

Iowa String Teachers Association

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Greetings, Fellow String Teachers!

This is my second letter as your current President. I hope this school year is proving as exiting for each of you as it is for me. I truly look forward to the start of each new school year. I've continued that optimism for the past 25 years of teaching and I hope I will continue until I retire.

As you receive this new Journal, we are in preparations for the 2005 Conference. The Conference will offer something for everyone. Our goal is to make this event appealing to public school educators, college professors and private studio teachers. The goal of this board is to address the entire population of string educators throughout Iowa.

This year's conference will begin a new era of collaboration between the two major instrumental groups in the state. The Iowa Bandmasters Association (IBA) and ISTA will be holding our conferences simultaneously this year in Des Moines at the Hotel Fort Des Moines. The IBA Conference will run May 12-14, 2005 and the ISTA Conference will run May 13-15, 2005. This "twin" conference has involved several meetings, phone calls, and emails between President James Bawden of IBA and myself. Jim and I share the opinion that this "joining" of our 2 groups for a common purpose is long overdue. Bob Phillips will be serving as a clinician for both IBA and ISTA. We have also agreed to a reciprocal agreement whereby IBA convention badges will be honored at the ISTA convention and ISTA convention badges will be honored at the IBA convention.

Also "new" at this year's convention will be the start of the ISTA Honor Orchestra Program. Schools from across the state will be eligible to perform at our convention as an "Honor" orchestra. Details and applications are included in this journal and are also online at www.iowasta.org.

We are still attempting to contact the membership via email. We have many members who have not provided us with an email address. While postage is not unreasonably high, email is still "free" and is a highly effective way to communicate. If you haven't done so already, please go to www.iowasta.org and send us your email address.

Please join us at the IMEA All-State Conference in November. We will be holding the annual membership meeting and I hope to meet many of you there.

Sincerely,
Martin Clancey, President

All-State Audition Information

Bruce Eilers originally published this article last year. It was suggested to run this again for everyone to see what the directions are for the string auditors.

TO: String Auditors for All-State Auditions
FROM: Ted Hallberg, Orchestra Chair

Thank you for assisting with the All-State festival by agreeing to serve as an auditor on October 23, 2004.

Included in this mailing are the audition requirements, excerpts, a facsimile of an audition card, your acceptance quotas, and the expected judging procedure. Please remember that the students' brief audition time with you is the culminating activity of two months hard work on their part. Although not every student you hear will be of All-State quality, each deserves the opportunity to be heard. Some students may be quite nervous and a positive, considerate reaction from you will help them deal with the situation.

It is very important to be consistent with each student. You must hear the same amount of music from each person on the initial audition. You need to hear enough from each student so that they feel they have had a fair hearing.

There should be a "scorer" in your room to add the scores on the audition cards. Please add your scores carefully, and then have the "scorer" check your figures.

The requirements for auditioning are:

- A. Play a solo or etude of their own choosing
- B. VIOLINS, VIOLAS, CELLOS - Play any of the major scales up to and including 5 flats and 5 sharps in 16th notes at a metronome speed of a quarter note = 88 (ascending and descending). A scale of 3 octaves is required for violin and cello. Violas - 3 octaves are required for C, Db, D, Eb, & E. Optional 2 or 3 octaves - F, G, Ab, A Bb, & B.

STRING BASS - Play any of the major scales up to and including 5 flats and 5 sharps in 16th notes at a metronome speed of a quarter note = 76 (ascending and descending). A minimum of 2 octaves is required for scales E through A; one octave and a fifth (or 2 octaves) for scales Bb through Eb.

Style of bowing for all instruments is to be at the discretion of the performer.

- C. Play the required excerpts of the All-State selections.

All students, statewide, will play the same excerpts and scales. I will notify the audition site manager what these excerpts and scales are. S/he will tell you Saturday morning what you are to hear and will post them prior to the start of auditions.

AUDITION FORMAT

The auditions are on a 5-minute schedule and it is important that you stay on time. Each student must play 2 scales, 2 excerpts, and a solo/etude within the 5-minute period. Ask the doorkeeper to remind the students to tune before they enter your room in order to save time.

Have all students audition in the following order:

- 1) Solo: Allow the student to play the exposition (or similar length portion) of the solo or etude.
- 2) Scales: The student will play the 2 scales from memory. Bring a metronome with you. Turn it on as you are requesting the 1st scale and turn it off before the student begins to play. **They do not play with a metronome.** Some students will play slower than the requested speed. That is OK, but a slow speed should be factored into the score you give for the scale.
- 3) Excerpts: The student will play the 2 excerpts. Let them play "their" tempo for the excerpts unless, of course, it is obviously too slow. In that case, you should set a tempo that corresponds to what most of the students have been playing. If a student can play the excerpts well, s/he is well qualified for the All-State Orchestra. However, if s/he can't play the excerpts after 2 months practice, there is little chance of learning the entire selections before the All-State Festival.

