



The official newsletter of the
Classical Mandolin Society of America

The Mandolin Journal

November 2015 • Volume XXXII #4

29th Annual CMSA Convention: Awesome in Austin

by Barbara Conrad



CMSA 2015 En-Masse Orchestra photo by Yahimi Masuo

Ah, Austin! Where shall I start, to convey the heady experience, the joy of being at a superbly-run CMSA convention, surrounded by over 140 kindred spirits, immersed in playing and hearing some of the most beautiful music on earth?

Concerts, workshops, En Masse orchestra, and lots of less-structured playing and socializing with friends old and new—the Austin convention had it all, and more. The enthusiastic Austin Mandolin Orchestra organizing team, led by Joane Rylander and AMO director Joel Hobbs, did an outstanding job, once again raising the bar for future conventions.

The convention started with master classes led by our headliners, Carlo Aonzo for mandolin-family instruments and Rene Izquierdo for guitars. This was the first time for a dedicated guitar master class, and I heard that the small group found it inspiring. Carlo's sold-out master class got rave reviews. One student told me, "Carlo keeps finding new ways to work on technique and make it interesting, useful and fun."

For early arrivals not doing master classes, Dede Hurson of the AMO led a group of 17 on a sight-seeing outing Tuesday evening, featuring a brew pub and Tex-Mex dinner. The famous Austin bats were a no-show, but we enjoyed the evening walk, the scenery and the company.

The En Masse orchestra experience is a highlight of every convention, so I will start here. We had 36 in the first mandolin section, 50 playing second mandolin, 17 on mandola/octave mandolin, 14 on mandocello and 13 on guitar. This includes five talented young scholarship students. Dr. Jim Bates was once again our dynamic conductor. With 130 players, he did an admirable job of keeping the group focused and making the best use of each daily rehearsal.

The first day we managed to read through our entire program, which consisted of:

- *Impressioni Orientali*, by Raffaele Calace
- *Memories from the Future: A Suite for Mandolin Orchestra*, by our Composer-in-Residence, Joel R. Hobbs, in three movements (a world premiere)
- *The Song of Japanese Autumn*, by Yasuo Kuwahara
- *Wild at Heart*, by Erik 't Hart, in three movements

This music was not what you'd consider mainstream classical music, but a wonderful demonstration of the possibilities for expression in mandolin orchestra music, from four different cultures. It was full of contrasts in mood and texture.

Classical Mandolin Society of America

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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

Greetings,

Thanks to everyone who contributed to this issue of the *Mandolin Journal*, especially Barbara Conrad who contributed three articles including her usual superb CMSA convention coverage.



Keith Harris' "Which Finger" column will resume with the February issue of the *Mandolin Journal* as Keith has been very busy traveling and teaching in Vienna, Venice, and Australia - in addition to planning master classes for the end of January in Korea and Japan!

Please check to see if you have renewed your CMSA membership as our membership year runs from November 1 - October 31. The renewal form is on page 26 or you may renew online at the CMSA website:
<http://classicalmandolinsociety.org/signup.asp>

The deadline for submissions for the February issue of the *Mandolin Journal* is January 1st. Please email submissions to me at **CMSAJournal@gmail.com**.

May your holidays be full of joy and music.

Sincerely,

Jackie Zito

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Presidents' Message

Kudos to the remarkable committee from Austin, and to all who participated in making the 2015 Convention a tremendous success. You can read about the event in this issue's article by Barbara Conrad.

There were several new features in this convention that we hope to continue and expand upon in future conventions. Using the data we acquire from our e-survey of attendees, we will continue to work on the suggestions and ideas offered to us, as well as keeping the favorite events and activities.

With the 2015 convention behind us, we have the challenge to work on the initiatives that have been set before the Board, and at the General meeting.

First, this fall, we will be accepting nominations for the Board of Directors. If you, or someone you know is interested and would like more information, please contact us with your questions. Nominations take place in November, the election is in January and positions are filled in February. Each term is for 3 years.

Then, in the next few months, we will be undertaking a complete overhaul of our website. You may see some "under construction" signs during the process, but we will be working hard to make the site more user-friendly, with new features and updates.

We are also working on expanding our music library so that a variety of music will be available to you online, as well as at the conventions.

For those of you who were unable to attend the Convention, we would like you to know that a scholarship for 2nd mandolin players has been set up in Lou Chouinard's honor. We are accepting donations of any amount, if interested in making a contribution, please contact president@classicalmandolinsociety.org for information.

As we work on our goals for the upcoming year, we wish you all happy holidays full of music and joy!

Susan and Sue



Susan Mc Laughlin



Sue Lesser

The Back Story: How did the CMSA Convention end up in Austin, TX? by Lou Chouinard

Your roving investigative reporter was curious as to how the CMSA Convention ended up in Austin TX. After exhaustive investigation and interrogation of the perpetrators, I am happy to bring you this story.

Joel Hobbs, a multi-instrumentalist, became interested in the mandolin (the best instrument on the planet) in 2002. In that year, he began taking lessons with Paul Glasse (who performed at the 2001 CMSA convention in Bozeman, MT.). He also became a CMSA member that year. In 2004, he continued his mandolin journey by attending the Mandolin Symposium and Mandofest. He also became a CMSA life member that year. Thoroughly enthused about all things mandolin, he started the Austin Mandolin Orchestra in 2004. The AMO gave their first public concert in 2005.

Fast forward to 2012. Dotty Coffey, the Host Committee Chair for the 2012 CMSA convention held in Minneapolis, noticed some posts on the Mandolin Café by Joel. They started corresponding. Dotty learned that there was a

mandolin orchestra in Austin. Being from Texas, she wrangled an invite to sit in on a rehearsal with the AMO while visiting her parents (who live just outside of Austin).

Dotty was amazed that this great orchestra existed and was, essentially, unknown to the greater CMSA membership. She suggested to Joel that the AMO should host a convention. After some consideration, the idea grew on Joel. One problem – Joel had never been to a convention. To truly understand what might be, Joel attended the 2013 CMSA convention in Regina.

Even more enthused, and with some intense lobbying by Ms. Coffey and yours truly, he agreed. The AMO had a number of members attend the 2014 convention in Portland to get firsthand experience on what they were in for. That experience had a large impact on the great success of the Austin convention.

The rest is history☺

29th Annual CMSA Convention: Awesome in Austin

(continued from page 1)

Each day began with a sectional practice, led by our top player/coaches: Carlo for first mandolins, Natalia Osypenko for second mandolins, Robert Margo for mandolas, Dede Hurson for 'cellos, and Rene for guitars. In this daily session we ironed out our trouble spots, resolved uncertainties and asked our roving conductor about any elusive questions. You could tell that at every En Masse practice we were becoming more focused, drilling down into more subtle matters of tone, tempo and dynamics.



Dana Wygmans

A local bass player, Dana Wygmans, joined us for our final rehearsal and concert Saturday, since we had no bassists among our attendees (and after having four last year in Portland!). This added a lot. After our last rehearsal Jim told us we were the best prepared En Masse orchestra ever, and we were flying at our fastest-ever tempo in places.

All of our concerts were publicized in the local entertainment publications, Austin being such a local center for live music, and a lot of people came in for all of them, especially the final one. The organizers brought in sound and lighting to transform a hotel ballroom into a real concert hall.

Saturday's concert audience gave the En Masse orchestra a standing ovation and called for more. For the first time at a CMSA convention, we gave an encore. Not having any other material prepared, we had to follow the exciting finale of our last piece, *Wild at Heart*, with a repeat of the quiet ending of the Japanese piece. That must have been hard for the guitars to do, as they started. I needed the mandolins' five-bar rest to get my own pulse back down. It was a lovely way to extend and close this shared experience. I was sure I saw tears in the eyes of our conductor, but it could have been perspiration from his intense conducting workout.

