

Notes

Celebration of Strings



wku.edu/strings

MESSAGE FROM THE DIRECTOR

Welcome to the WKU Pre-College Strings Program newsletter for Fall 2015! It is always my pleasure to share with you news about our program, give you updates on the accomplishments, honors, and performances of our students, and to celebrate the wonderful work of everyone involved.

Last semester, we hosted several spectacular events: Kentucky Cello Day XVII with Dr. Melissa Kraut on September 26th and the biggest violin event of the semester, Violin Fest on November 13th-14th, with guest teacher Professor Mauricio Fuks of Indiana University.

Dr. Melissa Kraut, Professor of Cello at Cleveland Institute of Music, was energized, gracious, generous with her time, and passionate about teaching. What a treat! We loved her so much that WKU cello professor Sarah Berry immediately booked Dr. Kraut for a cello Suzuki training session in January 2016! We look forward to seeing her again as she returns to Bowling Green to teach the further Suzuki training courses.

I was humbled and honored to host my own beloved teacher, Professor Fuks, as the guest artist for the Violin Fest. He never ceases to amaze me with his disarmingly simple insights, especially about the benefits of involving the whole person in playing a stringed instrument. I can confirm from my own experience that this works! Body, mind, and spirit: when they all work together in harmony,



there is no limit to how high we can soar. Other masterclasses that we hosted this semester included violin classes with Timothy Steeves and Dr. Brandon Christensen, and a cello master class with Jacobsen Woollen. I cannot tell you how thrilled I have been to bring these brilliant teachers to our campus, for them to share their knowledge and experience, give us new insights, and inspire us to greater heights.

In this newsletter, I am especially delighted to have a well-considered and thought-inspiring article by Elizabeth Hathaway about practicing with her daughter, Sarah. It's wonderful to hear from a dedicated parent about how much she is getting out of being a "violin mom"! I think you will really enjoy sharing their journey of learning the violin.

Congratulations to Yeju Kim, Kelly Lin, Maxwell Conte, and David Wiles for being selected to participate in the Kentucky Music Educators Association All-State Orchestras! They will be performing at the association's 2016 conference in Louisville in February. We are so proud of their hard work, and know that they will enjoy meeting other musicians from throughout Kentucky.

Lastly, I would also like to congratulate the WKU Student Chapter of American String Teachers Association for being named National Most Improved Student Chapter of the Year. This chapter has grown tremendously since becoming an official campus organization in Fall 2014. Students in this chapter have assisted the WKU Pre-College Strings Program in numerous outreach and group class activities. They have also hosted on-campus events like "Conduct Us" and "instrument petting-zoos," and volunteered their time and expertise at local public school music classes. I am extremely proud of them, and know that they will continue to do great work in the Bowling Green community!

I wish everyone a wonderful semester. For more information about the program and to keep up with our upcoming concerts and events, please visit us at wku.edu/strings.

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STUDENT PERFORMANCES



Chloe Pitcock, Suzuki Book One Recital

Suzuki Book One Recital, Chloe Pitcock September 6th

“During my recital I was a little nervous at first, but after I started playing, I had fun. A lot of my friends came to see me play. My favorite song was ‘May Song.’ My favorite part was the cake at the reception!”

— Chloe Pitcock

Suzuki Book One Recital, Sarah Hathaway October 13th

Congratulations to Sarah Hathaway for a great performance of her Suzuki Book One Recital! See page 16 for her precious hand-written letter.



Halloween Recital Grace Church of Bowling Green October 24th By Grace Kim

The Halloween recital this year was held at Grace Church of Bowling Green. Over seventy students filled this beautiful church, with everyone dressed in their fantastic and hilarious costumes. Students from the Pre-College Strings Program performed a variety of pieces from composers such as J. S. Bach, Brahms, Fletcher, Nunez, Shostakovich, and Suzuki. Violinists, violists, and cellists aged 4 to 16 played pieces at a variety of levels, under the direction of their teachers. A particular favorite of mine was the Beginner Violin’s performance of “GDG.” When performing this piece, the students displayed their strong understanding of the basic techniques of violin playing, which lay the foundation for



Halloween Recital, Grace Church of Bowling Green



SKyPAC's Gingerbread Homes for the Arts Event

lifelong success in string playing. It is remarkable how they can acquire and demonstrate these difficult skills in just one semester! The Pre-College Strings Program is a great opportunity for beginners to start with a good set-up, and it also provides the opportunity for advanced players to deepen their study of their instrument and learn how to perform in an ensemble.

