals (3)
- Must attend the Gala Banquet
- Attendees under 18 years of age must be accompanied by an adult.

Applications must be received before October 1. Scholarships are limited so apply early if you are interested.

For a link to the online scholarship form please go to <http://goo.gl/forms/UPa9TIhTei>

CMSA ★ 2015 ★ Austin: Día de las Mandolinas – October 14–18

(continued from page 1)

Carlo Aonzo will lead the mandolin master class. The focus will be right hand position, tone and tremolo training, scales and shifting in different positions.

The Poised Guitarist, taught by René Izquierdo, will help you fine tune your guitar playing to maximize outcome, improving your technique, sound quality, projection and long life as a performer.

Welcome Party

The first official convention function is the welcome party, which will be Wednesday night starting at 7:30 pm. The hotel has a nice patio area where we can mingle and enjoy some lively Austin music. The Austin Host Committee has some surprises in store, so we hope to see you all there.

Performers

Our evening concerts will feature performances by Italian mandolinist Carlo Aonzo, guitarist René Izquierdo, guitarist Elina Checkan, and jazz mandolinist Paul Glasse. The duo of Carlo and René has delighted audiences around the world, as has the classical guitar duo of René and Elina. “Paul Glasse, Austin’s resident mandolin ace, is one of the best in the business...his music is usually an eclectic mix of stylistic surprises,” says the Austin-American Statesman newspaper. We aren’t sure of the final configurations of these performances, but we are sure they will be something special.

As usual, we are planning an array of interesting workshops during the convention.

En Masse Orchestra

We are very happy to welcome to Austin Dr. Jim Bates as our En Masse Orchestra conductor. Jim has selected an exciting and eclectic lineup of music for the En Masse. We will perform the evocative *Impressioni Orientali* by Raffaele Calace, the masterwork *Song of the Japanese Autumn* by Yasuo Kuwahara, the rhythmic and fun *Wild at Heart* by Erik ‘t Hart, and a new piece TBD by our composer-in-residence.

Convention registrants will receive music via email once their registration process is complete. If you do not have email, we will mail the music to you.

Composer-in-Residence

Austin is excited to present Austin Mandolin Orchestra’s own founder and director, Joel Hobbs, as our Composer-in-Residence. Joel’s recent compositions include Opus Twelve, an epic collection of twenty-one new scores for mandolin including solos, duos, trios, quartets, and a four-movement work for mandolin orchestra. He has arranged

over fifty pieces from diverse genres for mandolin orchestra. The En Masse Orchestra will be premiering an exciting new piece that Joel is finishing now!

Scholarships

The CMSA offers a limited number of convention scholarships to full-time students. Scholars are responsible for their own travel, meals, and lodging costs. However, scholars may attend the pre-conference workshop and conference (including the banquet) at no charge. Scholarships will be offered for students playing mandolin, mandola, mandocello, guitar, or double bass. Applications are being accepted now, please check CMSA website and Facebook page.

Get Involved

Most importantly, we hope to see you here to share this amazing week with us. We do want to mention a few other ways you can become involved.

Donate raffle items. Bring with you or ship in advance any donations for CMSA’s fundraising raffle held during the banquet. Help us make the raffle fun and interesting by bringing a CD of your group, a mandolin-related curiosity, sheet-music, etc.

We are selling ads for the convention program and vendor tables. Please let us know if you are interested so we can take care of you.

And, as we make preparations we will be in touch with membership about helping out during the convention. If you would like to volunteer or have any questions, please let us know.

Contact Us

The best way to contact the Austin Host Committee is to email cmsa2015@amandolinorchestra.com.

We look forward to seeing you in Austin!

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Sheet Music Review:

August Watters, *Exploring Classical Mandolin*

by Robert A. Margo

Review of August Watters, *Exploring Classical Mandolin: Technique and Repertoire*, Boston MA: Berklee Press, ISBN 978-0-87639-162-4.

Judging from the traffic on the internet site www.mandolincafe.com, there are many mandolinists whose daily bread is bluegrass, old-time, jazz or other genres but who are curious about classical mandolin. Judging from the typical responses there is a considerable amount of misinformation out there in need of correction. In this ambitious 150 page book, August Watters seeks to provide an authoritative guide to non-classical players wishing to dip their toes into less familiar waters. Well-known to CMSA audiences, Watters is a professor of ear training at the Berklee School of Music in Boston – a useful perch, given that Berklee is a bastion of “roots” acoustic music and associated mandolin styles. Watters has performed in the United States and Europe as a soloist and in various ensembles, enjoys diverse contacts in the non-classical and classical mandolin worlds, and personally champions an elegant, modern bowl back instrument by the Italian luthier Carlo Mazzaccara.

Exploring Classical Mandolin is divided into three parts. Part One (“Practice Methods for Contemporary Classical Mandolin”) is subdivided into six chapters. After an introductory chapter providing an overview of classical mandolin today (chapter 1), the remainder of Part One focuses on selected core techniques (chapter 2); picking patterns and tremolo (chapter 3); scales, arpeggios, and positions (chapter 4); chord vocabulary (chapter 5); and advanced topics (classical improvisation, duo-style, and split strings, (chapter 6). Part Two provides musical examples drawn from baroque, classical, and modern composers that illustrate concepts discussed in Part One. Part Three is devoted to arrangements, mostly well-known classical pieces – for example, the Prelude to BWV1007 (transposed from the cello original) and one of Telemann’s twelve works for violin solo. Purchasers of the book are also given a code providing access to on-line videos and additional music. All music in the book is presented notation-only (no tab, in other words). Although some topics and musical examples are elementary, the book as a whole is not for beginners – it is not a method *per se*.

There is much to admire about *Exploring Classical Mandolin*. Above all it is very well written and logically organized. The author is an experienced, patient teacher, and players who start at the beginning and follow through to the end will have expanded their knowledge of classical mandolin and their skill set. The book is catholic in its tastes, a significant virtue. Although Watters’ personal preferences run towards the Italian, the introductory chapter provides a balanced, thoughtful overview of several of the different national “schools” of modern classical mandolin – Italian, German, Holland, the Far East, Israel, and the United

States.¹ Watters also rightly emphasizes that legitimate classical performance occurs on a wide variety of mandolin designs, including American carved-back mandolins – an historically accurate point of view if one that some classical players eschew.² The intended audience will find much food for thought in the central chapters of the book (chapters 2-4), as will intermediate level classical players, while even knowledgeable classical mandolinists will benefit from the chordal approach in chapter 5.

Undoubtedly the most innovative part of the book is the portion of chapter 6 devoted to split string technique. Obviously smitten with the technical and compositional possibilities, Watters provides examples and etudes that go far beyond previous uses of split strings. In my opinion this part of the work constitutes an original contribution to classical mandolin. Lastly, the music featured in Parts 2 and 3 provides something of interest for everybody, including those at an early stage through (very) advanced players.

Classical mandolin is a subject on which there are wildly divergent views about basic matters, let alone advanced. It is inevitable, therefore, that reviewers will find points on which they disagree with the author.³ The book generally adopts conventional left hand mandolin technique – that is, the physical orientation of the left hand on the fingerboard and associated left hand fingering.⁴ Arguably this makes sense given the intended core audience who (judging by posts on www.mandolincafe.com) are taught from birth that the mandolin is a plucked violin. But the mandolin is not a plucked violin, and there is much evidence that the conventional approach creates problems in amateur performance. In particular, the important work of Keith Harris challenging conventional left hand technique is not mentioned at all, as far as I can tell.⁵

Throughout Watters displays considerable reverence for classical mandolin tradition. Tradition is surely important in classical music and I applaud drawing positive attention to the 18th century methods, as Watters does repeatedly. However, I am unpersuaded there is much value in paying homage today to Golden Age methods or music.⁶ As noted earlier, the non-classical player who diligently works though the book will emerge a better musician, more aware of classical mandolin in its thousand points of light. But those who are spurred to go further will not find much of a roadmap in the bibliography.⁷ Lastly, recent composers for classical mandolin have sought to highlight the idiomatic features of the instrument.⁸ The selections by Victor Kioulaphides (the prelude to his very beautiful “Suite for Ali”) and Juan Carlos Munoz’s “L’Ami” (from his *Estampes*) illustrate this but, for my tastes, I would have preferred less in Parts 2 and 3 drawn from the violin-influenced side of the instrument (such as the settings of classical violin works or the Della Lancia “Scherzo”).⁹

Sheet Music Review:

August Watters, *Exploring Classical Mandolin*

(continued from page 6)

These points aside, *Exploring Classical Mandolin* is a major accomplishment and a valuable addition to the contemporary literature on classical mandolin. Non-classical players will derive the most from the book but classical players will benefit, too, and should add it to their libraries. Copies are readily available from http://online.berklee.edu/store/product?product_id=49646180 or from Amazon.

Postscript: August Watters will be giving a workshop at CMSA Austin based on the core chapters of his new book.

(Endnotes)

1 The Dutch example is Alex Timmerman (and his group “Het Consort”) who favor the “Ranieri” school of mandolin playing (although it is worth noting there are many Dutch mandolinists adopting the modern German style). Australia is omitted even though the classical mandolin scene down under is arguably as robust and innovative as any in the world. The former USSR and Brazil are also not mentioned.

2 Compared with the typical Italian bowl back the modern German instrument has a much larger bowl and a softer, darker sound, partially attributable to the use of flat-wound strings and the ubiquitous Wolle plectrum. Although the intention is to achieve a lute-like texture, the instrument is quite remote from an actual lute – it is difficult, in other words, to locate an actual historical precedent. The modern Israeli school favors the Kerman-style flat-back, also a recent invention lacking historical precedent. As Watters notes, Gibson carved-back instruments invented in the early twentieth century were intended from the start to be classical instruments, even if they were ultimately adopted in popular music. Carved-back instruments were used to play Munier, Calace, and so on in the United States at the same time this music was performed on bowl backs in Europe – the earliest performance of a Calace prelude in the United States that I can document occurred on a Gibson F-4 in 1921.

3 My main points of disagreement are those noted in the text. There are also some minor ones, such as on p. 24, where Watters distinguishes between “prepared” or “unprepared” right hand strokes. By “prepared” Watters means placing the plectrum on the course before stroking whereas unprepared means not to do this. I find this language imprecise. All right hand strokes on the mandolin are prepared (or rather should be) by making sure the pick is in its proper place before plucking, whether or not the pick rests on the string to be plucked. On p. 106, Watters suggests that “[w]hen you have mastered the works by Calace, Munier, Denis, and Leone you will be ready to move onto the Calace *Preludes*.” Speaking as someone who performs the *Preludes* I would say not, as the pieces require a more advanced skill set than evidenced by the musical examples included in the book.

4 The standard approach to left-hand orientation is illustrated on p. 16 (thumb behind the middle finger, more or less, poking out over the top of the fingerboard) and to fingering on p. 23 (one finger covers two frets or so-called “diatonic” fingering). In my experience,

players adopting the standard orientation also frequently use their left hand to support the neck, a bad idea on any plucked instrument. As Keith Harris argues in his book *The Mandolin Game: Practical Reflections on Some Basic Technical Matters* (www.trekel.de) and in his ongoing articles in this *Journal* standard left hand fingering on the mandolin can cause many problems ranging from the minor (choppy phrasing, intonation errors, flubbed notes) to the major (left hand injuries).

5 Ftn. 9 (p. 16) does briefly note differences in left hand orientation between the conventional approach and modern German technique but Harris’ criticisms go well this.

6 Golden Age methods are overwhelmingly influenced by techniques and approaches drawn from the violin, and it is certainly debatable whether this particular tradition has contributed positively to the long term development of classical mandolin. Similar to the classical guitar pre-Segovia the vast majority of Golden age mandolin music was decades out of date when it was first composed and little of it, in my opinion, merits modern revival (reaching a similar conclusion years ago Neil Gladd qualified by suggesting the music may still be worth studying for its bravura techniques; I am unpersuaded). To be clear Watters is not always reverent as, for example, on p. 15, which notes that the arched right hand wrist favored by Golden Age players is far less prominent today.