The concert line-up was superb. Thursday we heard the host orchestra play a set of original music,



The Austin Mandolin Orchestra under the baton of Joel Hobbs
Photo by Yoshimi Masuo

including compositions by Joel Hobbs, John Goodin, Philip De Walt, Evelyn Tiffany-Castiglioni and James Kellaris. Hats off to the AMO, who celebrated their tenth anniversary this year, and congratulations on an impressive performance. The Paul Glasse quartet followed with a set that, for me, broadened the definition of jazz – or else this is just a handy tag that covers their hard-to-categorize repertoire of cross-over music with roots in old-time, swing, blues and more. We enjoyed Paul's humorous introductions too.



The Paul Glasse Quartet
Photo by Yoshimi Masuo

Friday's concert began with Duo Exaudi, the husband-and-wife team of Rene Izquierdo and Elina Chekan, playing selections by Scarlatti, Bach, Brahms, Debussy and Fernando Sor. The duo of Carlo and Rene followed, with music by Bach, Paganini, and Brazilian Celso Machado. (Carlo and Rene also opened Saturday's concert, I omitted to say earlier, with different selections from the same composers.) Rene and Carlo's set ended with a couple of surprises: first, his talented young Italian protégé, Lorenzo Piccone, who played guitar and



Carlo Aonzo, Rich Del Grosso, & Lorenzo Piccone
Photo by Kevin Knippa

sang an original song. After that, a visiting friend, blues mandolinist Rich Del Grosso, came up, and all of them played a rocking number, "Mandolin Man."

Workshops were, as always, excellent and too many to mention – and three times as many as one person could take in. Starting Wednesday afternoon, they covered the whole gamut of music and mandolin-related topics.

There was something for every level. Lou Chouinard presented his mandolin boot camp workshop, aimed at less-experienced players.

Our Composer-in Residence, Joel Hobbs, led a delightful session in which the class collaborated in composing a suite entitled "The Joy of Dynamic Crickets," based on an initial brainstorm of random words. To begin, he gave us

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(continued from page 4)

blank music paper and some tricks of the trade to create with. Together we composed three movements for all orchestra sections. At the end, after playing through our suite, we handed in our transcriptions. You will find the results of our creative play in the “Composer’s Corner” in this issue.

Paul Glasse gave a three-part series about jazz mandolin. Carlo and Rene each gave two classical workshops for their respective instruments. In the mandolin ones, Carlo handed out sheet music and we became an ensemble.

Jim Bates, an ever-popular presenter, gave sessions on performance anxiety and on becoming a teacher.

Fred Pike had a session, iPad for Mando Dummies, where participants learned of creative ways to use iPad apps, camera and microphone to enhance their practice and performance.

Forums on composing and on making instruments brought together, respectively, three composers and three luthiers, to speak about their crafts.



*August Watters
photo by Keith Rylander*

August Watters spoke about classical mandolin techniques, drawing from his recent book. Joel Hobbs gave a second workshop, talking about subtle techniques for adding various tone colors and effects to enhance music.

Laura Norris and Sue Lesser gave a session about Mando for Kids and how to start up a local program. We heard later that this has inspired several people, with at least one who wants to set up a program right away.

Several vendors provided a variety of sheet music, CDs and related items for sale. Four luthiers brought a variety of lovely instruments to admire, try and even buy.

We were fortunate this year to have an AMO member and yoga instructor, Hester Denniston, lead yoga sessions each morning, featuring musician-specific stretches and breathing exercises. It was a great start to the day, for those of us able to get up a little earlier after the late-night playing.

Ah yes, late-night playing is where a lot of friendships are made. Carlo and Rene had an after-hours session to read

through a sampling of music their Manhattan workshop will be working on next spring. We were lucky to have Toni Nigrelli with us to lead her popular after-hours sight-reading sessions. Sue Lesser and Paul Beidler, Phil De Walt and others brought music for other sessions, which Paul described as “where we play music we can’t play, way too fast.” A lot of laughs. Other impromptu jams were happening in various corners.

The two lunchtime Open Mic concerts, smoothly coordinated and emceed by director Lucille Bjornby, were a chance to play for and listen to the talented players around us, from soloists to bigger groups, from all regions. What a variety and high quality of music we heard, and how impressive it is when you think of each person’s musical journey and dedication to reach this point.



*Sue Lesser & Paul Beidler at Open Mic
photo by Keith Rylander*

Friday’s banquet was a lively social occasion with a delicious buffet featuring Texas barbecue. The raffle raised over \$1,700 towards the CMSA education programs, which means that each person bought, on average, at least ten tickets and the odds were good for walking away with at least one of the desirable prizes.

At the Annual General Meeting Sunday morning, we heard from our co-presidents and others about the current state of the CMSA: in short, very healthy. We heard about plans for the convention in Philadelphia next year, November 1 to 6, and locations for the next couple of conventions after that.

So it’s all over for another year. We owe huge thanks to our wonderful Austin hosts for stepping up and bringing a CMSA convention to a new region. See you in Philadelphia!

CMSA Acknowledges New Lifetime Members:

**James Kellaris - Cincinnati, OH
Evelyn Tiffany-Castiglioni -
College Station, TX**

Mapping the Future of CMSA

by Susan McLaughlin & Sue Lesser

At the beginning of our tenure as Co-Presidents, we asked our fellow Board Members to help us set direction by providing us with their ideas, thoughts & vision for C.M.S.A. We were very pleased by the strong response. We summarized this Board input into three broad categories, and circulated it back amongst the Board Members for discussion. At our Annual General Meeting, which was held the Sunday morning of our Convention in Austin, we read this summary of ideas out loud to the members assembled. This, in turn, stimulated discussion and some additional ideas from the membership. At the A.G.M., we were encouraged to share this list with the full membership via the Mandolin Journal:

Conventions:

- Lengthen the convention
- Even out the quality of section leaders
- Expand open-mic opportunities
- Revive the mandolin playing contest
- Develop a protocol to ensure strong representation of sheet music (traveling library?), artist CDs and instruments at conventions
- Create a panel of experts to lead a workshop or discussion group in relevant topics such as: generating income, insurance, ownership rights to arrangements/music, growing an audience base, keeping performance standards high, orchestra development, etc.

Developing Resources for CMSA Members / Member Orchestras:

- Development & expansion of website (reformat user interface; complete work on Nakano Archive, add educational components, discography of classical mandolin recordings, convention video recordings, add resource information for mandola & mandocello, add registry of composers, merchandise store, etc.)
- Offer advanced group learning sessions via Skype or Go-To-Meeting (topics similar to those mentioned above)
- Encourage compositions of mandolin orchestra music
- Consider offering 'regional' mandolin events throughout the year
- Sponsor a scholarly publication to supplement The Mandolin Journal
- Create a comprehensive index of all issues of The Mandolin Journal

- Sponsorship of a classical mandolin camp
- Poll member groups to determine their activities, their music collections, etc.

Development of External Relationships:

- Increase interaction with international mandolinists
- Increase our exposure to the problems & solutions of orchestras in other countries
- Increase exposure to repertoire played by orchestras in other countries
- Create a CMSA orchestra 'playing tour' of another country
- Offer a 'mandolin cruise'
- Send CMSA representatives to related conventions, such as ASTA
- Send subsidized CMSA delegation to conventions of counterpart organizations (FAME, EGMA, BDZ etc.)
- Sponsor a CMSA orchestra to attend Eurofestival 2018

Of note: Some steps have already been taken towards implementing the following suggestions:

- Pursuing the growth of the mandolin as an instrument of choice
- Integrating the Mando for Kids Workshops into the main body of convention workshops
- Offering multi-session workshops
- Increasing presence and participation of classical guitarists at conventions
- Allowing for pre-selection of convention workshops and pre-printing of workshop materials
- Broadening the variety of articles submitted to The Mandolin Journal
- Completing a comprehensive history of CMSA (Include as many historical photographs as possible)

What do you feel CMSA should be devoting its time and energy towards? We'd be pleased to hear from you using the email address president@classicalmandolinsociety.org. Your input will help us focus our future priorities. Thanks again to everyone,
Susan & Sue
Co-Presidents, CMSA

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CALL FOR NOMINATIONS

Officers and Board of Directors Positions

To all CMSA members -

The following THREE(3) BOARD of DIRECTORS terms expire at the end of 2015:

- Vicky Gleicher
- Jim Bates
- John Goodin

All Directors are elected for THREE-YEAR terms (2016 – 2018).