Sonia Conte's solo performance of the Gavottes from Bach's Cello Suite No. 6 in D major was another highlight of the afternoon. With a clear and resonant sound, she crafted beautifully shaped phrases while showing her clear understanding of bow-division and sound-production. Sonia is just one of the many examples of the excellent set-up and technical skills displayed by many of the young players in the program. The recital was capped off by Violin IV's lively and exciting



Sonia Conte, solo recital

performance of Brahms' Hungarian Dance No. 5, sending the audience home with its catchy tune ringing in their ears.

SKyPAC's Gingerbread Homes for the Arts November 21st

Violin II and Violin IV students performed at SKyPAC's Gingerbread Homes for the Arts. They played Suzuki Book One pieces (all the way up to "Minuet One"), "Humoresque," and Brahms' Hungarian Dance No. 5. Special congrats to Sonia Conte, who also performed a beautiful solo at this event. A big thanks to Deborah Stein for inviting us!

Violin II: Leah Chen, Olivia Gaskill, Tyson Keller, Chloe Hawkins, Hannah Hawkins, Rebekah Johns, Iris von Steinfort, and Sheryl Sun

Violin IV: Joey Breslin, Sonia Conte, Grace Drexel, James Han, Nick Kang, Christie Lin, Anayah Ricketts, and Liyah Ricketts



Make the Season Bright

**Sonia Conte Solo Violin Recital:
“Dances through Time”**

November 22nd

“Thanks to all the WKU college students and my teacher, Alyna, who played with me in the recital. It was a good experience and really fun. Also, thanks to all the friends who came to my recital. I thought that it went well. I played my favorite five dance pieces in chronological order. I had a wonderful time, especially when I had refreshments.”

— Sonia Conte

**Make the Season Bright
December 3rd**

Beginner Violins and Cello I students performed at the Medical Center’s annual fundraiser, Make the Season Bright. This is the third year that the WKU Pre-College Strings Program has participated in this event. We loved being there to perform Christmas music, light the Christmas tree, and give back to our community. We treasure the memories shared with family and friends!

**The Symphony at WKU
December 6th**

Violin I and Violin III students performed Christmas music, Suzuki pieces, and various solos as a pre-concert event for The Symphony at

WKU’s holiday concert. After their performances, our pre-college students enjoyed a wonderful concert performed by our WKU college students in The Symphony at WKU and the South Central Kentucky Choral Society.

Violin I: Garrett Barr, Millie Cardwell, Virginia Neill Caudill, Ian Gibson, Abigail Johns, Ava Luis

Violin III: Elizabeth Bohlander, Emerson Carrigan, Sarah Hathaway, Zoe Hu, Rex Keller, Bella von Steinfort

**Bowling Green
Retirement Village
December 13th**

Students volunteered their time and performed Christmas music and pieces from Suzuki Books One through Four for the residents of the Bowling Green Retirement Village. Altogether, we performed close to 40 minutes of music. Kelly Lin, a student in the Pre-College Strings Program, organized this event, and we all enjoyed an afternoon of wonderful performances!



Zoe Hu at The Symphony at WKU Pre-Concert Performance

My Experience at Violin FEST

BY EMILY VAUGHN

The Western Kentucky University Violin Fest was an exciting weekend event, held on November 13th–15th, 2015. Over 120 violinists and teachers of all ages participated in masterclasses, group classes, and performances. Organized by Dr. Ching-Yi Lin, the Violin Fest brought together participants from Kentucky, Louisiana, Missouri, Tennessee, Texas, and West Virginia.

It featured a phenomenal guest artist, Mauricio Fuks, Professor of Music at the Indiana University Jacobs School of Music. The other faculty members were Dr. Lin, Andrew Braddock and Alyna Bloecher from WKU; Willy Michel and Ilya Friedberg from Indiana University; and Bernadette Lo from the University of the South.

Violin Fest started off with a bang on Friday night with a faculty chamber music performance. The first half of the program featured Ilya Friedberg and Dr. Lin performing music for violin and piano. The audience was captivated by their performance of Brahms' Violin Sonata No. 1, and was later sent on a journey through the streets of 19th-century Vienna by the duo's



Professor Fuks at Violin Fest 2015

performance of Heifetz–Godowsky's *Alt Wien*. The duo was joined by violist Andrew Braddock and cellist Christine Kim from Middle Tennessee State University, for a rousing performance of Brahms' C-minor Piano Quartet. I felt that the quartet's fiery music in the first movement inspired students to practice for their own performances the following day.

The next day, Violin Fest continued with Professor Fuks teaching

masterclasses throughout the day, group rehearsals, mini-private lessons, and a brief Q&A for the participants. During Q&A, students of all ages as well as teachers brought up a number of concerns about their playing, including memorization and relaxation techniques. Professor Fuks suggested that the students set aside time to sit peacefully and let go of all distractions,

and then enter the practice room with a positive mindset. He believes that it's important to work on memorization every time you practice, making it part of a normal practice routine. He, also, stressed the importance of relaxing while playing the violin—especially the upper half of the body: back, shoulders, chest, neck, arms, and hands—and making a habit of thinking of your body every time you pick up your instrument.

