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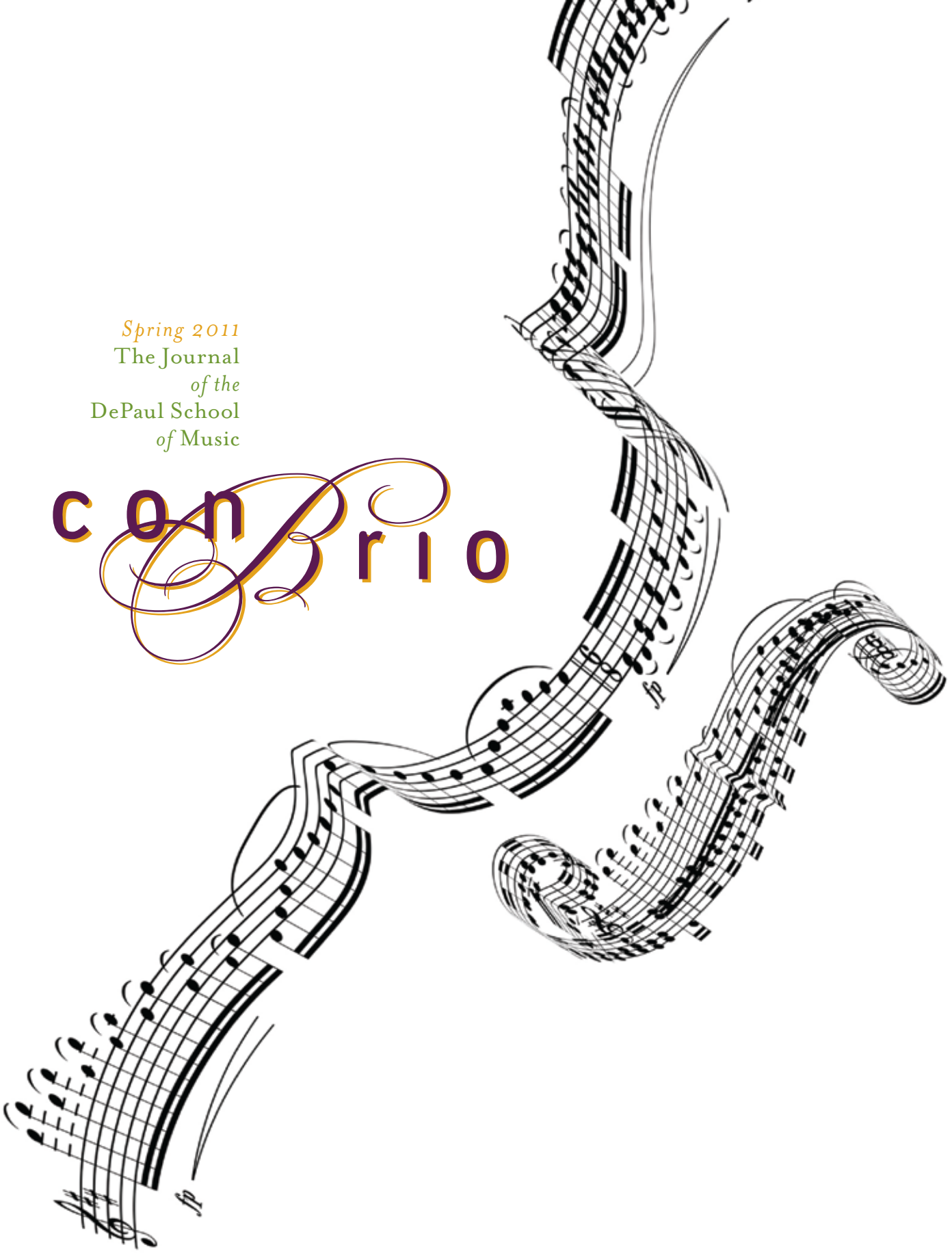

Good Vibrations:

Making string programs vital

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Good Vibrations

Making string programs vital

Prelude

They are nothing less than magical, those good vibrations. Such pedestrian materials as horsehair, resin, nylon, wire, and such oddly shaped wooden boxes combine in the hands of even young musical artists to create sounds of such beauty that they can resonate achingly within the deepest recesses of our souls. Under the guidance of capable teachers and following the blueprints of the master composers, these materials form the foundation of what might be thought of as the fullest flowering of human artistry. What amazing wizardry it is!