7 In particular, there are no references to Marga Wilden-Hüsgen’s very important book of technical studies, or the related two volumes of etudes by Gertrud Weyhofen, both essential guides to contemporary technique. It would also have been helpful, in my opinion, if Watters had included a list of suggested compositions, historical and modern, for further study and possible performance (and where to get them, for example, www.trekel.com).

8 For an extensive discussion of this point see the recent PhD dissertation by Stephen Lalor, “Ethnicities of Sound: Analytical Notes,” Sydney Conservatorium of Music, University of Sydney, 2013.

9 On p. 14 and again in his preparatory notes (p. 114) on the Valentine Abt piece, “The Brooklet,” Watters suggest that Golden Age composition drew on 18th century techniques. I personally know of no historical evidence that directly supports this. Instead, Golden Age techniques and compositions derived chiefly from violin approaches to the instrument that dominated mandolin culture at the time. This is certainly true of Abt, for whom “The Brooklet” is an entirely uncharacteristic work (as is a very similar piece by Bickford). The Della Lancia piece was written for the mandolin; however, Della Lancia’s mandolin compositions are scarcely distinguishable from solo violin music. A corollary to the point in the text is that the primary vision of classical mandolin presented in the book is playing the instrument solo or with other plucked instruments. As such, the rich, albeit spotty tradition of using the mandolin in chamber and orchestral music with non-plucked instruments is relatively neglected.

A Celebration of the Music of Jonathan Jensen

by Jim Blanchard, Baltimore Mandolin Orchestra

The multi-talented Jonathan Jensen describes himself as a musical chameleon. He is primarily a double bassist with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, but he is also widely known as a pianist for folk and ballroom dancing and as a published composer, arranger and songwriter. His orchestral arrangements have been performed by the Baltimore Symphony on international tours. In addition to playing bass with the Baltimore Symphony, he has occasionally been called upon to play keyboards, mandolin, banjo, tin whistle and percussion with them. A few years ago he wrote a Baltimore Ravens fight song called "Hail to the Ravens," and he has written all the songs for a musical about Baltimore's colorful former mayor, William Donald Schaefer. Jonathan and a BSO colleague have also performed for elementary school children in the Baltimore and Washington, DC, area, and at these presentations Jonathan delights the kids by playing the double bass, tabor pipe, psalter, ocarina, panpipes, flute, bamboo clarinet and his own "Home Depot bassoon," which he made from plastic tubing.



Jonathan Jensen

Jonathan is a long-standing member of the Baltimore Mandolin Orchestra, where he primarily plays mandola (and mandocello on occasion). He is no stranger to mandophiles. He has composed and arranged many pieces for mandolin ensemble in a remarkable array of genres. Unfortunately for our orchestra, his other (paying) gig with the Baltimore Symphony prevents him from attending most of our rehearsals and concerts. *But...* he is with us practically all the time through his music. We play a Jonathan Jensen arrangement or composition at virtually every BMO performance.

In the spring of 2014 we began to explore the possibility of doing a concert of just Jonathan Jensen pieces. We knew there were enough of Jonathan's tunes to make up a full 90-minute concert, so we presented the idea to him. He was very excited about the prospect. We decided to

do the concert in the spring of 2015 to give our orchestra members plenty of time to prepare for it, and we needed to find a date that didn't conflict with Jonathan's busy symphony schedule. Soon after we selected April 26th, the Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church invited us to perform in their 2014-2015 concert series. Our chosen date was available, which seemed like divine intervention.

The next step was to determine the program content. In addition to the orchestra, we definitely wanted the Baltimore Mandolin Quartet, of which Jonathan is also a member, to perform some of Jonathan's compositions and arrangements. The Baltimore Mandolin Orchestra also has a resident soprano, Beatrice Gilbert, for whom Jonathan has arranged a number of pieces with mandolin orchestra accompaniment. Naturally, we planned to include several of these as well. BMO members particularly like Jonathan's music, because, thanks to Jonathan's intimate familiarity with the mandolin family of instruments, he is able to cleverly weave all the voices of the orchestra into his tunes, so the second mandolins, the mandolas and the mandocellos all get a turn at the melody and countermelodies. Not all composers and arrangers do that.

Our orchestra rehearsed his pieces, adding them gradually to our concert selections during the fall and winter. Jonathan was able to attend several of our orchestra rehearsals, where he provided inspiration, guidance and helpful pointers to orchestra members. We invited some former BMO members and a couple of guest players to augment the orchestra and to participate in honoring Jonathan. When the day of the concert finally arrived, it was a beautiful spring afternoon. Over 300 people came out to hear the concert in the beautiful, acoustically live church. Kristin Turner, the BMO's music director, conducted the group.



The Baltimore Mandolin Orchestra at the Immaculate Heart of Mary Catholic Church

A Celebration of the Music of Jonathan Jensen

(continued from page 8)

Jonathan introduced the compositions and explained the story behind each one, adding a wonderful personal touch to the program. We began with a lively march called *Conrad's Cadets*. Jonathan composed this piece after attending the CMSA convention in San Diego in 2003, where the host orchestra played a march of its own. Jonathan noted that the BMO didn't have a march, so he decided to compose one. He named it after Conrad Gebelein, who founded the Baltimore Mandolin Orchestra in 1924. That first selection was followed by Handel's *Largo*, a moving piece from the opera *Xerxes* that Jonathan arranged from the original score. Not surprisingly, he gave the lead to the mandolas, because, as Jonathan said, "that's what you can do when you do the arranging!"

Next we played his brand-new *Tango de las Mandolinas*. This complex and rhythmically intricate piece may become the BMO's new signature tune. The tango was followed by a waltz called *My Smoky Mountain Home* that Jonathan wrote for his sister-in-law and her husband. They have a cabin in the mountains in North Carolina, and "My Smoky Mountain Home" will be what they will call their cabin when they retire there. Jonathan's intention was for this piece to evoke the beautiful landscape of the Smoky Mountains, and it succeeds magically.

Jonathan explained that *Come Sunday*, our next selection, is a short segment from a long suite by Duke Ellington called *Black, Brown and Beige*. Jonathan had heard a rendition of the piece played on the radio by saxophonist Johnny Hodges. He was so taken with it that he arranged it for all kinds of combinations, but finally decided that the mandolin orchestra was a perfect vehicle for this melody, which is supposed to depict the sound of a spiritual being sung in church on Sunday. (This version of *Come Sunday* was on the en masse orchestra's play list at the 2004 CMSA convention in Philadelphia.) Jonathan's arrangement of Sydney Baynes's *Destiny Waltz* was next on the program. This waltz – perhaps ironically called "Destiny" – happened to be one of the selections performed on the ill-fated maiden voyage of the Titanic in 1912.

Soprano Beatrice Gilbert ended the first set by singing two Puccini arias that Jonathan had arranged for her: *Musetta's Waltz* (from *La Bohème*) and *Un Bel Di Vedremo* (from *Madama Butterfly*.) Jonathan remarked that it was quite a challenge to take full scores by Puccini, who was such a wonderful orchestrator, and arrange them for mandolin orchestra. But, he added, "that's just the kind of puzzle I love to solve."

After the intermission, the Baltimore Mandolin Quartet opened the second set. Jonathan explained that while there are many beautiful pieces available from the repertoire for mandolin quartet, they mostly written by

and for mandolinists. The BMQ has performed many of



The Baltimore Mandolin Quartet: David Evans, Laura Norris, Jonathan Jensen, Tony Norris

these lovely pieces, but no one except mandolinists had ever heard of them! So Jonathan couldn't resist arranging some more familiar, non-mandolin pieces as well as some of his own compositions for the BMQ.

The BMQ's first selection was Jonathan's arrangement of the well-known *Quartet* from Verdi's *Rigoletto*. Jonathan explained that in this opera the four leading characters sing in this quartet, so he assigned the role of Gilda to first mandolinist David Evans. Laura Norris, playing second mandolin, was Maddalena. Jonathan's mandola was the voice of the Duke and, when he could squeeze it in, *Rigoletto*. And Tony Norris with his guitar was "the orchestra." Jonathan remarked that it is amazing what you can do with opera *without* an orchestra and singers!

After *Rigoletto*, the BMQ played two of Jonathan's original compositions for quartet. The first was his haunting *Waltz for Diane*. Jonathan originally composed this piece at the piano as a memorial for a dear friend of his who had passed away too early from cancer. He really didn't think it would be a performance piece, but after the Baltimore Mandolin Quartet was formed, he thought the piece would sound good in this combination. It's a beautiful, expressive composition, and one that has been performed as well by other mandolin ensembles. Following this, Jonathan explained that when he plays or listens to a certain kind of music long enough, he begins to compose in that style, whatever it might be. The quartet had been playing a lot of Italian dance music, so he decided he needed to write a tarantella... "to get in touch with my inner Italian," as he put it. The result was his rousing *Tarantella*. Both this *Tarantella* and *Waltz for Diane* appear on the Baltimore Mandolin Quartet's CD, "Grandmother's Ghost."

Beatrice Gilbert returned to the stage to sing Jonathan's very latest arrangement, *Écoutez les Mandolines* by

A Celebration of the Music of Jonathan Jensen

(continued from page 9)



Soprano Beatrice Gilbert and
BMO music director Kristin Turner

Vincent Scotto. Jonathan credited YouTube with his discovery of this piece. It is from a 1937 French movie that was set in Naples. The song may have been from a French movie, but it couldn't sound more Italian! We also thought that the name of this piece – "Listen to the Mandolins" – was a fitting subtheme for this concert.

This was followed by Jonathan's arrangement of Franz Lehar's *Vilia* from *The Merry Widow*. After ending on that incredible, sustained high B note, enthusiastic applause indicated a well-deserved request for an encore, which Bea obliged with Jonathan's arrangement of Ernesto De Curtis's *Torna a Sorrento*, a perennial audience favorite here in Baltimore.

The orchestra continued the concert with Jonathan's *Swimming Down the Stars*. This piece was inspired by a friend's description of looking up at a star-studded sky as she took a nighttime swim in an isolated pond. His friend imagined that she was swimming *through* the stars. Afterwards she told Jonathan that "someday, someone will write me a waltz called *Swimming Down the Stars*." Well, Jonathan admitted that he can take a hint, so he wrote this piece, and in it he tried to capture the feeling that his friend described so vividly to him. (*Swimming Down the Stars* was a great hit at Carlo Aonzo's 2010 Mandolin Workshop in New York City and, at the CMSA convention here in Baltimore in 2011, the en masse orchestra, consisting of more than 150 players, performed it as well. You can view that performance in a YouTube video at https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j_EFiC1Hc5M.)

Next on the program was *Grandmother's Ghost*, a schottische. This is one of several tunes that Jonathan initially wrote for his ballroom dance gigs. Later came mandolin orchestra and quartet arrangements. Though some dancers still enjoy doing the schottische, Jonathan said, this jaunty dance is long past its heyday dating back to the early 1900s. He could imagine his grandmother dancing to this tune. *Grandmother's Ghost* is the title track of the Baltimore Mandolin Quartet's CD.

The afternoon's closing piece was Jonathan's arrangement of a high-energy ragtime number. He explained to the audience that, when planning what the BMO, as host orchestra, ought to play at the 2011 CMSA convention, Jonathan suggested that we should present something by one of Baltimore's famous musical sons, Eubie Blake. Jonathan chose Blake's *Fizz Water*, written in 1914. It is a rag or one-step, a quick dance that was popular in the early 1900s. It was a perfect finale to this very special concert.



Jonathan acknowledges
the applause after the
concert

Jonathan is very generous in sharing his music and he is making it available to any groups who wish to play it. Contact him at jensentunes@gmail.com.

Thanks to Kristin Turner for her contribution to this article – JYB.