Professor Mauricio Fuks discussed the importance of knowing every aspect of the score, the style of the composer, and what inspired the composer to write the piece.

Professor Fuks' masterclasses had an overarching theme for the students: the importance of understanding what the composer has written in the music, then working out for yourself whatever the composer did not notate, such as phrasing. He remarked wittily: "Music students should dissect the music like medical students dissect a corpse."

He, also, mentioned the importance of always knowing what instrument is accompanying you when you are playing with an orchestra, or even imagining playing with an orchestra, because that will affect how you shape the music.

The masterclasses featured several students from WKU, Belmont, and other universities. Angeline Park, a student of Professor Felix Olschofka from the University of North Texas, performed the third movement of Mendelssohn's Concerto, which has difficult runs and shifts throughout. Professor Fuks observed that half the battle is mental, not physical and advocated the benefits of memorizing the piece: feeling closer to the music, being in control of the expression, and becoming more concerned with how the music sounds and less about the technical aspects.

Eva Casado, a student of Dr. Mikylah Myers McTeer from West Virginia University, performed Sarasate's Zigeunerweisen, known for its technical demands. Professor Fuks worked on the importance of set-up

and being able to hold the instrument with less tension. By fixing these fundamentals, Eva was able to play the piece with improved intonation and catch more notes during the faster passages. Professor Fuks also helped Eva with small changes in her bow hand that allowed her to play the fast passages with ease.



Violinist Eva Casado from West Virginia University



Suzuki Book One

Sarah Terning, a student of Elisabeth Small at Belmont University, performed the first movement of the Sibelius Violin Concerto. Professor Fuks discussed the importance of knowing every aspect of the score, the style of the composer, and what

inspired the composer to write the piece. After learning these things, it will become easier to make decisions about phrasing and articulation. As Mr. Fuks described for this piece, the opening depicts the cold, dry, wintry landscape of Sibelius' native Finland.

Other performers in masterclasses included Erina Buchholz, from the studio of Stefka Madere in Baton Rouge, LA; Joy Fan, a pre-college student from Vanderbilt University; Sarah Hathaway of the WKU Pre-College Strings Program; Grace Kim of WKU; Brian Xu from the studio of Shu-zheng Yang in Brentwood, TN; and Fujia Zhang from Southeast Missouri State University.

Throughout the day, participants, also, joined together to perform in group classes, where they worked on their ensemble skills. Everyone got to play with old friends and meet new ones. Group class teachers discussed the importance of set-up, breathing together before the start of a piece, and matching articulation. I led the Beginner class, where we worked on tapping rhythms on our violins, our standing and playing position, and our bow hold.

The teachers and students were excited to learn and grow from the group classes and masterclasses. Judith Meyer, a junior from West Virginia University, commented: "For me, the Violin Fest has been a great opportunity to travel, get some advice

from other teachers, and watch Suzuki classes. Last year, Dr. Lin came to visit Western Virginia University and she gave a masterclass on how to set up beginning violin students. I thought her presentation was amazing, especially since I want to teach young students. It has been wonderful to see her lectures put into action at Violin Fest through observing the beginner classes and the Suzuki Volume 1 to 3 classes taught by her and the faculty of the WKU Pre-College Strings Program.”

Rebecca Baumbach, a studio teacher from Nashville, remarked: “It is great for the parents, too, it’s so important for them to see what other teachers are doing, what other families are doing, and be part of that community.”

Violin Fest concluded with all of the students and teachers performing a concert together.

Emily Vaughn

Emily Vaughn earned a bachelor’s degree in Viola Performance and Music Education from the University of Tennessee on a Yates Scholarship for her outstanding level of performance. During her time at UT, she volunteered at the Joy of Music School, teaching private lessons to underprivileged students, and served as an assistant at the UT Viola Celebration. She has been the Strings Director at Mountain View Elementary School in Johnson City, TN, and has, also, assisted in the Science Hill High School orchestra program. Mrs. Vaughn



is currently pursuing a master’s degree in Violin Pedagogy at WKU. Her principal teachers are Andrew Braddock, Katie Dey, and Hillary Herndon.



Violin Fest Faculty Recital

Cello Day 2015

BY SUSAN ABELL, WKU ALUMNA

Cellists from Nashville to Louisville to Richmond gathered at Western Kentucky University for Kentucky Cello Day XVII. It was an amazing day of music and learning, led by Dr. Melissa Kraut, who teaches at the Cleveland Institute of Music.