Recalls: There will be time at the end of the auditions to make decisions, followed by a "Recall" time. You may (but are not required to) recall as many students as you feel necessary. Recalling a student simply means that you want to hear him/her again. Recalls are often used to make decisions at the borders: to choose between placement in 1st or 2nd violins; to choose alternates; to decide the last students accepted. They also let you give a second chance to students who you feel may not have played to their full potential the first time. If recalling students, write their names on a sheet of paper and specify their order of appearance. Have the doorkeeper take the list to the audition manager for posting. You may hear scales, solo, and/or excerpts in any combination. Just be sure that you treat each recalled student the same. You need to post the music to be played at the recall about 10 minutes before starting. You will again have time after the recall to make decisions.

You have a quota for each instrument. Be sure to indicate 1st or 2nd part for accepted violins. Only choose qualified players _ it is possible you will not fill your quota. That is permissible _ it is your decision. Obviously, we want people in the orchestra who are good orchestral players and who can play the passages accurately. If you fill your quota, you are encouraged to name qualified students as alternates. You may name up to 2 alternates for each of the instruments. There will be some entries that do not appear (scratches). This is normal and should not affect your decisions.

Use the rating system on the audition card. Please note that we have changed to a 10-point scale. This should eliminate the need for you to use pluses and minuses. Use the following criteria for assigning numbers:

10 - Nearly perfect, Professional level	5 - Good
9 - Exceptional	4 - Needs work
8 - Outstanding	3 - Weak
7 - Excellent	2 - Poor
6 - Very Good	1 - Unprepared

Do NOT ask any student his/her age, grade in school, school name, hometown, teacher's name, past All-State experience, etc. Your decisions should be based entirely on the performances you hear.

Iowa String Teachers Association Presents:

1st Annual Honor Orchestra Competition

Accepting entries in the following classifications:

A-4A High School String Orchestra
A-4A High School Full Orchestra
Middle/Junior High School String Orchestra
Middle/Junior High School Full Orchestra
Youth and Adult Community Orchestras
Alternative String Ensembles

Winners will perform at the 2005 ISTA with NSOA Conference being held at the Hotel Fort Des Moines on May 13-15, 2005.

For more information, visit our website:

www.iowasta.org

GUIDELINES FOR SELECTION OF ORCHESTRAS PERFORMING AT THE 2005 ISTA WITH ISOA CONFERENCE

The following guidelines will be observed in the selection of school orchestras to appear at the 2005 ISTA with ISOA Conference:

1. All elementary, junior high/middle school and high school orchestras are eligible for consideration, except those who have appeared at an ISTA with ISOA Conference in the past three years.
2. The orchestra director must be an active member of the Iowa String Teachers Association.
3. Audition tapes must be of the current 2004-2005 orchestra.
4. Recordings should be approximately 15 minutes in length and should represent contrasting styles of music.
5. Orchestras may be selected as follows: one each of class 4A, 3A, 2A, 1A, and A high school orchestras, two junior high/middle school orchestras, and at least one elementary orchestra.
6. Alternative ensembles will be selected as follows: one high school group, and/or one junior high group. Alternative ensembles consist of groups performing primarily fiddle, jazz, blues, or rock styles of music.
7. The selection committee will consist of four ISTA members, including one elementary director, one junior high/middle school director, one high director teaching in an A, 1A, or 2A program, and one high school director teaching in a 3A or 4A program.
8. The selection committee reserves the right to select no orchestras in a particular classification when, in the opinion of the committee, the quality of the orchestras does not meet the standards of an ISTA honor orchestra.
9. Audition recordings should be on cassette tape or CD, should be plainly marked for identification purposes and be of the best quality possible. Audition tapes/CD's may be picked up at the registration desk at the ISTA Conference.
10. Tapes/CD's must be postmarked by January 21, 2005 to be considered.

ORCHESTRA PERFORMANCE APPLICATION FORM

Iowa String Teachers Association – 2nd Annual Conference

Hotel Fort Des Moines

May 13-14, 2005

School
Director
Address
City Zip Code

Please check the appropriate category and classification

 String Orchestra Full Orchestra

Circle the grades represented in the group: 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

High School

 4A
 3A
 2A
 1A
 A

Junior High/Middle School

 4A, 3A Feeder
 2A, 1A, A Feeder
 Elementary/Beginning Orchestra
 Alternative Ensemble

Circle the grades represented in the group: 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12

 High School
 Junior High/Middle School

Return this form postmarked by December 17, 2004 to:

Send your tape postmarked by January 21, 2005 to:

Martin Clancey
President, Iowa String Teachers Association
3420 E Ave NW
Cedar Rapids, IA 52405
School: 319-558-3928
Home: 319-265-2465
Email: mclancey@cr.k12.ia.us

ASTA'S ANNUAL NATIONAL CONFERENCE TO BE HELD IN RENO, NEVADA, FEBRUARY 23–26, 2005

"Strings Alive in 2005!" Features Performances by Regina Carter and Rachel Barton Pine, Plus a Wide Variety of Educational Sessions

The 2005 National Conference of the American String Teachers Association (ASTA) will be held February 23 through 26 at John Ascuaga's Nugget Hotel and Conference Center in Reno, Nevada, and will celebrate all aspects of teaching and performing string instruments.