With each issue of *Con Brio* we set forth to explore a key idea relating to music in higher education with the hope that in that exploration we might generate new thinking or broader understanding about those things that truly matter in our field. Today and with this issue we step into the very heart of what might well be regarded as the centermost ensemble of every fine school of music — the string sections of the symphony orchestra — to examine in some detail the extraordinary dimensionality of a complete string education for those who play on orchestral string instruments. It's training that has a basis in the master/apprentice models of the Middle Ages, but that has also matured and expanded as our understanding of a complete musician has evolved. It is at once straightforward and endlessly complex, and we are pleased that you are willing to think these matters through with us.

We begin with a piece by one of the great violin pedagogue Josef Gingold's finest students, Janet Sung, who brings her teacher's wisdom about the true context of musical artistry to us all. Stephen Balderston shares insights into the extraordinary laboratory for string musicians found within chamber music assignments, where the perspectives of orchestral musician, soloist, and teacher are bound together provocatively. A panel of past and current DePaul string pedagogues (Ilya and Olga Kaler, Mark Zinger, and Rob Kassinger) debated the key aspects of proper studio training for us, and three DePaul orchestra conductors (Cliff Colnot, Michael Lewanski, and Steven Mosteller) then step into the conversation to comment upon the way in which the studio and orchestral experiences are ideally articulated. Finally, we reflect a bit upon string artists as "citizen musicians," a project underwritten by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, and we hear a bit about string playing from a recent visitor, the great and unusually expansive violinist Mark O'Connor. We do this for our field and we do it as we do all our work, with spirit.

Dean Donald E. Casey
DePaul School of Music

by Janet Sung

Creating Creative Thinkers

During a lesson when I was eleven years old, I remember my teacher at that time, celebrated pedagogue Josef Gingold, taking a book from his shelf, Shakespeare's *Hamlet*, and quoting from it to make a point: "Suit the action to the word, the word to the action." It was an early insight into thinking about music and its relevance beyond the printed score; being a successful musician is more than just learning how to play one's instrument. Each student's musicianship, education, and artistry are impacted by how that student develops intellectually and as a human being.

I was extremely fortunate to study with teachers who not only helped shape who I have become as a musician, but have equally shaped me in who I am as a person. No doubt, there are other factors that go into this equation — family, environment, personal experiences — but these teachers showed me how there is much more to understanding music, creating music, and living life as a musician than the mere act of learning how to play notes correctly.

Though I had made the decision and commitment to be a musician at an early age, I decided to attend a liberal arts university, a choice largely influenced by Mr. Gingold. His belief was that the challenges and experiences I would find outside the traditional conservatory setting would enhance who I would become as a musician. In retrospect, what I gained from my experience was exactly what he had anticipated — I was, for the first time, fully aware of different worlds of thought. Through the constant pursuit of analytical thinking, I became better informed, learned how to shape my own opinions, and became stronger in my convictions.

Later, when I continued my studies at The Juilliard School with Dorothy Delay, I experienced firsthand her extraordinary ability to integrate understanding about music, technique, career, life, and etiquette. She possessed great clarity and logic in her thought process, whether it had to do with instrumental technique, the logistical matters of soloing with an orchestra, or dealing with a business or personal situation; she helped each person find a unique clarity. In the end, I came away with a keener sense of the how and why of my choices.

In the increasingly competitive world of the string musician today, students need to be prepared for any and every situation. This takes shape in the form of being armed with knowledge — technically, musically, and otherwise — and having the ability to assess and deal with any situation. More often than not, a string musician's career will encompass many roles — as soloist, orchestral musician, chamber musician, and teacher. Students must have as many tools as possible to be well-rounded and self-sufficient, and be prepared for any opportunity. This can ultimately let them be free to be creative, to use their imagination without restriction, to develop their own ideas, and have the courage to take risks, even if it means failing and stumbling a few times along the way. What teachers can do, if done well, is not only prepare them for a musical career, but also provide relevant skills that can prepare their students for any aspect of life.