The day began with a wonderful masterclass taught by Dr. Kraut. The class began with Fauré's *Élégie* performed by WKU Pre-College student Maxwell Conte, followed by Caroline Thigpen of Nashville, TN. The collegiate participants included Morgan Thomas of WKU, John Woodward of Eastern Kentucky University (EKU), Philip Kettler of Vanderbilt University, and Collin Vice of EKU. Dr. Kraut amazed me with how she interacted with each student, addressing many playing techniques simply and clearly.

The afternoon session featured a

pedagogy class, followed by a Suzuki Play-In and the Collegiate Cello Choir. During the pedagogy class, Dr. Kraut answered questions and discussed a number of topics introduced by the participants. Dr. Kraut shared her philosophy of balance as the central focus of any musician's set-up, directly affecting all aspects of playing. We did various exercises to address balance in our bodies, both with and without the cello. Applying these techniques drastically changes the sound, benefits the body, and aids in preventing playing injuries.

Dr. Kraut, also, focused on tone quality and production, which encompasses many other aspects of playing, including intonation and bow technique. She introduced three parts to intonation: 1. Ear (Can you hear the pitch in tune?); 2. Listening (Are

you actively listening to the pitch?); 3. Aim (Are you "hitting" the note?). For me, this mindset has been a game-changer in my playing and teaching. In addition, the simplicity of this threefold approach provides a sense of calm and ease during the sometimes daunting task of learning a new piece. By applying these three questions during daily practice, intonation can greatly improve with ease.

Kentucky Cello Day XVII was a day to remember. The involvement of the professionals and students from the Kentucky and greater Nashville area was exceptional. A big thanks to Sarah Berry and Dr. Nathan Jasinski for continuing to grow and promote the Kentucky Cello Club. A second big thanks to Dr. Melissa Kraut for her time, her knowledge, and the memorable experience!



Collegiate Cello Choir with Dr. Nathan Jasinski



Pedagogy Class



John Woodward from ECU performs for Dr. Kraut



Suzuki Play-In



Susan Abell

Susan Abell grew up in Bowling Green, KY, where she played an active role in the music programs in her church and schools, from chorus to band. She attended Western Kentucky University, studying cello with Sarah Berry, as well as, Music Education with Dr. Bill Scott and Dr. Robyn Swanson. Soon after graduating summa cum laude with a MAE in Music Education, she moved to Franklin, TN, where she now maintains an active private studio (cello, violin, and piano) in the greater Nashville area. Currently, she is the Director of Strings at Grassland Middle School and Brentwood Middle School in the Williamson County School District in Tennessee. In addition, she has worked at the New England Music Camp, was selected for a conducting workshop with Hugh Wolff, and has completed Suzuki Cello Training (Books 1–3) with Dr. Melissa Kraut of the Cleveland Institute of Music.

FACULTY PERFORMANCES

Nashville Sinfonietta

On August 30th, Andrew Braddock and Ching-Yi Lin performed in a concert with the Nashville Sinfonietta, directed by Dean Whiteside. This annual concert, the sixth led by Mr. Whiteside, aids the Shade Tree Clinic, a free health clinic run by Vanderbilt University medical students that provides exemplary care for acute and chronic illnesses, social services, and health education. Braddock and Lin performed works by Mozart and Tchaikovsky.



Andrew Braddock, Kathryn Plummer (Vanderbilt Professor of Viola), and Dean Whiteside

Piano and Viola Faculty Recital By Grace Pritchett

On Sunday, September 20th, 2015, faculty member Andrew Braddock was joined by guest artist Bernadette Lo to perform sonatas for viola and piano by Paul Hindemith and Arthur Bliss in the Fine Arts Center Recital Hall. Lo is currently the Visiting Professor of Piano at the University of the South in Seawee, as well as, Roane State Community College.

The performance featured two large-scale 20th century works for the viola and piano. The pieces, both composed in the 1930s, showcase the virtuosic capabilities of the viola. The two works are very different, however, as Mr. Braddock explained to the audience. Full of soaring nostalgic melodies, as well as, unsettling dissonances, Bliss' sonata reflects the upheaval and dramatic change of the early twentieth century. The first movement of Hindemith's sonata, for example, incorporates brash dynamics and dissonant harmonies, which Mr. Braddock compared to a "city skyline."

On the other hand, the third movement of Hindemith's sonata, "Phantasie", has a dream-like quality and is full of iridescent, glowing sounds. In other words, the performance featured a great variety of styles.