NAME's Mid-Atlantic States Mini-Tour: June 2015

by Mark M. Davis

The New American Mandolin Ensemble (NAME) recently completed a whirlwind three-day concert tour of the mid-Atlantic states of Maryland, Pennsylvania and New Jersey in early June. We made new friends and brought our unique brand of classical mandolin music to new audiences.

The first concert was organized by luthier-extraordinaire Walt Kuhlman in his home town of New Market, Delaware. New Market was the first stop for the many Philadelphia families who left to seek their fortunes in the Great American West, and today is a wonderful collection of restored eighteenth century houses and commercial buildings. NAME had the opportunity to tour the Kuhlman's interesting workshop, beautiful home and gardens. One of our members (Robert Margo) plays a Kuhlman liuto cantabile and loves it -- we strongly suggest checking out his wonderful mandolin family instruments at <http://www.gypsismusic.com>.

Our first concert took place in the lovely hall of New Market United Methodist Church. Our program featured many of the pieces which we performed last year on our European tour, and included a few excellent new additions to our repertoire. We started with Richard Charlton's exciting "Dances for the Mandolin in the Moon," with its ringing fourths, syncopated theme, and contrasting moods. We followed the Charlton with Owen Hartford's prize-winning, four-movement "Urban Sketches" which was such a hit for us in Europe last year. After Hartford came Annette Kruisbrink's "Dreamtime" which features many extended techniques such as playing on the strings above the nut, Bartok pizzicato, and bass glissandi.

The next piece on the program was Victor Kioulaphides' "Concerto de Camera" featuring NAME member David Miller as soloist. This very beautiful three-movement work was written for the Belgian soloist Ralf Laneen and our performances of the concerto during the tour constituted its American premiere. The ensemble parts are highly accessible and we encourage other groups with access to a capable soloist to take up the piece. We followed the concerto with two more new pieces, arrangements of Armin Kaufmann's "Burletta" and "Mitoka Dragomirna" originally for mandolin and piano. Keith Harris' arrangements stay close to the originals, and are quite virtuosic combining advanced harmonies, passages with rapid scales, and a distinctly rubato sense of tempo which contributes to a 'burlesque' feel. Judging from the audience reaction they are definite crowd pleasers as well as great fun to play! We closed out the first half with the bluegrass-influenced "Homeward Bound" by fiddler extraordinaire Eden Macadam-Somer.

The second half of the program commenced with Emiel Stopler's dreamy "The City Awakens." This excellent

Dutch piece with its jazzy overtones should be better known by US orchestras; to my knowledge only the Atlanta Mandolin Orchestra has performed this very accessible piece in addition to the Providence Mandolin Orchestra, for whom it was written. Score and parts are available from <http://emielstopler.musicaneo.com/sheetmusic/?cat=3817>. "City" was followed by Owen Hartford's "Grooves No. 1 and 2" put us all in a very 'groovy' space, while my own "The Cat In Springtime" provided a minimalist romp through the adventures of a frolicsome feline. Robert Margo contributed arrangements of two pieces by Antonio Carlos Jobim, "Caminho de Pedra" and "Stone Flower", creating a very Brazilian mood befitting the warm weather. We ended as we often do, with Chris Acquavella's mid-eastern and rock-influenced "Yutuma". I recommend that EVERYONE try this piece as it brings down the house every time we play it (score and parts are available from www.trekel.de)! Our encore was Mark Linkins' Celtic-influenced "Sycamore", which featured improvisation by NAME member Mark Levesque.

After a spectacular brunch hosted by two of the Kuhlman's gracious neighbors we journeyed Saturday afternoon to Grace Performance Hall in Haddonsfield, NJ, with its high ceilings and terrific acoustics. Here we shared a program that evening with the Philadelphia Mandolin and Guitar Ensemble under the direction of Joe Todaro. This group was inaugurated in 2006 when Todaro inherited Russell Procopio's immense collection of mandolin orchestra music. The PMGE started the program with selections from their eclectic repertoire including two tangos by Astor Piazzolla; "Lover's Waltz" by Jay Ungar; "N Train", an original jazz piece by PMGE member Joe Kasinskas; an Italian chestnut, "La Belle Castillane"; and a cover of a modern country hit complete with vocalist and a bluesy harmonica break courtesy of mandolinist Mike Fox.

The two groups next combined to perform Linkins' "Sycamore" and the Kioulaphides concerto. NAME completed the program with works by Charlton ("Dances"), Hartford ("Urban Sketches"), Kaufmann ("Burletta" and "Mitoka"), Macadam-Somer ("Homeward Bound"), Davis ("Cat"), Michael Nix ("Prayer"), and "Yutuma" with "Stone Flower" as the encore. Judging by the standing ovation the concert was very well received! A professional sound person was on hand to record and video the entire proceedings, some of which will be made available on YouTube.

Sunday's concert was presented at the Performing Arts Complex of Delaware County in Wallingford PA in conjunction with the Munier Mandolin and Guitar Orchestra (MMGO), directed by Mark Linkins. The MMGO has been around since the late 1950s. Since its beginnings as an Italian cultural organization, it has gradually changed to accommodate a wider variety of

NAME's Mid-Atlantic States Mini-Tour: June 2015

(continued from page 11)

repertoire and under the able direction of Linkins is making major strides. Highlights of the MMGO's portion of the concert were "Palladio" by Karl Jenkins, Gershwin's "Summertime", Konrad Wolki's famous arrangement of "Santa Lucia" and Mark Linkins' take on Enya's "Orinoco Flow." Together the two groups performed Mark Linkins' arrangement of "Prelude to the Gadfly Suite" by Shostakovich, "Sycamore," and the Kioulaphides concerto. The performers were especially honored that the composer and his family were present for this performance of the concerto. NAME completed the concert by performing works by Stöpler ("The City Awakens"), Hartford ("Grooves"), Macadam-Somer ("Homeward Bound"), the Jobim arrangements, Kruisbrink ("Dreamtime") and, once again, "Yutuma". Our encore was Kaufmann's "Mitoka".

This trip illustrated for us the need for more exchange of concerts and ideas between American mandolin groups. It seems to us that American ensembles can be fairly insular and do not always have a good idea of what other groups around the country (or, for that matter, the globe) are doing. To be sure, some of the insularity is mitigated by the annual CMSA convention but not all. We can contrast the American scene with the Australian, where every 18 months the Federation of Austral-Asian Mandolin Ensembles (FAME) have a meeting at which

all the Australian mandolin groups get together, perform jointly and for each other, and exchange ideas and music.

Our tour and its combined concerts with the two Philadelphia groups is a good start at greater interaction. Other suggestions we heard post-tour are for expanded orchestral presence at future CMSA conventions and devoting a portion of the CMSA newsletter to annual reports by American groups of their activities and upcoming events. NAME is certainly interested in collaborating with other groups so music directors please get in touch with us if you are interested!

We were thrilled at the warm reception given to us on this tour, and look forward to many more tours and possible collaborations in the future. Watch for NAME concerts next year at the Connecticut Guitar Society's music series, Rockport Music, and North Meadow House Concerts. Follow our activities on Facebook, Reverbnation or the NAME website:

<https://www.reverbnation.com/newamericanmandolinensemble>
<http://www.namandolinensemble.com/>
<https://www.facebook.com/NewAmericanMandolinEnsemble>

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2014 - 2015 Financial Report

by Lou Chouinard

CMSA's most recent fiscal year began on July 1, 2014 and ended on June 30, 2015.

Our Board of Directors' fiscal goal for the year was to break even (as it is most years). We ended the year with \$73,822 in our treasury; an increase of \$4,347 from the year's starting balance.

Our income for the year was \$46,372. 21% of our income came from membership; 78% was from convention revenue, and the remaining 1% was from Mandolin Journal advertising, donations, and interest.

Expenses for the year were \$42,026. 16% was Mandolin Journal expense, 74% was spent on the annual convention, 4% was a grant to Mando for Kids, and 6% is for various administrative expenses (insurance, legal, website, PayPal fees, etc.)

Of course, having a very financially successful convention (as you read in the February issue of the MJ) adds greatly to our financial success.

Another huge contributor to our financial success is the large group of very dedicated volunteers who manage the operations and convention for CMSA.

I have worked in many non-profit and for-profit organizations. It is extremely rare to be in such solid financial shape. Congratulations to all who contributed to the financial success of CMSA in 2014 – 2015!

Respectfully submitted by Lou Chouinard, CMSA Treasurer

Review of Josh Feinberg and Brian Oberlin:

“Onward: Bass & Mandolin”

by Nick Royal

Review of Josh Feinberg and Brian Oberlin, “Onward: Bass & Mandolin,” <http://mandoberlin.com/music-projects-cds.php>

On the last night of the 2015 Classical Mandolin Convention in Portland, I went over to Brian Oberlin's table and asked him to recommend one of his recordings. As I recall he said something like, “This one is quite different from my other cd's,” which intrigued me, so I bought “Onward: Bass & Mandolin.” (I have thought of it coming out after Edgar Meyer and Chris Thile's recording by (almost) the same name, but the Meyer/Thile cd was made later in 2014. (And reviewed in the February 2015 CMSA *Journal* by Robert Margo.)

The bass player in the cd I bought is Josh Feinberg and I really like his playing. I also thought that Brian Oberlin sounded really good on the recording. Nine of the 14 tracks are written by Brian or Josh. The others are ones that many of us will recognize—and I think that is one of the reasons I like the cd so much: two Bach pieces; one by

Mozart; one by Tchaikovsky; and the folk tune, “The Girl I Left Behind Me.”

As with the Edgar Meyer/Chris Thile recording, Brian and Josh show how well the “large” bass with its strong voice can fit with the “small” mandolin. I enjoy hearing the mandolin played with non-mandolin family instruments and here is a great example of that -- really good musicianship and enjoyable pieces. I recommend it highly. To purchase the recording go the link above or else search for it on CdBaby.



CMSA Welcomes New Members:

Susan Roth - Seattle, WA

Cindy Cochran - Canon City, CO

Jack Marcovitch - Ottawa, ON

Melanie Sue Klar - Santa Clarita, CA

Fred Pike - Shorewood, WI

Kelly Morgan - Seattle WA

Angela Welcome - Ronkonkoma, NY

Nel Oomen - Molenschot, the Netherlands

The Italian Scene:

Notes from an American Classical Mandolinist

by August Watters

We all know that Italy has strong mandolin traditions, and somewhere in our collective memories we understand that these old-world traditions were central to the development of the American mandolin. Still, the Italian classical mandolin can be a bit elusive to Americans, who often remain separated by cultural and language barriers. The German system seems much more accessible by comparison, since most German students learn English in school, and since their educational system has done an excellent job of making its teaching materials and music available. This article seeks to make today's Italian classical mandolin scene more accessible and understandable.

In my travels I have been fortunate to spend much time in Italy, and particularly the northeast region of the Veneto, which has both strong stringed instrument making and classical mandolin traditions. There, in Padua, a lively classical mandolin scene revolves around the Cesare Pollini Conservatory, host of Italy's first college-level mandolin program. The Conservatory's vast (and reportedly, largely undocumented) musical holdings were bequeathed by the wealthy Venetian Republic, which controlled the Veneto and lands far beyond, for centuries and throughout the 1700s. This was the Venice of Vivaldi, and the court musicians who performed for the aristocracy.

Today Italy is made up of twenty regions, but the distinct mandolin traditions of each far predate their 1870 unification into a single Italian state. Various early mandolin-like instruments were associated with specific Italian cities, each with its own unique repertoire: for example, Cremona, Brescia, Milan, and Naples. In the mid-18th century these instruments were eclipsed in popularity by a new Neapolitan mandolin, but to this day each region maintains its own distinct musical traditions, often featuring mandolin.