NOMINATIONS

If you wish to nominate one or more CMSA members to stand for election for these seats, please return your nomination(s) to a member of the Nominating Committee.

<u>Nominating Committee</u>			
David Betts (Chairman) 230 S Main St Spring City, PA 19475 ponyshed@verizon.net	Jonathan Rudie 4 Maryland Avenue Towson, MD 21286 jrudie@aol.com	Lou Chouinard 3925 30 Avenue S Minneapolis, MN 55406-3108 l_chouinard@visi.com	Lucille Bjerneby 110 Ogston Terrace Malverne, NY 11565 ldbj110@optonline.net

To make a nominations, either

- 1) Go to www.ClassicalMandolinSociety.org where you will see a link to the online nomination.
- 2) Contact any of the members of the Nominating Committee, by e-mail or mail, with your nominations.

**DEADLINE FOR SUBMISSIONS TO THE NEXT JOURNAL IS JANUARY 1st
PLEASE SEND SUBMISSIONS TO: CMSAjournal@gmail.com**

Composer's Corner: CMSA 2015 Wrap-up

by Joel R. Hobbs

What fun it was to behold a horde of mandolinists descending like crickets on Austin for CMSA 2015. Though we experienced a dearth of Mexican free-tailed bats, there was no paucity of new music to savor. The Austin Mandolin Orchestra was elated to perform four world premieres with their remarkable composers—**John Goodin, James Kellaris, Philip Dewalt** and **Evelyn Tiffany-Castiglioni**—in attendance.

As composer-in-residence, it was joyful to observe my new piece *Memories from the Future: A Suite for Mandolin Orchestra* come to life under the nimble guidance of conductor **Dr. Jim Bates** and the hardest working mandolin orchestra in show business—the **CMSA En Masse Orchestra!** I'm grateful to the CMSA for providing this opportunity and to everyone who worked so hard to render a dazzling performance. In the near future, I will be releasing PDF files for this piece as well as my polka and AMO theme *The City of the Violet Crown* for distribution under a Creative Commons license. Watch my website joelhobbs.com for details.

The classics survive because they are masterful and worthy of our abiding reverence. But we shouldn't permit our concerts to become merely stagnant museums of proven repertoire. Jean Sibelius said, "Music begins where the possibilities of language end. That is why I write music." When we nurture each other's voice, we showcase vibrant and advancing artistic communication.

Each of us plays a role in preserving, discovering and originating music that will be meaningful for our audiences. Not all music will— or should— survive. As performers, we guide composers both by programming new pieces that we enjoy and by commissioning new ones.

In my CMSA 2015 workshop *Let's Make a Treasure Map*, I deputized a roomful of participants into the role of composer. In our 75-minute session, we talked about a number of composing techniques, created a plan for a new piece, then wrote and performed a miniature three-movement work. I hope everyone enjoyed it as much as I did and gained some insight into the composing process.

Here is a version of our collective piece *The Joy of Dynamic Crickets* for reference. I highly encourage you to continue to experiment with the techniques we discussed and to expand these materials into your personal rendition of the piece.

One place to start would be to look at Movement II. In the current version as we rotate through different chord inversions we get a suspenseful flowing sound but we don't have any one sequence of notes that is musically satisfying- how about a melody? One hint to crafting a melody is to work on voice leading— make a more smooth movement from one chord note to the next. You might even need to change the order of the chords, or add some new ones, to fit your new melody. Another challenge would be to add a few more measures to Movement III to contrast with the first four measures. Or use the materials handouts from the workshop to cook up a new piece of your own design.

These are just a few starter ideas for improvements, do what you like to make it your own. This is where my words end and your music begins! Find that place where you want to go musically, then draw a treasure map- your score- so we can all follow you there.

(cont. on page 10)

CMSA Welcomes New Members:

Achille Bocus - Oakland, CA

Philip Rugel - Parchment, MI

Jay Clement - Austin, TX

Tim Grear - Fayetteville, AR

Kenichi Sato - New Albany, IN

Elizabeth Hodges - Blanco, TX

Joyce Snodgrass - Leander, TX

Theresa Gong - Shepherd, MT

Dori Butler - Kirkland, WA

Amanda Case - Fort Worth, TX

Matthew Lyons - Fort Worth, TX

Evan Snoey - Seattle, WA

Brian Ellis - Austin, TX

THE JOY OF DYNAMIC CRICKETS

I. Eight Humid Elephants ♩ = 120

Musical score for "I. Eight Humid Elephants" in 3/2 time, tempo 120. The score consists of five staves: M 1, M 2, M'dola, Gtr, and M'cello. The first system (measures 1-8) shows M 1 and M 2 starting with a rest, then playing a melody with dynamics *mp* and *f*. M'dola, Gtr, and M'cello play a rhythmic accompaniment with dynamics *mf*. The second system (measures 9-16) features M 1 and M 2 with triplets and dynamics *mf* and *f*. M'dola, Gtr, and M'cello continue their accompaniment. The score concludes with a double bar line and repeat signs.

by Joel's CMSA 2015 Austin Treasure Mappers

THE JOY OF DYNAMIC CRICKETS

II. Flowing Suspense ♩ = 54

17

M 1 *pp* *cresc.* *f* *dim.*

M 2 *pp* *cresc.* *f* *dim.*

M'dola *pp* *cresc.* *f* *dim.*

Gtr *pp* *cresc.* *f* *dim.*

M'cello *pp* *cresc.* *f* *dim.*

25

M 1 *p* *cresc.* *ff* *dim.*

M 2 *p* *cresc.* *ff* *dim.*

M'dola *p* *cresc.* *ff* *dim.*

Gtr *p* *cresc.* *ff* *dim.*

M'cello *p* *cresc.* *ff* *dim.*

III. Cowabunga Mah-Jong ♩ = 132

33

M 1 *mp*

M 2 *mp* *mp* Mah jong

M'dola *mp*

Gtr *mp* *ff* Cow a bun ga

M'cello *mp*

To Ely:

“You made the world a brighter place with your presence...and your mandolin”

by Nora Morgenstern



Ely Karasik

Ely Karasik died on September 30 after a brief illness. He played with the Denver Mandolin Orchestra (DMO) until two months before his death at 91. His influence on DMO and Classical Mandolin Society of America (CMSA) members and fans – past and present – was profound. Comments from his many admirers, amateur and

professional musicians alike, include:

An inspiration

A gentle soul

Amazing

So very kind

Generous

A talent so huge it can't be put into words

Admired and loved

I recall my first rehearsal with DMO. Ely walked into the room and I was awestruck. There was the man I admired most in the mandolin world.

Because of Ely I became the best I could be.

“I learned so much . . . I would not be nearly as interested in music as I am today without him.” (from Emily, whose mother took her to a DMO rehearsal for the 7th grade assignment of “day on the job”. Emily started played with the DMO at age 13 and is currently pursuing her career in music.)

“My hero is Ely Karasik. He is a 94 (sic) year old mandolinist. He is an amazing composer and one of the best musicians in the world.” (from Gwyneth, who joined the DMO at age 10 and wrote these words for a 5th grade assignment, “Meet My Hero”. She is currently in a music track in junior high school and, at age 13, is an integral member of the DMO.)