Music of Matthew Herman By Carly Shoulders

On Sunday, September 27th, 2015, the faculty of the music department played an exciting recital of the music of WKU professor Matthew Herman. In FAC's Recital Hall, Zachary Lopes, Ching-Yi Lin, Donald Speer, Heidi Alvarez, Sarah Berry, and Liza Kelly performed a series of pieces written by Professor Herman between 1997 and 2014. With music for piano, violin, flute, cello, and mezzo-soprano voice, this recital had a bit of everything. It began with the world premiere of Herman's Signs, a solo piano piece played by Professor Lopes. Each of this work's seven movements features

a unique style of music. The next piece on the program, Sonata for Violin and Piano, played by professors Lin and Speer, juxtaposed moods of violence and anger with a soft and lyrical theme. The third piece, *Masks*, played by the trio of professors Speer, Berry, and Alvarez, also, had its world premiere. This work is intriguing because all five movements held a secret theme unknown to the audience. Before the performance started, the audience was told in the beginning that the performers, after the fifth movement, could choose to reveal the hidden theme to the audience by playing an epilogue known as The Unmasking. They decided to reveal the theme, which came from one of Verdi's operas. The recital ended with a comical piece, *Three Sick Songs*, performed by professors Kelly and Lopes. These three movements, all pertaining to different symptoms of sickness, brought laughter to the audience with their satirical lyrics.

An Afternoon of Brahms By Anna Darling

On Sunday, October 18th, 2015, the Ivan Wilson Fine Arts Center Recital Hall filled with students and community members, all there to experience a captivating performance of two masterworks from the Romantic period. Joining our own Ching-Yi Lin and Andrew Braddock, professors of violin and viola at WKU, respectively, were cellist Christine Kim, cello professor at Middle Tennessee State University, and pianist Kevin Class, a professor at the University of Tennessee, Knoxville. The recital



WKU Violin Studio at Jackson's Orchard

featured the Piano Quartet in C minor, Op. 60, completed by Brahms in 1875, and Piano Quartet in G minor, Op. 25, composed between 1856 and 1861.

From the first notes of the Allegro non troppo movement of the C-minor Quartet, a simple octave played by the piano, I was pulled into the music by the wonderful stage presence of the performers. I loved how simple descending minor seconds in the violin, viola, and cello could be played with such intention and heart. Every note was important, as I could see in the musicians' expressions and movements. My favorite movement of this piece was the Andante, which was actually in E major instead of C minor. The melody began in the cello and was flawlessly passed to the violin, and the piano added a beautiful dimension throughout the movement.

As for the G-minor Quartet, I was in awe of the energy the performers had intentionally saved for the last movement, Presto, also known as the "Gypsy Rondo." The pianist played with amazing dexterity, moving his fingers so quickly that it seemed he did not even have time for a breath until he struck the last chord. His hands lifted off the keys, and bows flew off the strings, freezing in the air, and the hall erupted in applause, the perfect end to a sunny Sunday afternoon.

This program was also performed at University of Tennessee, Knoxville, and Middle Tennessee State University.

Kentucky Music Teachers Association Conference By Alyna Bloecher

On October 26th, 2015, WKU Pre-College Strings Program faculty members and students gave

a presentation to high-school and middle-school piano students visiting the WKU campus for the Kentucky Music Teachers Association conference. Pre-College student Sarah Hathaway, age 6, joined Elizabeth Whitters and pre-college faculty members Steven Stewart, Emily Vaughn, and Alyna Bloecher for this presentation. Each instructor took turns discussing various topics: parts of the instruments, types of ensembles, and styles of music that can be played on the violin or viola. They, also, performed works of Mozart, Bartók, Sarasate, Bach, and Ervin Rouse, as well as folk and rock tunes. The presentation concluded with a performance of Bach's Minuet 3 by Hathaway, and time for each audience member to try a violin at the "instrument petting zoo." The audience was attentive, asked many insightful questions, and had a great time playing the violin!

Guest Artists

Jacobsen Woollen Cello Masterclass October 26th

The cello studio hosted Jacobsen Woollen, of the chamber group Latitude 49, for a cello masterclass on October 26th, 2015. Jacobsen is currently pursuing a master's degree in orchestral conducting from the University of Michigan, where he previously completed a cello degree with Prof. Richard Aaron. Jacobsen presented a wonderful masterclass, exploring concepts of sound production, arm weight, string-crossing preparation, and chamber music. Performers in the class were Joshua Propst, Shelly Burgess, and a string quartet consisting of Anna Darling, Grace Kim, Katie Woosley, and Morgan Thomas.



Latitude 40 cellist, Jacobsen Woollen

Timothy Steeves Violin Masterclass October 26th By Elizabeth Hook

I attended the masterclass by Timothy Steeves, another member of Latitude 49, on October 26th. I really enjoyed watching all of the students play their pieces and work through some things to help them improve their

performances. Anna Darling played two movements from Bach's D-minor Partita, Allemanda and Corrente. Mr. Steeves worked on phrase endings and pauses in phrases that would add musicality to the piece. Xinyu Liu played a movement from Bach's E-major Partita, Gavotte en Rondeau. Steeves slowed the piece down and worked on double stops and string-crossings. Ashley Brown performed her solo from Danse Macabre by Saint-Saëns, a piece that she was preparing to perform at our upcoming symphony concert. I learned a lot from the masterclass that I will be able to apply to my own playing.