Classical and Folk Mandolin

Americans tend to think of classical and folkloric music as opposite ends of the spectrum, but in Italian culture, folk and classical mandolin traditions are intricately entwined. Consider Italy's best-known mandolinist in America: Carlo Aonzo began life as the son of a mandolinist and restaurateur in the beautiful Mediterranean shore town of Savona. Young Carlo quickly internalized his father's way of playing mandolin, and learned the songs of his world. Years before he became a classical master, young Carlo grew up in a rich musical environment that included the songs of Liguria and surrounding regions, the mandolin-rich musical traditions of southern Italy that became popular across Italy and beyond, and of course, the pervasive influence of American music in the post-war era.

Ugo Orlandi: Classical Master

One mandolinist stands out as the patriarch of the classical mandolin in northern Italy: Ugo Orlandi, who has

dedicated his career to the popular and artistic resurgence of the Italian classical mandolin. It was Orlandi who presided over the opening of Padua's conservatory-level mandolin program, barely 30 years ago, which became the prototype for other conservatory-level mandolin programs across Italy. Each shares Orlandi's curriculum, administered by some of his most accomplished students, such as Mauro Squillante in Bari and Maria Miotti in Padua. Orlandi himself remains on the faculty in Milan. Others have chosen other directions: Carlo Aonzo, one of Orlandi's most successful students, went on to a career as a prominent and very personal interpreter of the Italian classical repertoire, followed by success in the US as a Winfield contest champion (a distinction usually won by bluegrass players), and finally, full circle, as a conductor of mandolin ensembles and performer of edgy classical-jazz fusion music.

The "Classical" Italian Repertoire

Italy's rich classical mandolin traditions have left us a world of musical literature to explore. Much is available for free on the Internet, of course, but the quality of editions varies. Ricordi has an extensive catalogue of mandolin music, although most appears to not yet be available online. One excellent source (much of it edited by Ugo Orlandi) is Ut Orpheus Edizioni. The German publisher Trekel also has an extensive collection of Italian classical music for mandolin. Some smaller Italian publishers, such as Armelin in Padua, offer new editions of classical works.

There is, of course, much concert music written by the towering figures of the Romantic-era classical mandolin, Carlo Munier and Raffaele Calace, including more than 500 compositions for mandolin and mandolin-guitar ensembles. There were many other great virtuosi during those waning years of the nineteenth century, (and a small army of Italian composers), but a central idea emerged from this time of activity: the view of the mandolin ensemble as just another genre of chamber music, as worthy and capable as a string quartet or brass quintet of performing concert music exploring a wide range of textures and moods.

A wealth of high-quality instructional materials also remains, much of it in the public domain: the Romantic-era methods of Calace and Munier are easily available, and each is meticulously crafted to gradually develop technique. This is one way to study virtuoso Italian classical music, but the beginning volumes of these methods also offer a clear path to the goals of solid mandolin technique for today's mandolinists: economy of motion, tone, projection, and fingerboard mastery. The method of Branzoli was written a generation earlier, and can be seen as a transitional method based in earlier approaches.

Most of the surviving mandolin methods of the eighteenth century (including those by Denis, Gervasio, and Leone)

The Italian Scene:

Notes from an American Classical Mandolinist

(continued from page 14)

were written by Italians, in French – evidence of the popularity of mandolin among the aristocratic classes that held power before the democratic revolutions of the eighteenth century. The value of these early mandolin methods should not be overlooked, since they document delightful ways of playing the mandolin, often using picking patterns outside of the alternate-picking norm. The Leone method is also interesting in its application of elaborate picking patterns to chord progressions – inviting an improvisational approach, and implying the ways mandolin might have been used for vocal accompaniment. This tradition continued in America in the form of Italian folk song and other music shared by millions of Italian immigrants, often in the shops of Italian barbers (it is probably not a coincidence that Bill Monroe found his Lloyd Loar mandolin for sale in a Florida barbershop!). Leone also explored split-string technique to extend the mandolin's harmonic and timbral possibilities.

Instruments, Equipment and the Italian Aesthetic

Imagine yourself as a student of mandolin at one of the Italian conservatories today: more than likely you would be strongly encouraged to use Ugo Orlandi's approved equipment: a modern Calace mandolin, equipped with Dogal strings and picks. Students are generally expected to begin with these tools, to ensure they are well equipped to understand the more subtle points of Italian classical mandolin and its aesthetic sensibilities. The modern Calace mandolin is made with a thick coat of lacquer, requiring the use of high-tension strings. This design results in an extremely durable instrument, with an astonishingly loud and present high register. Any list of the leading players of these instruments today is bound to be woefully incomplete, but in addition to the names previously mentioned, some highly accomplished players I have met and respect greatly include Carla Senese and Miki Nishiyama.

Today's Italian mandolins have tonal characteristics that have been refined and greatly improved in recent decades: the best of them have a well-developed low end, along with brilliant highs, excellent sustain and superior projection. The underlying aesthetic involves producing an instrument with complex overtones, which our ear perceives as brilliance. Playing one of these instruments is an endless process of learning to control the overtones (and thus expressiveness) through technique. The orthodox, Orlandi-inspired approach would never use dark-sounding picks, grommets or flat wound strings to make a "darker" sound, because these devices work not by boosting bass response, but by reducing trebles. Of course these views are not universally embraced in Italy; in fact dark-sounding picks are not difficult to find among mandolinists in the south. Some classical players are also experimenting with other approaches: Carlo Aonzo has been known to use dark-sounding picks, and Fabio Galluci produces his sensuous warm tone using an Israeli Kerman mandolin

with flatwound strings.

There are of course other excellent builders who are tailoring their instruments to the needs of modern classical mandolinists, including Lorenzo Lippi, Carlo Mazzaccara, Gabriele Pandini, and Anema e Corde. Most of these have emerged from the traditions of the Neapolitan builders, but 19th- and early 20th-century Roman builders such as Luigi Embergher also contributed enduring ideas, including the arched fingerboard and v-shaped neck. Today these features, originally Roman, are found on nearly all modern Italian mandolins. Roman-style mandolins also generally have a narrower nut and taller bridge. The CGDA mandola (mandoliola) tuning is attributed to the Roman builder Giovanni Battista Maldura in the 1890s, several years before Orville Gibson would develop the same idea in his Kalamazoo, Michigan workshop. The standard Italian mandola retains the older GDAE tuning, often known (in the US) as octave mandolin or (in the UK) octave mandola.

Rome in the Netherlands

One interesting recent development deserving special mention is the work of Dutch mandolinist and scholar Alex Timmerman, who has dedicated his career to researching and recovering the great achievements of the Roman way of playing mandolin. His ensemble, Het Consort, plays the Embergher mandolin, producing an exquisitely warm and textured sound. The next generation of mandolin virtuosi, including Sebastiaan de Grebber and Ferdinand Binnendijk, are demonstrating the stratospheric achievements of the Virtuoso Era, from the perspective of the Roman mandolin. The artistic direction they will take, based on this breathtaking foundation, remains to be seen.

Why We Play Music

Most classical mandolinists, of course, are not professional musicians. Their goals do not include chasing virtuoso technique or carving out new genres of concert music. We play mandolin to express ourselves, to challenge ourselves, and to enter that peaceful zone. We play because we want to share the company of others while enjoying the exquisite beauty of mandolin music. We play because of the deep satisfaction that comes from creating something beautiful together, something that is way beyond the sum of its parts.

It's a deeply human need to make music together. Popular culture prepares us to experience music as consumers, but we need music to provide opportunities to be creative, cooperative and expressive musicians together. And this is where the legacy of Italian classical mandolin is perhaps most valuable to mandolinists today: through the example of the classical mandolin ensemble, we see a way to improve ourselves while working together toward a shared goal – one that is sublimely beautiful, and bonds us together within our communities as we explore the power of music.

Bach on the Mandocello (and Alto Mandola and Liuto): The Cello Suites, Part Three

by Robert A. Margo

This is the final installment of a three-part article on the performance of Bach's solo cello music on CGDA(E) mandolin family instruments. In Part One, I discussed the history of the works and of their performance on plucked string instruments, including those of the mandolin family. In Part Two, I discussed editions, scholarly literature, modern recordings, and video performances. Here, I briefly discuss the key practical issues of performance.

The first issue is where to begin. To a first approximation, the cello suites are ordered in terms of difficulty, so beginning with BWV1007 is not only feasible it is the best course of action. BWV1008 and 1009 are progressively more difficult and thus BWV1007-1009 forms a natural evolution.

The difficulty level rises considerably with BWV1010, not so much because of the notes but because of the key (E flat). On the one hand, it is a major workout on the mandocello or liuto and it is very easy to stress your left hand (because of the stretches). On the other, anyone who can master BWV1010 on either instrument will have achieved an exceptionally high level of technical and musical skill. The final two suites are also difficult, but for different reasons – BWV1011 because of the scordatura, and BWV1012 because of the high tessitura. In particular, BWV1012 is much better suited to the liuto than to the mandocello because of the former has the high E string, just the like the version of the cello for which Bach wrote the piece. BWV1012 can also be played on a 5-course mandolin with a low C (tuned CGDAE, one octave above the liuto).

Assuming one has decided where to begin, the next question is whether should one play as written or add (or subtract) notes? In general, I play as written, but occasionally I will add a chord or change the voice leading slightly, to take advantage of added resonance or ease of legato on a plucked instrument. Consider, for example, the opening measure of the Prelude to BWV1010:



This can certainly (and easily) be played as written, but one can enhance the sound on a plucked instrument by filling out the opening chord, played as an arpeggio:



As an example of a small change in voice leading that, in my experience, works well in performance, consider measures 15 and 16 of Menuet I of BWV1007. As written these are:



My suggestion would be to play instead:

Bach on the Mandocello (and Alto Mandola and Liuto): The Cello Suites, Part Three

(continued from page 16)



Left hand fingering is next on my list. One approach is to think melodically --“melodic fingering” -- moving up and down the fingerboard along a given string, minimizing the use of open strings. My preference, however, is for harmonic fingering – moving across strings and wherever possible, using open strings. Harmonic fingering is common on the lute and guitar, my reference points for this music (rather than the cello).

As an example, consider measures 35-37 of the Prelude to BWV1007.



Measure 35 and the first two beats of measure 36 could be played on one string but this will sound choppy (and is really not what Bach intended). Instead, play the melody notes (here, with stems down) up the neck on the D string and the pedal A open. For measure 37, play the D on the upbeat of beat #1 (and following) open, the E and F sharp on the G string, and the A (beat #4) open.

Another example is the opening of the Prelude to BWV1008:



Using melodic fingering one might play the entire first measure on the D string. But there are alternatives worth considering. The A in beat #2 could be played open, holding down the F from the upbeat of #1. Of the F could be played up the neck on the G string, held down, and the D and A open, allowing the chord to resonate beautiful. The descending F and E would also be played on the G string and the D open. This type of fingering, borrowed from the guitar and lute, is known as “campanella” fingering, because it combines open strings with stopped notes, typically up the neck.

Most chords in the cello music are technically playable but may be difficult or even impossible on a plucked instrument depending on the size of one’s hand and the instrument’s scale length. Again, using campanella fingering may help. Consider the opening of Menuet I of BWV1008:



Many players will find the chord in beat #1 of measure 2 to be difficult to play in a low position. Using campanella

Bach on the Mandocello (and Alto Mandola and Liuto): The Cello Suites, Part Three

(continued from page 17)

fingering, play the first chord in 6th position, with the F at the 10th fret of the C string and the D and A open. Staying in this position, the second chord is much easier, especially if one plays the C in the bass as a harmonic (at the 12th fret). Whether you use melodic or harmonic fingering, work hard to minimize finger squeaks and other extraneous noises -- a common nuisance on the mandocello and the liuto.

Another fingering issue is whether to use left hand slurs. On the larger mandolin family instruments, I find that slurs can be very idiomatic (as they are on the lute), especially in playing ornaments. However, it is important that the instrument be set up well and that one's slur technique is up to par – otherwise the notes will be muddy or (worse) inaudible. Also with regard to ornamentation, I tend to keep things simple with the cello music – trills, mordents, and the like. How about tremolo? I would generally avoid it although (very) sparing use at cadences is not inappropriate stylistically, with a slow measured tremolo preferable to a fast, unmeasured tremolo.