Ely's life was full of music from the start. Born in 1924 and raised in the New York Bronx to immigrant parents from the present-day Ukraine, he was given his first mandolin by his father at age 14. He started lessons for 10 cents a session with about ten other kids, mostly children of Russian Jewish immigrants. But the instructor, Thomas Sokoloff, then the conductor for the New York American Mandolin Orchestra, was so struck by Ely's talent that within a few months he recommended that Ely start private lessons for 50 cents each and join the orchestra. Within months young Ely – a high school student! -- was promoted to first chair. Ely recalled, “I was pretty young for that ... it was fun!” World War II intervened, and Ely was sent to France where he served in a machine gun company. The machine guns were heavy WWI vintage -- “My fingers were always frozen.” His father shipped his

mandolin overseas, but Ely soon sent it back, fearing for its safety. Music cheered him throughout the war, even without his beloved mandolin. Ely told us the story of learning “La Cucaracha” from a foxhole companion, and from time to time he entertained the DMO by playing the chorus on his mandolin and singing the Spanish version.

After the war, wanting to teach music, Ely earned a BA in Music Education at Columbia University. Recruited to a small town in Illinois to teach band, he met his wife Lenore. Lenore was an accomplished musician herself, teaching and playing piano. The couple moved to Colorado where Ely was offered “a teacher's dream” – starting a school band from scratch and teaching music to all grades in Climax Colorado (elevation 11,300 feet). He left Climax in

1956 and became a science teacher outside Denver where – small world!

– one of our current DMO mandolinists, Herb Lucki, was his junior high science student. Years later, after hearing Ely play guitar duo with Ron Grosswiler, Herb recalls, “I knew I wanted to learn to play mandolin.”

Herb now plays solo and mandolin guitar duos, and is particularly

appreciative of Ely's gifted interpretation of tangos: “His recordings . . . make the music explode . . . bringing tears to your eyes and making you smile at the same time.”



Ely with duet partner Ron Grosswiler

Ely was passionate about all types of music. He sang in the Denver Chorale. He learned Balkan folk dancing with his wife. He sought transcriptions of a wide variety of musical genres. He wrote and arranged numerous mandolin works. In the 1970s and 80s, especially after he retired from teaching in 1979, he embraced a career of teaching and performing mandolin. Ely played with the Denver Symphony Orchestra and Opera Colorado, and performed at Lincoln Center with the Balalaika and Domra Association of America. He was a longtime member of the CMSA and in 2005 at the Denver convention became the first musician to be honored by the CMSA for his lifetime contributions to mandolin music: solos, duos, trios, quartets, quintets; Italian, Greek, Jewish, Russian, Spanish, and Brazilian. I had the privilege of viewing his massive collection of “gig” books – all of

To Ely:

“You made the world a brighter place with your presence...and your mandolin”

(continued from page 12)

the above as well as “Potpourri”, “Klezmer”, “American”, “Classic Assortment”, “Europe”, “Christmas”, “Wedding”, and more. His sons Randy and Keith both played with him starting in high school, Randy on piano/keyboards and Keith on double bass. According to his sons, Klezmer was Ely’s favorite musical style at the time, and Russian music was a huge early influence. Ely also played with the legendary accordion player Robert Davine. He hired clarinet players and singers – and at one memorable DMO performance a curvaceous belly dancer to accompany his set of Middle Eastern music -- “but rarely a drum set ... he hated the drums!” according to Randy. But above all, Ely’s favorite combination was mandolin and guitar. We in the DMO had the privilege of playing for years with Ely’s longstanding guitar partner Ron Grosswiler, who died in 2008. Ron wrote guitar accompaniments for many of Ely’s mandolin pieces, and put together mandolin orchestra arrangements for the DMO. Although they often bickered during rehearsals about particular notes or interpretations of orchestra pieces, it was obvious to all of us that they admired – even loved – each other immensely.

Ely was a founding member of the Denver Mandolin Orchestra in 1976, and with the encouragement of local mandolin virtuoso Charlie Provenza, was a pivotal member of the DMO revival in 1999. Ely gladly taught many of us how to be better musicians, and was especially encouraging to young players. He was determined that every member of the orchestra become proficient in the “tremolo” and taught his students (including myself) in the “arched wrist” technique. In going through Ely’s books, I came across a draft of a letter he wrote to Mandolin World News in 1985:

Dear Friends. In reference to the recent MWN survey, I wish to submit some comments on particular concerns of mine. The MWN has advertisements of mandolins without pickguards and photos of prominent players holding mandolins without pickguards. The pictures may lead the student to believe there is no need for them. Sometimes the photo will indicate that the wrist is to be flat.

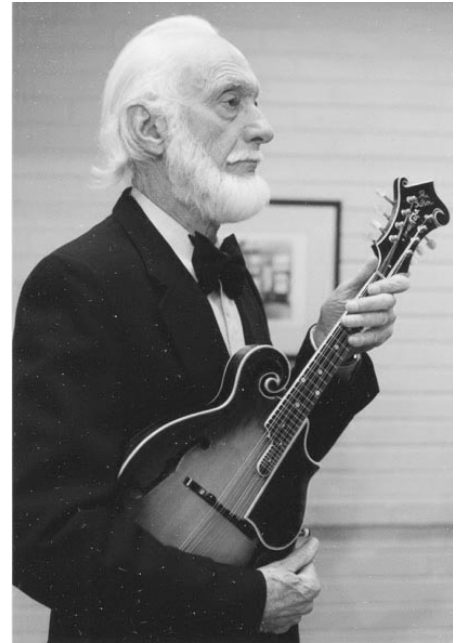
With these influences, the prospective student acquires a lack of good tremolo, flexibility and no nuance. These characteristics would have been obviated had the student used an arched wrist, a quiet arm and a pickguard. The pickguard presents a plane of reference for the tip and/or fingernails of the hand curving downward from an arched wrist...the hand will not wander away while gliding and gently touching the pickguard.

A spin-off benefit: no scratches and no gouging. Mandolinists ought to have the same regard for the

physical integrity of their instruments as other musicians do. During my professional engagements I never see my colleagues scratch their violins, guitars, clarinets, pianos, etc. But when I see some nationally famous mandolinists on tour, I am treated to martyred mandolins.

I don’t know if this letter was ever sent or published. But I can say that I still strive to achieve a tremolo even close to Ely’s exquisite sound. And it has taken years for me to master the more modern technique of the flat wrist.

Ely at one time owned the entire family of Gibson mandolin instruments – several mandolins (including the beautiful Lloyd Loar that he played in the orchestra), mandola, mandocello and mandobass, the latter tricked out in Ely’s idiosyncratic fashion with piano strings and a giant plectrum fashioned from the leather sole of an old shoe!



Ely with his Lloyd Loar

A little known fact about Ely was his fascination with Edgar Allen Poe. He became a member of the Baltimore Edgar Allen Poe society in 1976, and produced three CDs of musical homages to Poe’s poetry.

Ely wrote over fifteen original mandolin orchestra compositions, and arranged many more. We are in the process of putting together a library of his original mandolin works as well as historical reference pieces that we hope to share with mandolin enthusiasts in the future. As Scott Johnson, a former DMO cellist put it: “The vibrations of his mandolin strings affected all of us in massively profound ways.” May the vibrations live on.

With gratitude and thanks to:
Sara Visser (mayfairdenver.org)
Members of the Denver Mandolin Orchestra
Randy and Keith Karasik

Short Reviews, Volume 4:

Recordings of Interest

by Robert A. Margo

It used to be possible to review more or less every classical mandolin CD of significance for the CMSA *Mandolin Journal* at leisure and length. No longer – there are just too many worthy artists and too many worthy CDs, and long reviews sit in the queue too long due to journal space constraints. This is volume four of an occasional column of “short reviews” – the tradeoff is less detail in return for timely information/opinion for CMSA members.

Duo ReCuerda, “Gioielli del barocco,” available from www.primton.de or www.trekel.de

Duo ReCuerda is Jeannette Mozos del Campo (mandolin and baroque mandolino) and her spouse Vicente Mozos del Campo (classical guitar). The duo formed in 2003 when both were attending the music conservatory in Wuppertal. Jeannette received her initial training from Marga Wilden-Hüsgen and later her graduate degree from Caterina Lichtenberg. In wide demand as a workshop instructor, she teaches elementary music education at the music school in Bucham, Germany. Her husband studied guitar at Wuppertal with Alfred Eickholt and subsequently at the graduate level with the great Italian guitarist Carlo Marchione. One of the leading classical-mandolin guitar duos in Europe, Duo ReCuerda has released two previous CDs, “Elegia” and “Montuno”.