Brandon Christensen Violin Masterclass November 10th

Dr. Brandon Christensen of Southeast Missouri State University (SEMO) gave an informative and delightful masterclass about Baroque violins and performance practices. Anna Darling, Xinyu Liu, and Ashley Brown performed three different movements of Bach. Dr. Christensen commented on their articulation, their phrasing, and different choices for their bow strokes. In addition to discussing modern violin playing, Dr. Christensen brought two Baroque violins, which are to be played in a slightly different manner than modern instruments. He explained that understanding how to play these instruments, which were the same kind of instruments composers such as Bach composed for, leads to a deeper understanding of Baroque music and style.



Masterclass with Dr. Christensen from SEMO

WKU ASTA Chapter Wins National Award

Student Group Awarded *Most Improved Student Chapter*

BY LANDON CASE

The American String Teachers Association (ASTA) student chapter at WKU has been present as an on-campus organization for four years, and its efforts to make string education and playing reach the local community of Bowling Green, KY, are most certainly evident. Our organization became an official campus organization in Fall semester 2014 under the new leadership of Landon Case (President), Josh Propst (Vice-President), and Dr. Ching-Yi Lin (Advisor). Not only has our chapter been recognized by the University, it has a more visible presence on campus and has made a distinct impact on the local community. And now great news: we have just heard that the ASTA has given our chapter the “Most Improved Student Chapter” award. Members of our chapter will be attending the ASTA National Conference in Tampa, FL, to accept this award on March 2–5, 2016.

Within the last year, our chapter has increased its productivity and influence in the community rapidly. For example, we hosted a Q&A seminar that featured guest Lisa Hussung, the elementary music teacher at Rich Pond and Jody Richards Elementary Schools in Bowling Green. Lisa’s superb ability to capture the attention of students in her classrooms held our chapter spellbound. She gave us fantastic insights into classroom management techniques that we can use in our own music classrooms.

This past year, the members of our chapter have gone into public-school orchestra programs to hold sectionals, play in the sections to inspire confidence, and offer help. We now regularly go into the schools twice a month to assist with district contests, school concerts, and all-state auditions. We are always looking for



Potter College Fall Festival

ways to become more involved with our university by having engaging events such as Conduct Us, an event which allows non-music major students at WKU to conduct their favorite popular songs in front of our string ensemble. We volunteer at events on campus such as the Potter College Fall Festival, where this year, we hosted an “Instrument Petting Zoo” and introduced non-music major students to the violin, viola, cello, and guitar.

Our chapter is, also, involved in WKU’s Pre-College Strings Program, which gives students aged 4–18 the opportunity to study a string instrument from beginning through

advanced levels. Dr. Ching-Yi Lin, Assistant Professor of Violin at WKU, director of the program, and our faculty advisor, gives members of our chapter the opportunity to assist in the group classes by correcting the bow holds, posture, and intonation of the young string players, as well as, accompany the students on the piano.

This program contributes greatly to our future success as string educators, and gives us priceless insights into the invaluable teaching methods modeled by the instructors.

After a great deal of fundraising, representatives from the chapter attended the 2015 ASTA National Conference in Salt Lake City, UT, last March. One of our members, Alyna Bloecher, won the ASTA George Bornoff Memorial Scholarship, which was

announced at the welcoming assembly at the Conference. We are looking forward to attending the conference again this year in Florida, and, also, to accepting our second award from ASTA.

Through our ambition to teach, learn, and serve our community, we have accomplished great things. ASTA at WKU will continue to support string education to the best of our ability, and endeavor to make an even greater mark on the campus and in the community.

WKU American String Teachers Association chapter to receive award at national conference. Read more on WKU News.

Learning the Violin: A Mom's Perspective

BY ELIZABETH HATHAWAY

When I registered Sarah for Strings Explosion in the summer of 2014, I never expected the violin to become such a major part of all our lives. To be honest, I almost hoped she wouldn't enjoy the summer camp. Because if she did, it would only mean more lessons in the fall... hours of practicing, and hours of listening to the proverbial squeak of beginning violinists, hours of recitals, and hours of trying to find a parking place within walking distance of the Fine Arts Center. Just thinking of it all gave me a headache, and I briefly considered keeping the tuition money and skipping the whole thing. Nevertheless, Sarah went to camp as planned and, parking aside, I could not have been more wrong about our experience with the Pre-College Strings Program.