Finally, my tempos in playing the cello music tend to the brisk side and I prefer a bright sound, plucking near the bridge rather than near the sound hole. The brisk tempo helps to offset the sharp decay of mandolin family instruments and playing closer to the bridge (a feature of baroque lute technique) enhances clarity. While I generally do not use a pronounced “notes inegale” in realizing the melodic line, a little “swing” is fine, and I always try to be conscious of strong and weak beats.

To conclude, Bach's works for solo cello are central to the western classical music canon. Arrangements of them have long been played on plucked strings, and they especially help to fill an important void in the literature for solo CGDA(E) instruments of the mandolin family. Mastery can take a lifetime but even a modest amount of study can pay huge dividends in technique and musicianship.

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Report on the 2014-15 Season:

Providence Mandolin Orchestra by Mark M. Davis, Music Director

2014-15 was a very good season for the Providence Mandolin Orchestra (PMO) with new members, new repertoire and a renewed sense of purpose. Our season consisted of weekly Tuesday night rehearsals and four concerts – two community music series (the Bread Box Theater in Willimantic, CT, and the Little River Music Series in Hampton CT), a concert at the historic Aldrich mansion in Warwick RI, and our annual spring concert at the Park Place United Congregational Church in Pawtucket RI, our home base. In return for use of rehearsal space proceeds of our spring concert go to the church. We also make a separate financial contribution to help with the church's winter heating expenses. Proceeds from the other concerts cover conductor and occasional soloist fees, with the remainder going into the PMO bank account. Members also pay annual dues which provide a rehearsal stipend for the music director and pay miscellaneous expenses (e.g. purchases of music scores and parts).

Our repertoire comes from our many contacts in the international mandolin world, as well as pieces we pick up in our travels or purchase. Last October we were very fortunate to have Steffen Trekel stop by on his way to the 2014 CMSA Convention in Portland. He joined us for our Bread Box Theater concert playing the solo part in Vivaldi's "Concerto in C Major, RV 425." At this and our other fall concert at the Aldrich Mansion, we performed two classics of the modern repertoire for mandolin ensemble the famous "Suite No. 6" by Herman Ambrosius, and Claudio Mandonico's rock-influenced, three-movement "Music for Play." We also performed other contemporary pieces by Juriann Andreissen ("Canzone No. 1", arranged by Alex Timmerman), Robert Schultz ("A Lament for the Death of Polite Language"), and Jurgen Thiergärtner ("Herbstimpressionen"). American composers are never absent from our repertoire. At our fall concerts we performed one movement of James Kellaris' "Kalamazoo Suite," Robert Martel's lovely "Evening Sky," Randy Newman's "Sail Away" (arranged by Robert Margo, the PMO's 'resident arranger') and ended our concerts with Owen Hartford's 7/8 frolic "Family Squabble."

The PMO spent the winter and spring working on new repertoire and developing technique. We often started rehearsals with the mandolin and mandola sections in one room working with music director Mark Davis on right hand and left hand techniques, while the "low end" of the orchestra (classical guitar, mandocello, liuto cantabile, and string bass) made sure the underpinning was rock solid. We found an hour of this kind of work at the beginning of each rehearsal greatly sped up the process of mastering our program.

For our spring concerts we developed a different program focusing on new music. We completed work on James

Kellaris' excellent three-movement "Kalamazoo Suite" to give only its second (and third) American performance. We also mastered two of the movements from Philip DeWalt's outstanding "Twelve Pieces for Mandolin Orchestra" – the dreamy "Music for a Deserted City" and the jazzy "Small Shoes." We performed one of Owen Hartford's new pieces – the beautiful "Solace." (Owen is our 'resident composer' having contributed many great pieces to the PMO's repertoire over the years, including "Gretel Dreaming" and "The Frog Price; a Mini-Opera"). Mark Linkins, the director of the Philadelphia Mandolin and Guitar Ensemble contributed three scores to our spring program – a lovely arrangement of Shostakovich's "Prelude to the Gadfly" and his own Celtic-influenced "Sycamore" (which has a solo improvisation as its centerpiece, performed by PMO guitarist Mark Armstrong) and "Variations on an Ancient Irish Air" which pits 6/8 rhythms against those in 3/4. The spring programs also included Stephen Lalor's excellent three-movement "Australis Suite" which was performed by the Australis Ensemble at the 2014 Eurofestival in Bruchsal, Germany. Lastly, Robert Margo contributed two arrangements – Simon and Garfunkel's "Scarborough Fair/Canticle" and the Police's "Synchronicity I" which brought the concerts to a rocking conclusion!

It has not been easy for the PMO to find new members. The difficulty level of music we perform is high; new players must be good readers, and have at least an intermediate level of technical skill on their instruments. Through a combination of open auditions and advertising at our local music schools, we were able to attract some excellent new players to our ranks. The orchestra now consists of nine first and second mandolins, one alto (CGDA) mandola and one octave (GDAE) mandola, one liuto cantabile, two mandocellos, three classical guitarists, and one string bass.

Our season officially ended in late spring and we start again in the fall. During the summer months we plan one or more sessions at which we will sight-read through pieces that might become new repertoire. We will resume our regular rehearsals in September 2015. We welcome guests to come and listen or sit in with our group at these rehearsals on Tuesday evenings (7:30 – 9:30 PM) at the Park Place United Church of Christ, 71 Park Place, Pawtucket, RI, 02860. We also invite CMSA members to 'Like' us on Facebook [<https://www.facebook.com/pages/Providence-Mandolin-Orchestra/104914166242604?fref=ts>] and to visit our YouTube [<https://www.youtube.com/user/ProvidenceMandolin>] and ReverbNation (<https://www.reverbnation.com/providencemandolinorchestra>) rchannels Our website is <http://www.providencemandolin.org/>

15th Annual Carlo Aonzo Mandolin Workshop: Mandolin Magic in Manhattan

by Barbara Conrad

Hard-core classical mandolin aficionados met in New York City June 4 to 7 for Carlo Aonzo's fifteenth annual mandolin workshop. The group of 23 included mandolins, mandolas, mandocellos and guitars. Guitar master Rene Izquierdo, here for the second time, shared conducting duties with Carlo.

The two are perfectly matched. Not only do they play flawlessly together, but they also share a common musical sensibility. Together, in only four days, they moulded our disparate group into a unified, high-performing orchestra.



Rene conducts Scarlatti while arranger Victor sits listening
(photo credit: Carlo Aonzo)

This year's music was challenging and satisfying, for players and audience alike at the Sunday recital. We played:

- Antonio Vivaldi, *Concerto alla Rustica*, three movements
- Domenico Scarlatti, *Sonatas K.32 and K.9*, arranged by Victor Kioulaphides, featuring two solo parts
- J.S. Bach, *Art of the Fugue*, Contrapunctus 10
- J.S. Bach, BWV 1060, *Concerto for Oboe and Violin* in D minor, in three movements and featuring two different soloists in each movement
- Joaquin Rodrigo, *Estudiantina – Pasacalle Y Copilla*
- Ugo Bottacchiari, *Preludio Sinfonico*, arranged by Keith Harris

As usual, mandolin parts were assigned in advance, balancing the sections and sharing the challenges.

I heard several people asked which was their favorite, and they could not name one. Each piece had its own attraction: the intricate complexity of the Bach pieces, the joyful rhythm and pace of the Vivaldi, the playfulness of the *Estudiantina*, the sweetness of the Scarlatti. The final piece in the set, the *Preludio*, had a wonderful richness, with divided parts in each section. It had such

a range of emotions and colors, with its dynamic and tempo shifts, chromatic runs and soaring high notes, that it gave many of us goosebumps each time we practiced it. The final performance was the best time we played it.

To cap off our recital, Carlo and Rene played two crowd-pleasing pieces, leaving everyone wanting more.

For the full four days we worked on our orchestra music. It sounds like all work, but it was fun too, and the time flew. Breaks were frequent and sufficient, allowing for some private work on our personal "problem areas." Since we all had the music well before we arrived, people seemed to be well prepared and the group, which included quite a few first-timers, started at a high level. I was impressed with the work ethic and concentration of this group, and how everyone incorporated every new suggestion and improvement Carlo and Rene gave us. Our soloists especially stepped up to the extra challenge and shone in the recital.



Soloists: Carlo works with soloists
(photo credit: Eliza Dagostino)

We also had opportunities for some after-hours group activities. Wednesday evening Carlo and Rene played a brilliant duo concert at Bargemusic with an all-Bach program.



Bargemusic:
Carlo and Rene
at Bargemusic
concert

(photo credit:
Jean Young)

15th Annual Carlo Aonzo Mandolin Workshop: Mandolin Magic in Manhattan

(continued from page 20)

Thursday evening a number of us headed to the basement of a Greenwich Village synagogue to hear the great mandolinist Andy Statman in a trio with double bass and percussion. His music defies categorization. He plays his own original improvisational-seeming stuff, ranging in style from bluegrass-ish, old-time ballad-ish to something sort of jazzy.



Statman: Crowded, intimate setting for Andy Statman trio (photo credit: Carlo Aonzo)

He often plays a whole concert of klezmer-style music on clarinet, but we were fortunate that, knowing he had so many mandolin fans in attendance, he gave us an evening of mandolin virtuosity.



Katz's: Music at Katz's Deli (photo credit: Kevin Albinder, Katz's staff)

our visit came after we ate, when Carlo and Rene pulled out their instruments for a short impromptu concert. Staff and nearby diners were charmed, and Carlo and

Rene had their photos taken for Katz's wall of celebrity photos. We'll be looking for it next year.

Most attendees preferred the four-day format over the three-day workshop of previous years. I thought the extra day brought us to a higher level of readiness and a more confident and polished performance. Said Carlo, "This workshop is not about putting on this recital, but it's what everyone takes away and can do afterwards."

Carlo and Rene bring us such a depth of musical understanding and are able to impart a deeper sense of the music. For example, Carlo dissected our *Art of the Fugue* movement to identify the various recurring themes and show us how they move from one section to another, overlapping and mutating. After this our phrasing and dynamics were so much more subtle. One student said, "They get us from just playing notes to making music at a much higher level."

Some of the first-timers told me what a great experience they had at this workshop. Said one, "This workshop is unique in that we are playing such high-calibre music and Carlo and Rene bring what we have practiced to musical life! The practice days were long, but without them, the music would not have been as perfected."

This year's June date was a departure from the usual spring time frame, to accommodate our leaders' schedules. Returning to the earlier timing, next year's workshop will be Thursday, April 14 to Sunday, April 17. Registration will be open by the time you read this. Contact Chaim Caron at ccaron@earthlink.net for details; please put CAMW16 in the subject line.



Group: Bach was very much part of the group all four days (photo credit: Carlo Aonzo, missing from photo)

Contemporary (1945 - present) Concertos for Mandolin: A Provisional List

by Robert A. Margo

David Miller, my friend and colleague in the New American Mandolin Ensemble, recently asked me about contemporary concertos for mandolin. Here, “contemporary” means post-World War Two and “concerto” means for solo mandolin plus accompaniment by string orchestra or a mixed ensemble (e.g. strings plus woodwinds).¹ David is a superb professional mandolinist who works diligently at enhancing his skill set, already very advanced. One of the best ways to do this is to tackle challenging works from the solo, chamber, and concerto repertoires. However, Miller knew of only two pieces that fit the above description of a contemporary concerto for mandolin – the well-known concerto by the Israeli composer Avner Dorman, written for Avi Avital and recorded on the Naxos label; and the equally well-known concerto by Chris Thile (“Ad Astra Por Alas Porci”) that Thile wrote for himself and thus far has not recorded.² David figured there were many more than these two and he sought my assistance in compiling a list. The task being interesting, I got to work.