The conference theme—Strings Alive in 2005!—conveys the excitement of all that the event has to offer its attendees. In addition to a wide variety of educational sessions, the conference features music industry exhibits, master classes by renowned artists, the ASTA National Orchestra Festival™, the National High School Honors Orchestra, and the Alternative Styles Awards.

Highlights of the conference include a concert performance by acclaimed violinist Rachel Barton Pine and an evening of jazz with the Regina Carter Quintet and the Arizona State University Symphony Orchestra. World-renowned violin soloist and music educator Midori Goto will lead a collegiate-level master class—one of many offered at the conference. Dr. Kim Dolgin, a noted psychologist, is the keynote speaker for Strings Alive in 2005! and also will present a plenary session on how to handle difficult students.

Educational sessions, held throughout the conference, are offered in seven categories: Alternative Styles, Chamber Music, General, K–12, Private Studio Teacher, University, and String Industry Showcases.

Strings Alive in 2005! truly offers something for everyone interested in string music. School orchestra directors and music teachers, private studio instructors, alternative styles enthusiasts, university educators, and professional performers alike will benefit from the many exciting offerings of ASTA's 2005 National Conference.

Complete details about the conference, including registration materials, travel and accommodations information, and session descriptions, can be found at www.astaweb.com.

Student Chapter News

The UNI Student Chapter of the American String Teachers Association is off to a great start this semester! Our first meeting set a record for attendance – we currently have twelve active student members. Our officers are:

President: Rebekah Cannon – senior music education major; violinist; member of first violin section of the Northern Iowa Symphony Orchestra; member, Sigma Alpha Iota; Career Scholars Award student intern in strings/Suzuki

Vice-President: Amy Beekhuizen – sophomore music education major; violinist; member of the first violin section of the Northern Iowa Symphony Orchestra; UNI Presidential Scholar

Secretary/Treasurer: Molly Sullivan – graduate student in viola; member, Northern Iowa Symphony Orchestra, Waterloo-Cedar Falls Symphony; faculty, UNI Suzuki School

This semester's activities will include:

*Bake sale

*Chamber Music Party

*Workshop – String Instrument Repair with luthier Christian Brandenburg

*Recital for students of UNI-ASTA members

*Assisting with UNI All-State String Workshop

For a copy of our student chapter newsletter, please email Rebekah Cannon at gomusic@uni.edu or our chapter adviser, Dr. Julia Trahan, at trahanj@uni.edu

Studio Teachers' Forum

Julia Trahan

Helping Students with Spiccato Bowing

There seem to be a few things which students either do very naturally or find very difficult – I have found that spiccato is one of those things that often gets “glossed over” by teachers, because students often just “do it” or find it nearly impossible.

The first thing to consider if a student is having difficulty with spiccato is the basic setup of the bow hand. If the student has a great deal of tension, is over-pronating, or is not placing the thumb and the pinky in the correct place and with the correct curvature, this will hamper the students efforts with any bowing, especially spiccato. The second consideration is placing the stroke in the correct place in the bow. Find the natural “bounce point” on the bow by having the student play fast repeated notes in different places on the bow with a relaxed stroke, until the bow “wants” to bounce – this will be the best spot for the spiccato stroke. Finally, encourage students to start FROM the string and let the bow leave the string in a controlled manner; for inexperienced students in particular, dropping the bow on the string may produce a bounce, but it will probably come crashing back to earth in a rather inelegant fashion! Emphasize that controlling the distance of the bounce is the most important aspect of the stroke. Other considerations for students as they develop this stroke will be the angle of the hair/stick, and amount of bow (my motto: less bow = more controlled spiccato).

One of the best exercises for spiccato that I have found comes from my colleague at UNI, Frederick Halgedahl. He has devised this “spiccato pyramid” to help his students, and has generously given permission for me to share it with you in this issue. I’ve found it very useful and I’m sure you will, too!

Please send your tips for spiccato, or any other topic of interest for this column, to me at “trahanj@uni.edu” and I’ll be sure to publish them in a future issue of the ISTA journal. Happy practicing!