In addition to their mandolin and guitar education, Jeannette and Vicente have undertaken a special study of baroque music, and it shows in their remarkable new CD. The composers on “Gioielli de barocco” are a mixture of the familiar – Corelli, Handel, and Scarlatti – and the not-so-familiar (Ranieri and Romaldi, at least outside the mandolin world). What is remarkable is the performance. Simply put, Jeannette has figured out how to play baroque music on the mandolin in a completely natural manner – by which I mean not only does she have a deep understanding of the underlying principles of baroque harmony and rhythm, her skills at baroque ornamentation and embellishment are far (far) beyond any other mandolinist at present, in this reviewer’s opinion. (A small request: she would do the mandolin world a great service by writing a short method book about performing baroque music on the mandolin). Vicente, a world class guitarist on his own accord, accompanies her beautifully and sensitively throughout, with perfect ensemble and impeccable tone. Regardless of whether your tastes are inclined to the eighteenth century or later, “Gioielli del barocco” is a desert island mandolin disc if there ever was one.

Annika Hinsche, “Carlo Domeniconi: Selected Works VII 12 Preludes for Solo Mandolin,” available from www.pool-musik.com or www.trekel.de

Carlo Domeniconi is one of the world’s leading composers

for classical guitar. His “Koyunbaba” is arguably one of the best – and certainly, one of the most frequently played and recorded – of contemporary works. Evidently Domeniconi came across an earlier solo recording of Hinsche’s (“Approximacao”, which I reviewed previously in the CMSA *Journal*) and became transfixed by the sound world of the classical mandolin. He was particularly taken with a Calace prelude that Hinsche performed; “[f]ascinated that this little instrument could produce such great music,” Domeniconi bought a mandolin and set to work composing his own set of preludes.

There are twelve Domeniconi preludes and they are all, in a word, exceptional. The music is, at varying times (and often in the same piece), mercurial, tender, violent, desolate, exuberant, funky – really, just about any relevant adjective one could think of. Technically the pieces are (mostly) very difficult but all seem highly idiomatic for the mandolin, at least in Hinsche’s world-class hands. In time I believe this music will be seen as a milestone in the history of the classical mandolin, the contemporary equivalent of the Calace. There are many excellent composers in the modern classical guitar world and this recording offers tangible evidence that persuading more of them to write for the mandolin could bring massive dividends. For aspiring mandolin super-heroes reading this review, the sheet music is expected to be published by <http://www.edition-ex-tempore.de/>.

Jesse Jones and Craig Butterfield, “Stickerfoot”. Available from <http://www.cdbaby.com/cd/jessejonescraigbutterfie>

Jesse Jones (www.jessejonescomposer.com) is one of the brightest up-and-coming compositional lights in contemporary classical music. An assistant professor of music now at the University of Georgia (and formerly at the University of South Carolina) with a PhD in composition from Cornell, Jones’ solo and chamber works are routinely performed in New York, Europe, and Asia at major concert halls by major artists (for example, the Julliard Quartet, one of the world’s finest, premiered Jones’ string quartet “Whereof man cannot speak ...” in 2013). No slouch himself in the classical department, Butterfield (www.butterfieldbass.com) has an international reputation as a bassist, renowned for his technique and musicality in a vast swath of repertoire. A reviewer of one of Butterfield’s recent CDs wrote that he “[hadn’t] heard such expressive playing and virtuosic command since Gary Karr” – high praise indeed from the bass fraternity.

In his pre-PhD life, Jones performed widely as a new-grass mandolinist in the Bush-Grisman-Thile-mode with the group String Helix, appearing on Prairie Home

Short Reviews, Volume 4:

Recordings of Interest

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Companion and at Wintergrass, among other venues. He put the mandolin aside while completing his doctoral studies but has returned to the instrument in recent years, teaming up with Butterfield in the increasingly popular mandolin-bass duo format *a la* Thile-Meyer and others. It is a grand thing, because Jones is a superb mandolinist and Butterfield is as adept in popular and jazz styles as he is in classical music. There are nine selections on "Stickerfoot", four written by Butterfield and the remainder jointly composed. The music reflects a wide variety of styles, from old-time fiddle tunes, newgrass, jazz, some pop stylings, funky and irregular meters, and a splash of the tonal side of contemporary classical. The music alternates between composed and improvised sections; both players have massive chops, and the solo stuff will burn your ears at times. "Stickerfoot" is clearly influenced by Thile-Meyer and the casual listener might be forgiven in confusing the two duos. But the careful listener will detect more architecture to the writing on "Stickerfoot", perhaps reflecting the high level of formal training that Jones and Butterfield possess. Bottom line, if you enjoy Thile-Meyer I guarantee you will feel the same about Jones and Butterfield – they are that good. Here's hoping that the CMSA powers-that-be will hire Jones and Butterfield soon for one of our upcoming conventions!

Mike Marshall and Caterina Lichtenberg, "J.S. Bach: 15 Two-Part Inventions, 4 Organ Duets, 3 Canons from the Art of the Fugue", available from <http://elderly.com/recordings/items/AM-CD1094.htm>

The music on this recording has been transcribed and arranged for just about every instrument imaginable be these two guitars, clarinets, violins, cellos, bassoons, trombones, marimbas, whatever -- or, contrary to the liner notes, mandolins. Little needs to be said about the performers who rank among the most recognizable names in the mandolin universe. As one expects of Lichtenberg-Marshall, every note is in its proper place, beautifully and meaningfully plucked, clear as a bell. Lichtenberg plays the right hand of the music on her modern German-style (and strung) mandolin while Marshall plays the left hand on his modern American-style (and strung) Monteleone mandocello. Even allowing for the registers and playing styles, the instruments are so fundamentally different in conception and sound that it is easy to tell the two apart. By plucked string standards, tempos are generally on the far side of brisk when they need to be – which is to say, typical of a high level harpsichordist, but quite a feat on the mandocello even for so expert a player and fleet-of-fingers as Mike Marshall. Matching sheet music folios, in tab and notation, are expected to be published soon. The recording is readily available from Elderly (see above), who will also carry the sheet music.

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10th Annual Aonzo Italian Mandolin Accademia: Multicultural Mandotourism

by Barbara Conrad



2015 Accademia Group Photo

August 25: I just got an email from my Swiss-Italian friend, saying (my translation), "I am so satisfied with the Accademia and having played for a week! I'm back in the routine, but my head is still in Acqui." That's how I am feeling as I begin to tell you about it.

Carlo Aonzo's tenth annual Accademia Internazionale Italiana di Mandolino, August 16 to 23, was a success in every way. Forty students made the trip from near and far to a new location: the historic spa town of Acqui Terme in Piemonte, in the north-west of Italy.

Many were attending their first Accademia, while others were veterans of one or more. This year's group was the most diverse yet, with players at all levels coming from Argentina, Australia, Brazil, Canada, England, Poland, Scotland, Switzerland, Taiwan, the U.S. and, of course, the majority from Italy.

Several attendees brought companions, bringing the number of our group to around 60 people.

The local component included a couple of mandolinists and a cluster of young guitarists, who came with their teacher, Roberto Margaritella. Roberto and guitar master/composer Katsumi Nagaoki were the draw for guitarists. For the mandolin-family instruments we were in the able



Guitar Sectional

hands of Carlo, Piero Lisci, Sabine Spath and newcomer Michele De Martino from Sorrento, near Naples.