It became evident almost immediately that there is no single source to answer David’s question for the entire world, one-stop shopping as it were. This is not surprising. Much contemporary music is commissioned, written “on-spec” for a particular player and suiting the player’s specific needs. The market for such works being very small, only those composers who are already well-established or for some other reason have a pipeline into a publisher will see their works in print – and if a work is not in print, it can take quite a bit of effort to find out about it. That said, a fair amount of what I uncovered is commercially available.

I began where one always begins if seeking information about contemporary music for classical mandolin – the link on Neil Gladd’s website (<http://www.neilgladd.com/camm.html>) which gives Neil’s (on-going) list of contemporary American works for mandolin. This yielded several pieces, such as the Brian Israel concerto (which exists, evidently, only in a piano reduction). From there I proceeded to another standard source, the Australian Music Centre (<http://www.australianmusiccentre.com.au/>), a treasure-trove of down-under information for all things mandolin.

Next, I proceeded to the standard mandolin publishers such as Les Productions d’Oz, Trekel, Vogt & Fritz, among others.³ This proved fruitful, as did searching on the website of www.sheetmusicplus.com. The websites of the leading professional players (e.g. Avital) often contain repertoire lists, including concertos. I scoured www.youtube.com (and Facebook), finding several items that way. Once I had a preliminary list, I posted it in the “Classical” forum on www.mandolincafe.com and solicited comments. I also sent the list to several friends around the world, seeking the same. This yielded some additional pieces. The Appendix the follows gives my list in abbreviated form – composer and title only.⁴ Currently the list contains 55 pieces. This number should be viewed as provisional (very) as I am quite sure the list is incomplete; in particular, I am guessing there are more concertos from South America, Russia, and (especially) Japan. I welcome additions to the list; please get in touch with me through the Journal.

(Endnotes)

1 I have included a few works that are double concertos, where mandolin is one of the instruments. I am excluding chamber works with mandolin parts, however prominent, if there is no soloist element *per se* (an example would be Elliot Carter’s “Luimen”). I am also excluding pieces for which the accompaniment consists exclusively of plucked strings (some pieces on my list also exist in this format, but not exclusively).

2 The concerto can be heard, however, in a live performance on www.youtube.com.

3 The defunct company Plucked String Editions falls into this category. PSE publications always listed available and forthcoming products; at one time these included the Israel and Bardwell concertos (see my provisional list).

4 I plan to maintain an on-going database with additional information such as date of publication, publisher (if any), and performances/recordings (if known).

DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS TO THE NEXT JOURNAL IS OCTOBER 25th
PLEASE SEND SUBMISSIONS TO: CMSAJournal@gmail.com

Appendix:

List of modern (1945-present) mandolin concertos

Ayal Adler, “Concerto for Mandolin and String Orchestra”	Tuba, and Chamber Ensemble”
Sergei Abir, “Double Concerto for Klezmer Clarinet, Mandolin, and Strings”	Robert Lombardo, “Orpheus and the Maenads: Concerto for Mandolin and String orchestra”
Josef Bardanashvili, “Concerto for Mandolin and String Orchestra”	Robert Lombardo, “Chamber Concerto for Mandolin” [this is an arrangement of “Orpheus” for mixed chamber ensemble]
William Bardwell, “Concerto for Mandolin and Small Orchestra”	Armin Kaufman, “Concerto for Mandolin and Orchestra, Op. 66”
Herbert Baumann, “Concerto for Mandolin and String Orchestra”	Victor Kioulaphides, “Mandolin Concerto”
Vincent Beer-Demander, “Massalia Concerto”	Peter Klatzov, “Mandolin Concerto”
Luiz Otávio Braga, “Concertino for Bandolim and Strings”	Yoshinao Kobayashi, “Mandolin Concerto No. 2”
Roland Chadwick, “Diana of the Uplands (Concerto No. 1 for Mandolin and String Orchestra)”	H. David Korenchandler, “Concerto for Bandolim and Strings”
Vladimir Cosma, “Concerto for Mandolin”	Wladimir Koroltschuk, “Suite ‘Pro et contra in D’ for Mandolin and String Orchestra”
John Craton, “Mandolin Concerto No. 1 in D Minor”	Kostas Kritsotakis, “Concerto for Mandolin and Orchestra”
John Craton, “Mandolin Concerto No. 2 in D Major”	Yasuo Kuwahara, “Raidoh: Concerto for Mandolin and Orchestra”
John Craton, “Mandolin Concerto No. 3 in E minor”	Mike Marshall, “Concerto for Mandolin and Strings”
John Craton, “Mandolin Concerto No. 4 in G Major”	Daigo Marumoto, “Mandolin Concerto”
Julian Dawes, “Concerto for Mandolin and Strings”	Jeff Midkiff, “From the Blue Ridge’: Mandolin Concerto”
Avner Dorman, “Concerto for Mandolin and Strings”	Vasgen Muradian, “Concerto for Mandolin”
Dietrich Erdmann, “Mandolin Concerto”	Hankus Netsky, “Concerto for Mandolin and String Orchestra”
Federico Gardella, “Concerto for Mandolin and Symphonic Orchestra”	Martijn Padding, “Eight Metal Strings for Mandolin and Ensemble”
Radames Gnattali, “Concerto for Bandolim and Orchestra”	Fritz Pils, “Concertino for Mandolin and String Orchestra”
Radames Gnattali, “Suite Retratos for Bandolim and Orchestra”	Efrem Podgaitis, “Concerto for Mandolin and Chamber Orchestra, Op. 160”
Ebbe Grimslund, “Concertino”	Matan Porat, “Madrigals, for Mandolin and Strings”
Joan Griffith, “Dakota Suite: Concerto for Mandolin and Chamber Orchestra”	Igor Rekhin, “Concerto for Mandolin”
Lutz Werner Hesse, “Concerto for Mandolin and String Orchestra”	Michael Seltenreich, “Mandolin Concerto”
Gilad Hochman, “Neludim – Fantasia Concertante for Mandolin and Strings”	Sergio di Sabbato, “Concerto for Bandolim and Strings”
Sean Hickey, “Mandolin Concerto”	Gil Shohat, “Neoclassical Concerto for Mandolin”
Daniel Hue, “Concerto No. 1 for Mandolin and Orchestra”	Chris Thile, “Ad Astra Por Alas Porci”
David Jaffe, “Bristlecone Concerto #2”	Samson Tognan, “Concerto for Mandolin”
Brian Israel, “Mandolin Concerto” (piano reduction only)	Menachem Weisenberg, “Concerto for Mandolin and String Orchestra”
Dennis Kam, “Prelude, Puzzles, and Postlude, for Mandolin,	Oded Zehavi, “Puit-Mandolin Concerto”

12th Annual Mandolin Symposium

by Kat Randolph and Nick Royal

“The mandolin has seen a burst of creativity and wonderful new ideas these past 5-10 years. It’s like our little instrument is having its own (not so quiet) Renaissance while the world spins out of control towards the next ‘app’ and folks rush about trying to find solace. Let this quiet meek instrument show us a way, right?”

--Mike Marshall, liner notes to Mando Planet CD

“This is the biggest little instrument in the world”

--David Grisman, Mando Symposium opening night concert



David Grisman & Mike Marshall
photo: Maria Camillo

The quotes from Mandolin Symposium co-founders Mike Marshall and David Grisman speak to the shared passion for mandolin music of all types that makes Mandolin Symposium so special and unique. For this year’s annual love fest to mandolin music of all styles, Mike and David brought together an astounding line up of the best mandolin players from around the world to teach and play. Twelve instructors, and more than a dozen other guest artists, represented the huge range of styles of the “best little instrument in the world”, from traditions as diverse as Bluegrass, Dawg, Jazz, Blues, Classical, Choro and Celtic traditions, as well as Klezmer and Jamgrass. So special is the Symposium that many of the musicians admitted that it was the highlight of their year, and arranged their entire touring schedule just to be there. The week included many of the tried and true aspects of symposiums – workshops, morning lectures, ensembles, evening concerts and jams, as well as some changes to keep things fresh, such as more classes co-taught, holding two evening concerts open to the public, and inviting more guest artists.

The line-up of talent and styles was showcased on the first evening, when the instructors took the stage. Seated in a long line, they spoke one by one about their style of playing, their inspiration and mentors, and the classes

and workshops they’d be leading.... and then each played. Don Steirnberg on Jazz; Tim Connell on Traditional Irish and Chords; Dudu Maia on Choro; Rich DelGross on Blues; Roland White on Bluegrass; Mike Marshall on the “big gators”, Bach and the Advanced ensemble; David Grisman on Dawg; Caterina Lichtenberg on Classical; Sharon Gilchrist on Bluegrass and beginning technique; Drew Emmitt on Jamgrass and Eric Stein on Klezmer. They joked and ribbed each other with friendly comradery and deep respect. “Why play four chords when you can play 52?”, asked Donnie as he introduced his legendary Jazz and Chord classes. “Why worry about 52 chords, when you can make great music with four?” Sharon Gilchrist assured the beginners in the audience. As each instructor played, he or she often invited another musician to play along, and they’d blend their individual styles together. Listening to these impromptu mash-ups, those of us in the audience were in awe, and excited to learn from these masters in the week ahead.

Workshops and Ensembles

With so many amazing instructors to learn from, students face the question: “Do I focus on one style or sample many?” For each style, classes ranged from beginning to advanced, allowing each student to decide if they wanted to go deeper on a style they already knew or try something different. Many students did both. For example, many bluegrass players took Caterina’s beginning classical classes to learn right hand techniques for glide stroke and tremolo, as well as advanced classes with Dawg. Classical players branched out to get into the groove of Blues or the swing of Jazz, and then attended Caterina’s Classical master class. Jazz and Choro players, however, tended to stick with Donnie and Dudu, as dedicated apprentices to the masters of these styles.



The Classical Ensemble

12th Annual Mandolin Symposium

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The workshops provided students with an understanding of the history and techniques to convey the unique sound of each style. We'll focus on the workshops led by Rich DelGrosso and Sharon Gilchrist, not just because that's where your authors spent most of their time, but because both are excellent teachers. Rich, the leading expert on mandolin blues, spent more than thirty years playing with, and being mentored by, the blues and string band legends Yank Rachell and Howard Armstrong. All that time he was also working as a middle school science teacher. Those combined experiences made Rich an outstanding teacher, and gave him a tremendous respect for his mentors and the roots of the music. In his Blues 101 class, Rich outlined the four key elements to playing blues, or really any style: melody, harmony, arrangement and rhythm. By the end of class, he had us all feeling the back beat, "sliding into the twos and fours", and improvising on 8 and 12 bar blues progression. In "Blues and Bluegrass", Rich and Roland White looked at how these two styles relate to, and contrast, each other. Roland, who played with Bill Monroe, shared many stories, including one about the time he and Bill Monroe played a double bill with Muddy Waters at the historic Stanhope House in New Jersey. The class worked through the Bluegrass Stomp, and compared the different emphasis on the beat in both styles, i.e. the 1st and 3rd beats of the measure for bluegrass, vs. the 2nd and 4th backbeat for Blues.



Sharon Gilchrist

Sharon Gilchrist, a fine mandolinist and a bass player, taught a variety of classes on right and left hand techniques and closed-position soloing. She had very helpful handouts with exercises that really helped students gain a better understanding of the fretboard. Roland White taught many other classes on "old style" bluegrass. In his class on the "double stop shop", he taught students how to start with a simple "undernourished" tune, and put "some flesh on the bones" with double stops. For Nick it was a whole different way of learning, by ear and without handouts. For us

classical players, this can be uncomfortable, but getting out of our comfort zone and learning new styles, with great teachers and support, is what the Symposium is all about.