Yes, of course, hours and hours of our lives have been devoted to violin practice and activities, but those hours have been a blessing, not a burden, for Sarah and me. As I have helped her work on and memorize every piece from "The Ant Song" to "The Witches' Dance," I, too, have learned so much about music, my daughter, and even myself. Now, before I continue any further, however, I don't want to give the false impression that every hour of practice has been perfect because, quite frankly, Sarah and I can both remember a few days that we would prefer to forget. One of us would get frustrated over something silly, which would lead



Sarah and her family

to the other person becoming irritated, then the first person becoming angry; and so the dominoes tumbled. As a parent, you learn quickly that you have to pick your battles with your children, correcting the serious problems and laughing together at the silly mistakes; and practicing violin with your child is no different.

The role of the parent is to listen, advise, and encourage, which sounds quite simple, except that each violin—and each child—is a unique and sensitive instrument. Consequently, of those three jobs, listening becomes the most important. Merely by paying attention to her thoughts and reactions

while she practices, I have discovered so much about Sarah—how she learns and thinks, what she enjoys, what inspires her, even when she is having a growth spurt—all of which has enabled me to correct and encourage her more effectively not only for the violin, but in our daily lives, as well.

Two lessons I have learned have become integral to maximizing our practice time together. First of all, violin practice has made me appreciate how truly different Sarah and I are. I approach almost everything seriously, with the need to be perfectly prepared in order to avoid being embarrassed by mistakes, especially in public situations,

while Sarah, in contrast, approaches violin with passion. Of course, she wants to learn how to play her best, but her love of playing the violin and learning a new song far surpasses any concern she might feel over a mistake made before an audience.

From her first solo performance, Sarah's ardor was obvious. A few days prior, we still were unsure of the order of the Twinkle variations. About the time I would have panicked from not knowing exactly what to play, Sarah smiled and said, "Mommy, I'll just play whatever Steven plays on the piano. It'll be great!" From that moment on, our practice times became considerably less stressful because I knew that Sarah, at five, had mastered a concept with which I still struggle: mistakes should

not be feared and dwelt upon, but embraced simply as a sign of something to practice more before moving on to the next lesson.

That said, however, even the most enthusiastic student needs a break at times, leading me to my second point. Learning when to be patient and persistent in completing (and sometimes stretching) Sarah's practice time, when to take a short break to refocus if practice is not progressing smoothly, and when to put the violin away for the day and go outside to swing instead, have all ensured that Sarah practices with her best form and most receptive attitude.

Other than paying the bill and providing transportation, I feel my role

in Sarah's violin lessons is a relatively minor one. God blessed Sarah with a love of music – she could memorize and hum songs long before she learned to talk – and God blessed me with a child who wants to practice her instrument and enjoys the introduction of each new song almost as much as opening a Christmas present (almost). As long as she needs me, though, I will always be ready to ask Sarah to straighten her bow, make silly faces at the notes that have gone awry, and applaud at the end of a good practice. When the day comes that my presence is obsolete (except for the applause, of course), I shall treasure how close we have become through our practice times together.

Learning and Observing in the WKU Pre-College Strings Program

By Ashley Brown, a senior at WKU pursuing a degree in Music Education

I started playing violin in an after school program at my elementary school. Before then, I had never seen a violin and did not really know what one was. Although it sounds like a cliché, that day changed my life. One of the counselors for the program brought his violin, and he played it for us. He even let us play it – as long as he was holding on to it, too! I remember going home that day raving about how I wanted to play the violin. My mom didn't think it would stick, because I was already in dance, softball, choir, and piano. She never thought it would take me to where I am today.

I had the privilege of coming to a great campus with access to a strong string pedagogy program. After a few years of being a music-education student at Western Kentucky University, I was given the opportunity to work with students



in the WKU Pre-College Strings Program. Watching the faculty work with the kids was amazing to me. I'd never seen how fast a student could progress in this type of systematic and nurturing setting. After observing some of the incredible students and groups, I began to want to learn how to teach like that myself.

One of the best ways to learn something is to teach it. This philosophy works exceptionally well with music. Working with the Pre-College Program has allowed me to learn more than I ever could have imagined. To be given the chance to watch and study string pedagogy, to see how it all comes together in the end, and to get to know some wonderful students along the way—this has been one of the most fulfilling experiences of my life. I'll be forever grateful to the faculty for giving me this opportunity.

SPECIAL RECOGNITION



James Han and Curtis Lin: "We love music"

3rd District Honors Orchestra October 29th

"I was given the opportunity to lead a cello sectional at the 3rd District Honors Orchestra. During the sectional, I offered advice on how to navigate technical passages, and gave suggestions about the musical aspect of the pieces. My primary goal in the sectional was to cultivate a unified sound among the section. I was impressed with how well the students responded to my ideas, and I had a great time!"