Due to a last-minute change of schedule, one of the special guest instructors

was unable to be part of the program. Mimmo Epifani, from southern Italy, is well known as an expert on Italian traditional folk music, such as taranta and pizzica. I was disappointed not to have his workshops on these styles. However,

Mimmo was able to bring his group for his scheduled public concert in the town center on Friday night. Very electric, it was more like a kind of mandolin rock concert than you'd expect from the description.



Mimmo concert

The crowd loved it.

We had plenty of playing. As usual, we were divided into groups by level and assigned to an ensemble. The assigned parts for our orchestra music had been sent out in advance. Our schedule consisted of orchestra and sectional rehearsals of our concert pieces, ensemble practice and individual lessons. We also had technique workshops with Carlo and with Michele.

One private lesson was scheduled for each of us, and then anyone who wanted could ask for another. In free periods when others had lessons, we were able to work on our own or else take a break.

Michele gave a presentation on Neapolitan mandolin music (in Italian and English), with the theme of "destroying stereotypes". History is full of injustice to our instrument, he told us, and the mandolin has been considered a second-rate, folk instrument, a Neapolitan instrument of the common people, and not an adequate

10th Annual Aonzo Italian Mandolin Accademia: Multicultural Mandotourism

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instrument for serious study. Not so! The origins are in the Middle East, a thousand years ago. In fact, the earliest version of the mandolin was from northern Italy and the north had many more mandolin orchestras (and the music for them) than did the south, where bands were more prevalent. Today, a southerner like Michele has to go to the conservatory in northern Italy to study mandolin. For most of its history, it was the instrument of royalty. The association with Neapolitan songs came about after the unification of Italy in 1861, when the country was looking to create a national identity and these songs became widely popularized. In the following years emigrants took these songs with them everywhere. To illustrate the historical discussion, Sabine played a baroque mandolin and Michele played duets with Roberto and with Carlo, a baroque Serenata and a Neapolitan Preludio.

Our other presentation, well researched and delivered by Alex Chiabra, was about the folk music called variously taranta, tarantella, saltarella and pizzica. The story of its origins is a long and fascinating one, going back to ancient times, full of myth and magic – and too long to get into here.

Concerts are always a highlight, and our instructors gave us a top-notch one. I was impressed to see the six of them take on the Bottacchiari Preludio that we have played at other Aonzo workshops, which has divided parts and could easily use eight or more players. After this they played duets in almost every combination and finished all together again for Suite Marinaresca. This concert was a great chance for us to see what stars they are!



Jam

Wednesday night, after a pizza dinner, the gang went into the town center and anyone who wanted to play jammed and entertained the rest of us and a lot of passers-by. Carlo took advantage of the chance to promote the

upcoming instructors' concert and our final concert.

The music we worked on and played for our final concert was enjoyable and had a satisfying level of challenge. The list was:

Raffaele Calace, *Intermezzo*

Giuseppe Giuliano, *Concerto for mandolin*, three movements, with soloists

Claudio Mandonico, *Ceciliania* – theme and ten variations

M. o F. Russo, *Fantasia Napoletana* – medley of many well-known tunes

Michele conducted the Calace, Piero the Giuliano, and Carlo the other two pieces.

As well, the ensembles performed their pieces. In Carlo's group, we played the first movement of *Quartetto a plettro*, by Salvatore Falbo Giangreco. A serendipitous addition to the program was a large choro ensemble, an extracurricular activity of the week, led by Fernando, our Brazilian student and a music teacher.



Final Concert

The hotel where we stayed was built as a monastery around the time the mandolin was born, in the mid-1750s. Today it has been refurbished and provided space for our lodging and meals and all our rehearsals and concerts. We enjoyed its central location, only steps from the pedestrian shopping area and plazas of this ancient town.

I Googled “types of tourism” and wow, up came a long list, including agritourism, vinitourism and ecotourism. But my new one, mandotourism, is not on the list. This Accademia is a prime example (as is any CMSA convention that is outside your own region). What a great way to experience another country, as part of a well-organized event that attracts a bunch of the nicest people you could ever meet.

Next year's Accademia will again be in Acqui Terme, August 14 to 21. If you go to the website, www.accademiamandolino.com, you will see photos and hear samples from this year's event, and also details about 2016.

Registration is now open for the
16TH ANNUAL CARLO AONZO MANHATTAN WORKSHOP
New York City
Thursday, April 14 to Sunday, April 17, 2016

Would you like to develop your playing technique and musicianship? Come to New York City next April! The Carlo Aonzo Manhattan Workshop is a wonderful opportunity for great musical growth for players of **all** mandolin-family instruments as well as guitars, from intermediate players through professionals. Enjoy the camaraderie of learning and playing with fellow enthusiasts in a warm and supportive environment and experience the wonders of New York City!



Carlo Aonzo, one of the greatest classical mandolinists alive today, has a deserved reputation for warmth, patience and extraordinary teaching skills. Attendees are unanimous in their praise of Carlo, and for the quality of experience offered at this highly regarded workshop.

Carlo will again be joined by Cuban virtuoso guitarist René Izquierdo. René was a great addition to the past two workshops and shared his enthusiasm and expertise with everyone. We are very happy that he will be with us again to enhance our musical experience.

This workshop will be four full, six-hour days. Carlo's well-received *Exercises & Techniques* lessons will be integrated into the orchestra sessions. Private lessons may also be arranged.

Each year participants learn music from a variety of eras and styles. The music encompasses a range of opportunities for musical growth for all levels. It is sent out to participants months in advance of the workshop, on receipt of registration and payment. This year's music includes a fugue by J.S. Bach, a concerto by C.P.E. Bach, a romantic Italian piece by Bracco, a piece in the ragtime style by contemporary composer James Kellaris, a collection of early dance music by Praetorius, and a piece by Stamitz.

A limited number of places are available, so don't miss out on this opportunity.

For additional information or to register, email workshop director Chaim Caron at ccaron@earthlink.net. Please add "CAMW" to the subject line of your email.

Visit www.carloaonzo.com for additional details.

Contemporary Concertos for Mandolin:

A Correction and Some Additions

by Robert A. Margo

When John Goodin is not playing mandolin, he is a professional librarian. After reading my article on contemporary concertos for mandolin in the August 2015 *Mandolin Journal*, John emailed me, pointing out there was another source of information I neglected to mention – WorldCat (coupled with, as he politely put it, “consulting with a music librarian”).¹ John is correct. I knew about WorldCat (<http://www.worldcat.org/>) having used it previously, but for some inexplicable reason didn’t in this case.

John kindly searched WorldCat for additional examples of contemporary concertos for mandolin which he forwarded to me. After assessing his suggested additions subject to the original criteria I used (and also running my own search), I added the following items to my list:²

Ben-Amots, Offer, “Concertino for Clarinet, Mandolin, and Orchestra” (2011)

Künhl, Claus, “Replete with Suns: Concerto for Mandolin and 13 instrumentalists” (2005)

Colinet, Paul, “Concertino no. 1 for mandolin and orchestra, op. 27” (1989)

Colinet, Paul, “Concertino no. 2 for mandolin and orchestra, op. 29” (1989)

Gilardino, Angelo, “Fiori de Novembre: Concerto for mandolin, guitar, and chamber orchestra” (1997)

Gilardino, Angelo, “Jerusalem Concerto: For mandolin, guitar, and chamber orchestra” (2013-14)

Gross, Eric, “Concerto for mandolin and string orchestra, op. 141” (1984)

Gross, Eric, “Concerto no. 2 for mandolin and chamber orchestra, op. 151” (1986)

Kimble, Chad, “Concerto for amplified mandolin, string orchestra, and percussion” (2006)

Morgan, David S., “Concerto for mandolin and string orchestra” (1999)

Surdin, Morris, “Concerto for mandolin and strings” (1966)

Szeto, Caroline, “Mandolin concerto” (1999)

Vos, Tom, “Concerto for mandolin and orchestra” (2001)

I am grateful to John for writing and I encourage others to do the same if you come across works that I have inadvertently omitted.