Caterina Lichtenberg, who has become a prominent and much admired presence at Symposium, led the classical

workshops and ensembles again. For Nick, Caterina is the "real trooper instructor", that is, working cheerfully with whomever comes to her. At the University of Cologne, she teaches some of the greatest young mandolinists in the world. At Symposium, the twelve participants in the classical ensemble had varying levels of skills, but equally high levels of enthusiasm for her teaching. The group rehearsed two pieces, "Marca Aurora" by Romantic composer Raffaele Calace (1863-1934) and "Aria Sopra la Bergamasca" by Baroque composer Marco Uccellini (ca 1610-1680). The



Caterina Lichtenberg

night of the concert, the ensemble had time to perform only the baroque piece, which featured three parts – two main voices played by the first and second mandolin sections, and a bass continuo line. Caterina led the firsts, and Marijke and Michael Wisenekker, a Dutch sister and brother duo who play mandolin and guitar, led the seconds and bass sections. Caterina also co-taught a class with her husband Mike Marshall on J.S. Bach's 2-part Invention #3 and Organ Duet #3, both of which they recorded on their recent CD. Caterina and Mike demonstrated techniques to add emotion to the call and response aspects of the piece. Caterina showed how to play extended trills, and vary the speed and dynamics to create a "singing swell" in the hand off to Mike.

New Evening Concert Format

Evening concerts at Symposium have traditionally featured two instructors per night, culminating in the big, final Friday concert with the students and all the instructors. This year the schedule was very different. Instructors played Monday for the students (as described above), and on Wednesday and Friday in concerts open to the public. Tuesday's concert featured guest performers, and there was no concert on Thursday to allow more time for jams.

Choro das Tres, the trio of virtuoso sisters in their 20s, made their third visit to Symposium while on tour in the U.S. Corina plays flute and piccolo, Elisa plays mandolin, banjo and clarinet and Lia plays 7-string guitar. Their father, Eduardo, plays pandeiro (the Brazilian tambourine). Their set ranged from serene waltzes with Corina's soulful flute, to joyful, allegro pieces in which

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Elisa's fingers fly. In their ongoing mission to revive the Choro tradition, they've been writing, commissioning and recording new compositions. The fame and influence of these young women is sure to grow in the years to come.

The Ragtime Skedaddlers, a trio carrying on the long tradition of ragtime music, played on Monday. The trio, made up of Dennis Pash on banjo-mandolin, Nick Robinson on mandolin and Mike Schwartz on guitar, plays rags and cakewalks using original arrangements published from the 1890s through the 1920s. They captivated the audience with renditions of the Black and White Rag, The Entertainer and Temptation Rag. Having just performed a repertoire of music the "Golden Era of the Mandolin" with the Seattle Orchestra, I was especially delighted to hear (and recognize) these tunes.

The Wednesday night concert featured not only all the instructors, but a special appearance by the Ger Mandolin Orchestra and members of David Grisman's Sextet. Though the initial change in structure was to accommodate David Grisman's concert schedule (he had to fly out for a concert with Del McCourey at a bluegrass festival in Kentucky), the new approach worked out very well. It was great to hear the members of David Grisman's band -- his long time bassist Jim Kerwin, very talented guitarist George Cole and violinist Chad Manning -- play with and back up the instructors.

Sharon Gilchrist started out with the classic country song, "Waltz Across Texas," (by Ernest Tubb) with the assistance of Grisman's fiddler, guitarist, and bass player. Rich Del Grosso, did a wonderful tune he wrote: "She Googled Me," about a guy who puts "the make" on a woman at a bar, only to find out that she learns all about him and his past from Google! Don Stiernberg did a lovely version of Stevie Wonder's "Isn't She Lovely," accompanied by George Cole on guitar and Jim Kerwin on bass. Some of you reading this article will remember Don Stiernberg from his participation in the Dayton CMSA Convention in October of 2009.

Seven members of the Ger Mandolin Orchestra were on hand to perform on Wednesday. The Ger Mandolin Orchestra, the brainchild of Avner Yonai, is a living tribute to the Jewish mandolin orchestras and players who perished in the Holocaust. (The story of the Ger Mandolin Orchestra and their original concerts in 2011 were written up in the May and November Issues of this journal). The group had just returned from their debut performance in New York, at KulturfestNYC, an international celebration of Jewish arts and culture. At Symposium, they performed five pieces, including a lovely Polonaise by Edward Cziuszk, and "The Russian Rag," by George Cobb/Dave Apollon and a lively Italian piece.



*Ger Mandolin Orchestra
photo: Maria Camillo*

Caterina performed two solo pieces, "Air #4" by Gabriele Leone, and on the soprano lute mandolin, "Fantasia" by Carl Friedrich. Then Mike joined Caterina and they played a piece from their new Bach cd: the Organ Suite, #3, followed by a traditional tune they arranged, "Elzic's Farewell."



Caterina & Mike

The evening ended with David Grisman bringing up the three members of his Sextet, to play an amazing set. Then for the grand finale, David invited Mike Marshall and all the other instructors up on stage. They played Dawg's Bull, one of the first songs that Mike and David had recorded together when Mike joined DGQ in 1978. The piece started with just David Grisman, Mike on mandolin, and Chad Manning playing the simple rhythm on fiddle, then it built, full throttle, into the feet-stomping melody. The stage was lined with all the instructors, who played rhythm back up and then, one by one stepped up and took a solo. The bluegrass players -- Sharon Gilchrist, Drew Emmitt, and Roland While -- stepped up first and confidently played a dazzlingly lick. As they played, I watched the other teachers who don't play bluegrass or new grass -- Caterina, Rich DelGross, DuDu -- wondering if they'd take their solo too. I could see them hanging back a bit, then eyeing each other, encouraging each other to just "go for it". And they did! They played their hearts out, blending their style with that flow of the tune. And it worked like magic, just like everything about the Symposium.

Obituary: Vito F. Foti

Obituary:

Vito F. Foti

Public Accountant and Mandolinist

Vito F. Foti (90) longtime resident of East Orange and Millburn NJ passed peacefully on Easter Sunday, April 5th. Visitation is Thursday, April 9th from 2-4pm and 7-9pm at Galante funeral Home, 2800 Morris Ave, Union, NJ. A Mass of Christian burial will be held on Friday 10:00am at St Rose of Lima Church, Short Hills, NJ.

Vito was a decorated WWII veteran of the Army Air Corp. He graduated from Seton Hall University and worked as a public accountant for Lieberman Bros & Drossman for over 30 years, then worked in the Papermill Playhouse Finance Dept. for over 20 years.

An avid mandolinist, Vito was a "Hall of Fame" 60-year member of the Bloomfield Mandolin Orchestra. Vito received a lifetime service award from St. Joseph's

Church EO for his volunteer activities. He served as President of the Holy Name Society and called Bingo (B---2!) for many years. Later in life, Vito was also active at St. Rose of Lima Church.

Vito loved ballroom dancing and along with his wife Millie was a celebrated local talent, winning the 1993 Millburn Senior Dance Contest. Vito and Millie led off the Papermill Flashmob of 2010 with a "Peabody" step that has half a million hits on YouTube.

Vito is survived by his wife Millie (Carmela) of 63 years; his five children Maria Johnson and husband Allen, Gabe Foti, Jim Foti and his wife Carrie, Tom Foti, Anne Pollock and husband William; his twelve grandchildren, and two great grandchildren. He is also survived by three sisters-in-law, Rose Foti of Brick NJ, Marie Mosso of West Orange NJ and Sue Mosso of Miami FL, and many loving nieces, nephews and cousins. His kindness, smile and infectious laugh are their treasured memories.

Sheet Music Available:

An Englishman in New York by Joe Brent and Alon Sariel

by Robert A. Margo

Courtesy of Joe Brent and Alon Sariel, I am pleased to announce the availability of the sheet music for their recent CD, "An Englishman in New York," which was reviewed (very favorably by me) in the August 2014 issue of the CMSA *Mandolin Journal*. The CD features arrangements for mandolin duo of 22 works by John Dowland, the greatest of the English lutenists of the "Golden Age" of English lute music (late 1500s-early 1600s). The CD and music were funded by a Kickstarter campaign.

The sheet music may be ordered in pdf form (download) or hard copy from Paladino Music:
<http://www.paladinomusic.at/sheet-music/pm-0033>

Payment will be in euros on this website. In North America, the sheet music can also be ordered in US dollars from Subito Music:

http://store.subitomusic.com/index.php?main_page=product_info&cPath=3_210_1132&products_id=7215

It should be kept in mind that the music is arranged for regular mandolin (GDAE) and 10-string mandolin (CGDAE). The 10-string parts can be played on a tenor mandola (CGDA) or on a liuto moderno (CGDAE, one octave lower than the 10-string mandolin). Brent and Sariel perform this music on instruments constructed by Brian Dean.

The CD may be ordered from Orlando Records (payment in euros):

<https://www.orlando-records.com/cds/englishman-new-york>

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The Regina Mandolin Orchestra would like to acknowledge the help of the C.M.S.A. and the S.O.A. (Saskatchewan Orchestral Association) www.saskorchestras.com for providing grants to help offset the cost of purchasing instruments for our Mando-for-Kids program.

Which Finger?

A Series About Mandolin Technique

Installment 18

by Keith David Harris

S---T---R---E---TC---H---I---N---G

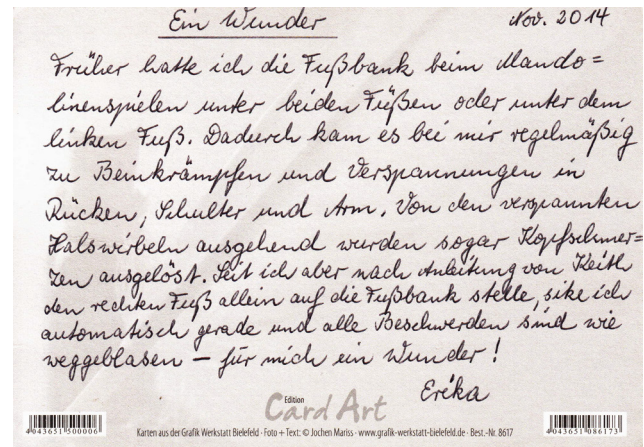
Sometimes I suggest that people try modifying some parameter or other of their playing technique, because I think things will work better if they do. If the people are regular students, who have learnt to trust me and have the patience to give things a fair try, they usually accept my advice, even though they know it may take a while before they feel the benefits. Sometimes though the improvement is instantaneous and dramatic – and of course that gives me a very nice feeling...

A Miracle

...I used to get leg cramps and tension in back, shoulder and arms, and even headaches due to tension in the neck. Since taking Keith's advice...all my complaints have just vanished. For me it's a miracle!

Erika

(This nice German lady, incidentally not a regular student, was happy to give me permission to publish the postcard.)



More often, even if something doesn't work immediately, people see the advantages, and that motivates them to accept the challenge.

A frequent reaction with people who don't know me that well though, is:

I've been doing it this way for so long, I can't possibly change.

I know from observing other people and also making changes myself that this is utter complacent nonsense, and really just means they don't want to go to the trouble, but I also know that there is always a price to pay for any change, so the decision has to be their own. That also applies to anybody working through these *Installments* of course!

The basis for such suggestions is usually a combination of the insights I've gained by trying things out myself over a very long time, together with my assessment as an experienced teacher of whether or not it will benefit the student. Old photos provide a good (if often rather embarrassing) record of various stages I've been through. On looking back, I often wish somebody had been able to correct fairly minor but critical things, which would have made a big difference, and sometimes I'm just horrified that people who should have known better either weren't able or didn't want to point certain things out to me. See the picture on the right for a mild example...

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Which Finger?



Even if these pictures don't look very similar at first glance, if you focus on the details of what the people are doing in playing the instruments, you will probably notice some common aspects. Perhaps the fact that the pictures are a long way apart - forty years in time and the Pacific Ocean in distance - might suggest some underlying principles. Bob Margo gave me permission to use the very recent picture on the left, and I doubt if the longhaired lutenist on the right would have minded. Bob's picture accords exactly with my present view of how things should be, and it's gratifying that the other guy did lots of things, if not all, in that way too - forty years ago. Can you spot relevant similarities and differences?