— Morgan Thomas

The WKU Pre-College Strings Program would like to thank Elizabeth Whitters for working with our students for the past three years, accompanying group classes, and assisting students in group classes. Elizabeth recently graduated from WKU with a bachelor's degree in Violin Performance. She will be moving to Louisville in spring 2016. We will miss her and wish her all the best in her future musical endeavors!



Beginner Violins Getting ready for the Christmas Recital



Morgan Thomas (far left)

Holiday Violin Group Class December 7th

We decorated our violin scrolls for our Christmas Recital! Thank you for a wonderful fall 2015. Great job, parents and students, for all your hard work this semester!

KMEA All-State

Congratulations to Kelly Lin and Yeju Kim, violin, and David Wiles and Maxwell Conte, cello, for getting into the Kentucky Music Educators Association All-State Orchestras! They will be performing at the association's 2016 conference in Louisville.

Special thanks go to teachers of the Violin Fest 2015 participants:

Rebecca Baumbach, Nashville, TN
Alyna Bloecher, WKU Pre-College Strings Program
Josh Bloecher, Bowling Green Christian Academy
Mary Boronow, McNeill Elementary School
Karen Clarke, Middle Tennessee State University
Stefka Madere, Baton Rouge, Louisiana
Andrew Braddock, Western Kentucky University
Dr. Brandon Christensen, Southeast Missouri State University
Dr. Andrea Dawson, Middle Tennessee State University
Connie Heard, Vanderbilt University
Claire Hess, Frankfort, KY
Phil Kent, SCAPA Lafayette High School Orchestra
Dr. Ching-Yi Lin, Western Kentucky University
Dr. Mikylah McTeer, West Virginia University
Rebecca Neely, Louisville, KY
Flora Nevarez, University of Louisville
Courtney Morrison, South Warren Middle & High School
Dr. Felix Olschofka, University of North Texas
Patrick O'Rourke, Bowling Green High School
Dr. Elizabeth Steva, Morehead State University
Johnny Thompson, JohnnyThompsonMusic
Emily Vaughn, WKU Pre-College Strings Program
ShuZheng Yang, Brentwood, TN
Youth Performing Arts School (YPAS), Louisville, KY

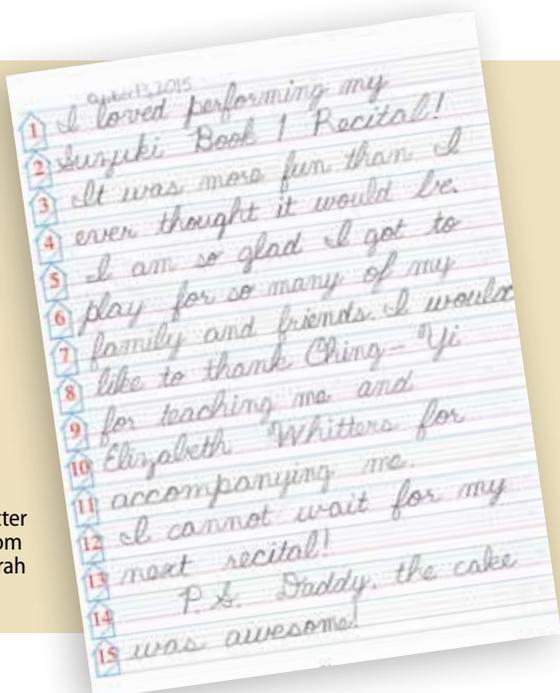
WKU Pre-College Strings Program student helpers:

Ashley Brown
Vanessa Brown
Shelly Burgess
Landon Case
Grace Kim
Josh Propst
Carly Shoulders
Steven Stewart
Xinyu Liu
WKU ASTA



Thanks

We would also like to thank the Potter College Dean Dr. Larry Snyder, Music Department Head Dr. Scott Harris, Amy DeCesare, Karen Dinwiddie, Marcus Dukes, Jennifer King, Amanda Lee, Bryan Lemon, Jeff Smith, Lili Yang, and WKU ASTA student chapter for their support of the WKU Pre-College Strings Program.



Letter from Sarah



Sarah Hathaway (second from the right) and her friends at her Suzuki Book One Recital



Pre-College Strings Program
Department of Music
Western Kentucky University
1906 College Heights Blvd. #11029
Bowling Green, KY 42101-1029

AN EVENING OF MUSIC FOR STRINGS

*Performing works by
Leclair, Dvořák, and Kodály*

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VIOLIN
*University of
Oklahoma*



Ching-Yi Lin
VIOLIN
Andrew Braddock
VIOLA

Violin Masterclass with Dr. Gregory Lee on
March 21, 6pm in Fine Arts Center Recital Hall

WEDNESDAY
MARCH 23
AT 7:30PM
FINE ARTS CENTER
RECITAL HALL



Free and open to everyone. For more information, contact Dr. Ching-Yi Lin: strings@wku.edu or (270) 745-5939