1 A WorldCat search returns 61 items, some of which do not meet my criteria for a contemporary mandolin concerto (e.g. Vivaldi). WorldCat is not one-stop-shopping: while there are items not on my original list, there are other works on my original list that are not in WorldCat.

2 My original list excluded concerto-like works for mandolin if the accompanying instruments did not meet the definition of an “orchestra” whether of strings or larger ensemble. It would take a separate article to list all the concerto-like works that do not meet this definition (well-known examples are Clarice Assad’s “Obrigado” for mandolin and string quartet, or Victor Kioulaphides, “Mandolin Quartet” for mandolin, violin, viola, and cello).

“Diferencias”: A Primer for Performance

by Robert A. Margo

This article is a summary of the workshop that I gave at the 2015 CMSA convention in Austin TX. The workshop focused on a solo work, “Diferencias sobre Morenika”, composed by Victor Kioulaphides. The original version of “Diferencias” was written for a GDAE instrument, either the standard mandolin or the octave. For the purposes of the workshop, Victor kindly made versions for CGDA instruments (alto mandola and mandocello). The Austin workshop was the first of a series I hope to give at CMSA conventions on various pieces from the original repertoire for solo classical mandolin.

There are two primary motivations for the workshop. First, “Diferencias” is arguably one of the most popular of all modern works for solo mandolin. It has been widely performed in concert, recorded several times, and frequently used as a test piece in performance competitions. Second, studying the solo repertoire is an excellent way to build skills on any instrument, including the mandolin. As music for solo mandolin goes, “Diferencias” is moderately difficult – not too advanced in other words, and not requiring mastery of unusual techniques. That said, the piece emphasizes certain aspects of mandolin technique (see below) that are not as frequently found in Calace or Munier, for example.

Victor Kioulaphides is one of the most prolific and successful of modern composers for classical mandolin. Born in Athens in 1961, Kioulaphides moved to New York City (where he resides today) in 1979 to study double bass and composition at the Julliard School and the Manhattan School of Music. He has a very lengthy catalog of works for chamber opera, chamber ensemble, orchestra, and instrumental music. Fortunately for us mandolinists, Kioulaphides makes his various pieces for solo mandolin freely available. A full list of works can be found at <http://home.earthlink.net/~vkioulaphides>. An informative interview of Kioulaphides appears in the August 2008 issue of the CMSA *Mandolin Journal*.

“Diferencias” was composed for Davka Dances, a New York City dance group that specialized in Judeo-Hispanic music and dance. The intent was for the piece to be performed by a mandolin soloist while accompanying Davka’s lead dancer interpreting the music. In 2002 Kioulaphides made the score available publically. Post-2002 the earliest performance that I can reliably document was by Alison Stephens at a concert in England in April 2004. In October 2004, I played the piece at the CMSA convention in Philadelphia during the performance competition. Subsequently, Stephens played the piece innumerable times, sometimes on her Embergher mandola, nicknamed “Beast”. The piece was a great favorite of hers and undoubtedly she would still be playing it today were it not for her untimely death in 2010. Other documented

performances have been given by Chris Acquavella (for example, the gala Saturday night concert at the 2011 CMSA convention in Baltimore in front of a very large audience), Ferdinand Binnendijk, Jim Dalton, Travis Finch, Sebastiaann de Gregger, Susanne Herre, Jördis Hoppe, Patrizia di Lorenzo, Natalia Marashova, David Miller, Svetlana Musifina, Anastaisa Orlova, Alina Sakaloukaya, Mauro Squillante, Alex Timmerman, Tamara Volkskaya, David Westwick, Yeleen Zabavskaya, and yours truly.

There have been three CD recordings of “Diferencias”. One is by Stephens on her CD “Souvenirs”. Another is by Acquavella on his CD “Praeludium” and the third is by de Grebber on his recording “Fantasia Romantica”. Video performances on www.youtube.com can be found by Stephens (octave mandolin), Musafina, Miller, and Timmerman (alto mandola, and mandolin).

Victor has written concert works and shorter pieces for solo mandolin. Besides “Diferencias” the concert works are the “Suite for Ali” (written for Alison Stephens), “Sweelinck Variations” (written for Sebastiaan de Grebber) and “Variations on a Basque Melody” (written for Ferdinand Binnendijk). Of these, “Sweelinck” is by far the most difficult – indeed, it is one of the most difficult solo works in the entire repertoire. “Variations” and the “Suite” are similar in difficulty to “Diferencias”. The shorter pieces are beautiful miniatures and are moderate in difficulty – representative examples would include “El Malecon” and “Idilio”. All of the solo works are freely available in pdf format at <http://www.paperclipdesign.com/vk/>.

The language in the solo mandolin works is tonal. Kioulaphides is fond of early music forms (“stile antico”), a good example of which is the “Suite for Ali” which has five movements like a baroque suite. With few exceptions, passages in the solo works are highly idiomatic to the mandolin. Kioulaphides makes use of the full range of conventional mandolin techniques; before attempting any of his music it is essential to develop a good tremolo, alternate picking, glide stroke, and some facility at cross-picking. The composer is a skilled mandolinist, so pay close attention to his left and right hand fingering suggestions – but don’t be afraid to use your own discretion as a performer.

The piece is a theme and variations. The theme is a very old (and very popular) Sephardic folk song, “Morenika”. There are many traditional (and not so traditional) performances of “Morenika” on www.youtube.com. I found these to be very helpful in preparing my performances.

The composition is written in two voices. Voice #1 has stems up and voice #2 has stems down. These should be

“Diferencias”: A Primer for Performance

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very clear to your audience. When learning a piece with multiple voices it is good to practice each voice separately until you are happy with how it sounds, after which you put the voices back together. There are many phrase and dynamic markings in the score – make sure you understand their meaning and pay close attention!

The theme is stated in mm. 1-17:

Victor Kioulaphides

Lento ♩ = 50

mp *mf* *mp* *mf*

mf cantabile

1. 2. 4

f *p cresc.* *f*

dim. *mf*

f *p cresc.* *f* *dim.*

stesso tempo

Your interpretation of the theme should be free – but do not lose sight of the beat. Arpeggio chords should linger briefly on the root (bass) to emphasize the harmony. Note the grace notes and ornaments (these I play as upper mordents). Grace notes and ornaments should be plucked with the right hand, not slurred with the left.

At m. 8, beat #1 I play the first D with my first finger, the second D open, the F with the fourth finger on the G string, and the A on the D string, holding the fretted

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“Diferencias”: A Primer for Performance

(continued from page 21)

notes down as long as I can. On beat #4, m. 8 I sometimes play the D and G notes as harmonics, even though this is not indicated in the score (but sounds very nice). On beat #4 of m. 13 and elsewhere in the piece, the “+” means a left hand slur is requested by the composer.

The first variation begins at m. 18 (note the double bar and change in time signature). Keep the tempo constant and make sure the accompaniment is very even. Also make sure that the melody is distinct from the accompaniment (remember the two voices!). One way to do this is to vary the tone color with the right hand. At m. 21, beat #1 I use the 4th finger on the A, and the 2nd on the C# -- be sure to keep your 4th finger down.

The second variation begins at m. 42. The time signature is now 6/8, but that the instruction is that the quarter note equals the dotted quarter, so the underlying tempo remains the same. The word “leggiero” means “light and delicate”. At m. 50 I use the same fingering as at m. 21 (see above). At m. 52 the “+” sign means a left hand slur. You should experiment (slowly!) with different right hand plucking patterns in this section. It can be played with alternating strokes but varying the articulation and pattern (for example, glide stroke) can be very expressive.

The third, and final variation, begins at m. 75. Note that the tempo is quicker (and that the accelerando actually begins in m. 74). In my experience, this section can be very exciting for an audience – but don’t push things to your limit (and remember not to rush). The D’s in the bass need to be very steady. At m. 76, “Sul A” means that the melody notes are to be played on the A string. At m. 81, play the upper G on the E string and the E on the last eighth note beat open. The right hand pattern at m. 82 is UDD (up, down, down). In mm. 92-93, my right hand pattern is UDUDUD except for the last group of six which is UDUDUU. At m. 97, play the first D with an upstroke, and the same for the first A in m. 98. Note the accents in m. 99. I usually accelerate a bit towards the final D, which I play as a double stop (D fingered at the 7th fret of the G string and the open D string).