One thing I maintain both players can do well is spread their fingers between notes a long way apart, and the notes will still sound good. Can you see that simply from the basically harmonious distribution of forces in the left hand – the control over what the fingers do? I know this requires a trained eye and a bit of an intuition for physics (only a bit though - mine is pretty poor). Can you spot why Bob could probably stretch a tiny bit more easily (efficiently) than the other chap? The longhaired guy could in fact get around the fingerboard pretty well too though, but he sometimes bought the results at a high price, in terms of efficiency. He didn't know it at the time, but he often had to waste energy compensating for various inefficiencies. It is a familiar story of somebody doing something well not **because of** but **despite** certain things. That's indeed very common, so be careful when you imitate things players you admire do, expecting that to improve your playing. Despite what you, or even they, think, it may just either have nothing to do with their success, or even be actually something impractical that they somehow get around, often unconsciously – **not because of but despite...**

How far can the fingers of **your** stopping hand (the left hand if you are right-handed...) stretch horizontally along the fingerboard?

Please be sensible as you try the following experiments, and if something hurts, just stop before you damage yourself. I have a mandolin in mind, so you should possibly subtract a fret now and then if you play a mandola, and certainly a fair bit more for a mandocello. Whether you believe it or not, statistically, cello players (like Bob in the picture – well it's really a liuto, but the idea is the same) are much more likely to be doing things in an

(cont. on page 30)

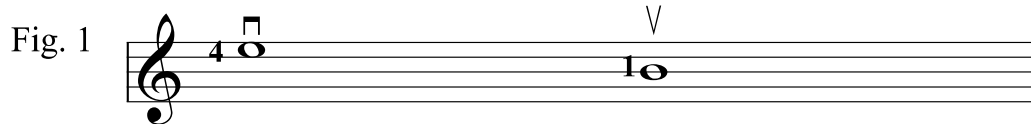
Which Finger?

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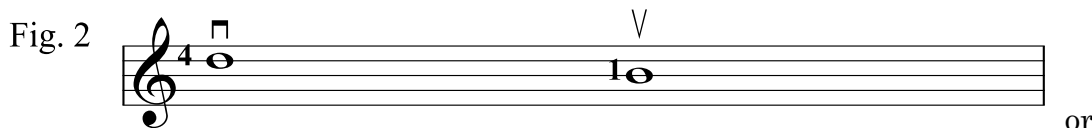
anatomically and physically sensible way than people with shorter fingerboards. They have to compensate for the instrument's unwieldiness by being super efficient. Another word of caution: please don't force things. If you can't do these things comfortably and easily, it probably won't be from lack of trying, but rather from having picked up wrong information at some time. If you do even wrong things repeatedly, they begin to feel right, at least until tendonitis or arthritis set in. You could of course find out about the right way...

How to proceed in Figures 1, 2 and 3 below:

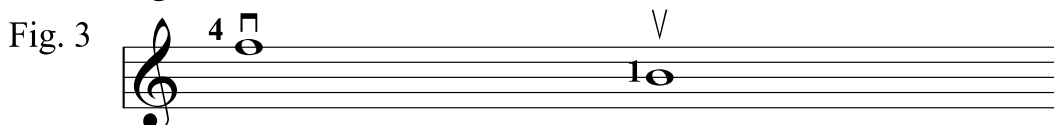
- Start by fretting only the higher note – with the pinkie. Take care that it feels good and strong. Don't press the other fingers down, but rather, allow them to close up to the 4th finger, so it can easily apply the appropriate pressure to press the string cleanly against the fret.
- Keeping the pinkie exactly where it is, now expand the other fingers back (in the direction of the tuning pegs) so the 1st finger stops the lower note **as well**. Check that the other fingers (2 and 3) are **not** touching the strings, because that would get in the way and falsify the results.
- Now play the higher note with a **downstroke** and let it ring for 4 seconds - more if you want, but please not very much less. If it's uncomfortable or unclear, please don't force it and make your hand sore. You should realize though that the reason is most likely that you just don't quite do it right, and really should look into the matter more closely.
- Now use an **upstroke** to play the lower note – the one with the 1st finger. There should be utterly no break in the sound between the notes; the right moment to raise the pinkie is exactly with the upstroke.



This is the archetypal situation, declaring the interval of a 4th to define the natural and God-given extremes for the placement of the 4th and 1st fingers respectively. This is one of the fundamental dogmas on which the notorious “position theory” is founded. Don't blame me. I didn't invent it, and I think it was a lousy idea 250 years ago and still is. Just think about some of the other ideas which also went unquestioned at the time: slavery, suppression of women, transportation of criminals, who stole a loaf of bread for their starving children, to British colonies like America and Australia – ideas aren't necessarily good just because they are old. Don't get me wrong, though. There's nothing wrong with being able to alternate easily and comfortably between these two pitches, and it strikes me as being a pretty sensible choice of fingers to do it with too. What I really think is a bad idea though, is regarding the above combination of notes and fingers as in any way more obvious, sensible or useful than



or



or many other possibilities.

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Are all the combinations equally easy, good and comfortable for you? If they aren't, sorry! It is almost certainly not for anatomical but rather for behavioral reasons, not how you are built but what you do, choice not destiny. It might be comforting for you to believe for example that it doesn't work because your pinkie is just too short or not strong enough, but I've simply never met anybody for whom such rationalizations were not just a copout, with the rare exception of people who have damaged their hand in an accident – and even in such cases, it's often worth at least investigating whether that's the real explanation.

There can of course be lots of reasons why some people have troubles. Two common ones though are certainly self-imposed:

- 1) If you support the neck of the instrument with any part of your stopping hand – as indeed is prescribed in 99% of “how-to-do-it” mandolin methods – you severely restrict the hand's ability to adapt appropriately to the exigencies of playing. (Any competent guitar teacher can tell you why.) Simply holding the instrument becomes the priority, and many people either overhear or ignore the awful consequences of this in terms of intonation (see Installments 11 and 18) or just general efficiency.
- 2) The muscles of the hand are not properly trained, and don't or can't send the fingers where they should go - invariably because the player simply doesn't really have a clear, undogmatic and convincing idea of what to do, and not because of inborn physical limitations.

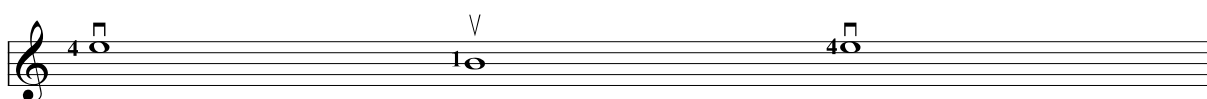
Perhaps you can understand what this rather cryptic statement means by examining the following matters slowly and honestly:

- What happens to your **pinkie** in Figures 1, 2 and 3, after you raise it to play the note with the 1st finger? Do you in fact just (a) lose track of it, and therefore can't answer the question (highly likely)? Does it (b) continue hovering over the spot it just left (pretty unlikely), or does it (c) move spontaneously towards the 1st finger?

If (c), which is by far the most likely result, you'll have a problem if you want to put the pinkie back on the note it just left, because you have inadvertently allowed the forces in the hand to change, and the pinkie is no longer anywhere near the 7th fret.

Try this and think about it for a while:

Fig. 4

At this moment, you should be stopping with both the pinkie (E) AND the 1st finger (B).	When you raise the 4th finger in order to play the note stopped by the 1st finger, it SHOULD continue hovering over the E fret, ready to return there without any further adjustments. This is not very hard, but does require a certain sort of training that not everybody has had .	So, are you able easily and fluently to put the pinkie back where it was? It goes without saying that the 1st finger continues stopping the lower note. Or did you really want to have an untidy and noisy break between the notes?
		

It seems to be a close-kept secret that how far you get with your **pinkie** depends almost entirely on the 2nd finger. When you raised the pinkie in Figure 4, you might have noticed the pinkie closing up to the 1st finger. Well, that might be how it looked, but the real reason behind the impression was that the 2nd finger came to the aid of the 1st finger,

Which Finger?

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and the pinkie just got dragged along. The spread between the fingers starts with the 2nd finger, whether it is stopping or not. It really is much more a matter simply of awareness than of physical training, although well-trained muscles are also useful.

First though, please look closely at the following pictures, and see how easily and consistently the players were applying the principles of points 1 and 2 above.



- Regarding point 1: Look first of all at the place where the index finger joins to the hand. Can you see that there is a small gap between there and the neck of the instrument? The neck is not resting on the hand – the hand is not supporting the instrument. (How to achieve this is covered in great detail in *The Mandolin Game - TB 2010*. I wrote the book, by the way, during a long stay in Greece, among other things working with my young friends Mairi and Panagiotis, whose hands are shown here.) Mairi, on the left, is stopping both B on the 2nd string (with her index finger) and at the same time A on the 3rd string (with her pinkie). Panagiotis, on the right, is stopping both A and E on the D string, essentially the situation illustrated in Figure 1 above. They are both seen stopping with the index finger at the 2nd fret and the pinkie at the 7th fret.
- Regarding point 2, about real control of the fingers: Observe the space between fingers 1 and 2. If the players were to raise the pinkie, it would merely continue hovering over the spot it just left, ready to return there if so required, because in the first place, the 2nd finger would maintain its distance from the index finger, and by so doing would maintain a correct balance of forces in the hand. Please note: even though the 2nd finger does not stop a note itself, where it is determines the success of the other fingers, particularly the pinkie.

As a further illustration of how the hand works, consider this photo:

- This octave mandola player is seen stopping both the 3rd and the 2nd frets at the same time. If he were to raise the 2nd finger, the 1st finger would continue pressing the string against the fret, ensuring a smooth change from one note to the next. Were he to stop again with the 2nd finger at the fret it just left, the 1st finger would also stay in place– for the same reason.



Which Finger?

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Interestingly, the photo does illustrate one particular and glaring technical error, an issue which resolves itself in later photos. See if you can spot it, and see if you understand the reason it disappears later. However, it also illustrates very well an aspect of how the hand works, particularly in respect of how to stretch between fingers.

- Notice that fingers 1 and 2 are stopping notes on adjacent frets. Another way of expressing this is to say that there is not much stretch between these two fingers. And observe the result for the pinkie, which is hovering – very relaxed and harmonious – not over the 7th but over the 5th fret.



- The (generally excellent) player, the student of a highly respected colleague, is young, daring and highly motivated, and in the picture on the left he tries to prove that he can put his pinkie on the note at the 7th fret, while keeping the 2nd finger at the 3rd fret – really an impossible anatomical situation. Looking at how far the pinkie is away from the 7th fret, and the ring finger from the 5th, which they are supposed to be pushing the string firmly and cleanly against, I've got my doubts about how lovely the

notes would sound. But even apart from the fact that there's no call for a circus act, the hand just doesn't look very happy and relaxed. The attempt doesn't prove much, or at least not what the player intended. It's a good party trick, I suppose.

- Look now at the dramatic difference it makes if the distance between the 1st and 2nd fingers is increased by one fret. The pinkie is still a little bit far from the 7th fret for my taste, which however is probably due not to a stretching issue, but rather to its not being trained to be positioned more vertically. (cf. Mairi and Panagiotis above.) It's much closer to the relevant fret than in the previous picture though, and the ring finger is now excellent. The real issue is only apparently the stretch between 1 and 4; in fact, the issue is the distance between 2 and 4, and this is much shorter and more manageable in this last photo.



I hope you enjoy looking at these pictures, and that the Installment perhaps nudges you into thinking in a different way about a few things. Please be kind but critical when you scrutinize the lute lout next to Bob Margo. He was very sensitive in those days...

Throughout this Installment, I've casually asked a number of questions. If anybody is interested, let me know, and I'll publish my own thoughts in the next Installment. And if anybody would like to talk about any of the issues raised either here or in the previous 18 Installments, please don't be shy about contacting me.

Keith Harris, Marburg (Germany), where it's over 90°F on Independence Day, 2015.

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