To conclude, “Diferencias sobre Morenika” by Victor Kiuulpahides is a very popular modern work for solo classical mandolin. It is well within the capabilities of serious amateur players, and is especially useful for building your right hand plucking skills, speed, and performance stamina. Give it a try, and let me know how it goes (at robert.a.margo@gmail.com)!

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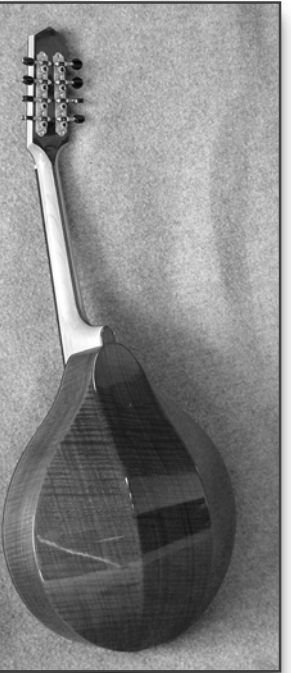
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Western Canada Mandolin Orchestras Host Touring Langendorfer Mandolineorchester

by Barbara Conrad



Langendorfer Mandolineorchester

Here's a great alternative to leaving home to play with bigger and/or better orchestras: having one come to your town to play with you!

In late August our Vancouver group, the Lower Mainland Mandolin Society (stage name Melodious Mandolins) and the Victoria Mandolin Orchestra (VMO) hosted a visit from a talented group of young German musicians, the Langendorfer Mandolineorchester. The 31 members, the majority in their teens, comprised nine first mandolins, seven second mandolins, five mandolas, six guitars, two flutes and two double basses, led by their dynamic musical director (and tour leader) Anja Renz.

They play the kind of orchestra arrangements we would play at a convention, such as classical mandolin repertoire and arrangements of popular tunes, for example, their Pirates of the Caribbean medley. (I would love to play this one!)

Langendorf is located about 80 miles southeast of Hamburg, on the Elbe River in Lower Saxony, which was the old dividing line between the post-war East and West Germanies. The orchestra really is an example of what is possible with initiative and determination. Orchestra members come from Langendorf and towns in the surrounding area. No matter that Langendorf is a little village of about 400 people!

Established in 1973, the group makes a tour every three or four years. Previously they have traveled to Norway, Sweden, France, Poland, Holland, Italy, India, Japan, the eastern United States and South Africa. This was their first time in Canada.

Anja has been with the orchestra since her teens and now teaches many of the members. She was a major force behind this tour.

For us it started from an email from Anja about a year earlier, saying that they would like to visit this area, and

could we organize some concerts with them. Our leader, Cathy Sands, rose to the challenge. And she may have been the only person in town who could have pulled it off. Besides playing mandolin, Cathy sings with the Concordia Choir, whose roots are in Vancouver's German-speaking community. She enlisted the help of contacts in towns around the area, including Barrie Webster and Ernie Nicholls, fellow CMSA members from Victoria, on Vancouver Island, and White Rock, south of Vancouver.

In the end, the visitors played five concerts to good-sized and appreciative audiences. The first was in a hall in New Westminster, near the home of Nadia Anderson, one of our second mandolinists. Next was a concert in a church out in White Rock, organized by Ernie Nicholls, who now lives in that town (sadly, too far away for him to play with us regularly).

Said Ernie, "The group arrived in White Rock in the afternoon, immediately rehearsed for about an hour, and then walked down to the ocean, where some of the boys went for a swim. They admitted that it was 'rather cold'."



Langendorfer M.O. in White Rock

The most ambitious gig was the Vancouver concert. We had a practice with the German group and with the Concordia choir, and that was fun – and an eye-opener for those who had not performed with another orchestra or a choir. The evening of the concert began with a German buffet dinner ("just like home," said the young visitors) in the Alpen Club, which is like a community hall. Our group opened the concert with a few of our best international numbers, then the Langendorf orchestra played seven pieces and suites. The choir sang three German numbers, and were then joined by the Melodious Mandolins for a number together, Henry Mancini's *The Thorn Birds*, directed by the choir conductor. The Langendorf members came back and we moved seats to integrate the two mandolin orchestras, and the joint mandolin orchestra played Tarrega's *Recuerdos de l'Alhambra*.

The high point of the concert was the final number, with the choir and massed orchestras performing a stirring arrangement by the choir conductor of Beethoven's *Ode to Joy*.

Great applause – and I figured that was all we had.

Western Canada Mandolin Orchestras Host Touring Langendorfer Mandolineorchester

(continued from page 24)

But wait, there's more! Anja got up and said, 'We have one more little song for you, to end with.' Some of the Melodious Mandolins had left the stage, not having been in on preparing this last surprise. Luckily I had stayed put, and my German stand partner passed me a page of music. It was their arrangement of the Brahms lullaby. What a kick: sight-reading the encore on stage! The audience sang along and loved it – what a great finish to this German-themed evening.



At the Alpen Club

The German group played a concert the next day, part of an outdoor summer series in Gibsons, a small coastal town a couple of hours away, where a former member of our group now lives.

After that, they took a ferry to Victoria, British Columbia's capital, where Barrie Webster and the VMO team organized a concert at the University of Victoria's Music School with the Victoria Mandolin Orchestra and the Edelweiss Harmony Choir. This concert, with an enthusiastic audience of more than 150, followed a similar format to the Vancouver one. The Langendorf orchestra opened, followed by the choir, then the VMO with the choir, after which the two orchestras played together a Swedish number, *Visa vid Vindens Angar*, by Mats Paulson. The Langendorf orchestra closed with Konrad Woelki's *Heimreis*. The encore gave the VMO members a similar experience to my own.

Barrie said, "We all finished on a real high. Our orchestra is small, but five of us, with the enthusiastic support of our president, Mary Ellen Marks, put things together. We met the visitors at the ferry on the Friday evening with a big yellow school bus, took them to the motel in Victoria where they stayed, four to a room, and then did breakfast with them on Saturday morning. Later on Saturday, we took them to Butchart Gardens and then to the Greekfest celebration in Royal Oak before giving them some free time that evening in Victoria. Several went to visit the Royal BC Museum that evening and didn't leave until closing time at 10 p.m.! On Sunday they had time to

explore Victoria on their own before we picked them up with the bus at 6 p.m. After setting up the seating at the recital hall, we had a short rehearsal together of our Swedish folk song and then the concert began."

He added, "Both of our orchestras feel that we have achieved something significant by pulling off this tour with Anja's orchestra.

Her initiative to contact Cathy, Cathy's drive to encourage us to participate and everyone's help with all the arrangements – it all made something special happen. When we can succeed in something like this, we feel a well-deserved sense of pride and accomplishment."



Vancouver is known as one of the most beautiful cities in the world, and the weather couldn't have been better for almost the whole of their ten-day visit. Cathy played tour guide for them, and they had a chance to see the top attractions: Stanley Park, Grouse Mountain, Granville Island, Chinatown, the Museum of Anthropology, Wreck Beach....

Anja had extremely positive comments on her group's experience. They found the Vancouver people very friendly and interested in them and what they were doing here.

She regretted that the visit was not long enough to visit nearby Seattle and other areas of mandolin activity and they are already planning the next tour.

Both the Vancouver and Victoria groups found it a delightful experience to meet and play with the visiting orchestra. Said Cathy after our combined concert, "We really stepped up our game tonight."

If you are ever contacted about a similar possibility, I'd recommend making the effort. We found it well worth it.

For more about the Langendorfer Mandolineorchester, you can go to their website: www.mandolinenorchester.eu.

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