Analytical and creative thinking can be cultivated in the studio. This in turn spreads to the other arenas of learning for the student — the practice room, the stage, and beyond.

In the *studio*, teaching technique is a given. It is the means by which we help students learn to create the music they imagine. Creating music is a complex, extremely detailed process, and understanding *why* technique directly affects what we do musically is just as crucial as understanding *how*. Any number of technical devices can affect this: bow speed, bow weight, precise coordination between hands, a narrow vibrato, shifting speed, etc. To me, it is imperative to ask questions of the student in a lesson; the students are pushed to truly think about what they are doing, not just follow instructions. Being able to articulate all aspects of violin playing is part of their intellectual growth, which helps them become independent thinkers.

In the *practice room*, the second arena of learning, the student develops his or her analytical and creative thinking. The student must know what kind of sound he or she wants to achieve, his or her "interpretation." A student must also be able to hear the most subtle of differences in pitch, tone, articulation, and expression. To prepare for a masterful performance, one has to study the score, have an awareness of its historical context and the current performance practices, as well as appreciate other interpretations. A teacher ultimately wants to teach the student to be able to teach themselves. Practicing with focus and purpose can only be accomplished when one has a

clear idea of what one wants to express.

The *stage* becomes a student's third arena of learning and provides a setting for demonstrating and assessing their analytical and creative thinking. Performing regularly is crucial to the development of any musician. A single performance is never the "end product"; it is another means by which to evaluate and build upon what a student has internalized and acquired thus far. The analytical thinking involved during this phase is especially crucial, as it gives the student a clear assessment as to where he or she stands within a broader picture of his or her musical path.

Ultimately, students must learn to be creative thinkers and doers, not just imitators. This applies not only to their music-making, but also to other areas of their lives. As future ambassadors of our art, they must always be curious, as we are constantly learning from others and our environment. They must take into consideration all that surrounds them, physically and intellectually. Creative thinking can shape the direction of other aspects of the young musician's life and can open doors where they least expect them to be.

Janet Sung *joined the DePaul faculty in Fall 2010 as professor of violin and strings chamber music coordinator. She has performed with symphony orchestras and in recital in concert halls and festivals around the world, as well as in radio and television broadcasts. In 2009, she performed the world premiere of Kenneth Fuchs'* American Rhapsody for Violin and Orchestra. *Highly sought after as an artist-teacher, Janet Sung has conducted masterclasses throughout the country.*

The Importance of Chamber Music

by Stephen Balderston

Recently, I was honored to serve as principal cello of the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra for a week, and it led me to think about the importance of teaching chamber music to university students. That amazing ensemble — an orchestra made up of astoundingly talented soloists and ensemble musicians — really exemplifies what we are trying to instill in students at DePaul. Each of the individuals could have wonderful careers on their own, but the magic they create as an ensemble is palpable. The chamber music program at DePaul seeks to teach these qualities to all of our performance students, as a goal to which they can aspire.

As a university program with a conservatory feel, DePaul teaches students a set of principles that will apply to whatever career they choose to pursue. Some students take orchestra auditions, some form their own ensembles, and some choose to teach. But the lessons that seem to apply, regardless of career path, are those of the chamber music class.

A truly accomplished chamber musician exhibits the best traits of the orchestral musician, the soloist, and the teacher. Chamber musicians have the ability to learn a specific repertoire on an expert level; and they have the flexibility, open-mindedness, and sensitivity to respond to those around them while performing. Chamber musicians must curb their soloist tendencies in favor of a group mentality, but in the best possible way. The truth is, an excellent chamber musician can become a virtuosic soloist when it is necessary but also be an accomplished and expressive ensemble player. Chamber music helps define and solidify the skills students need in today's ever-changing musical landscape.

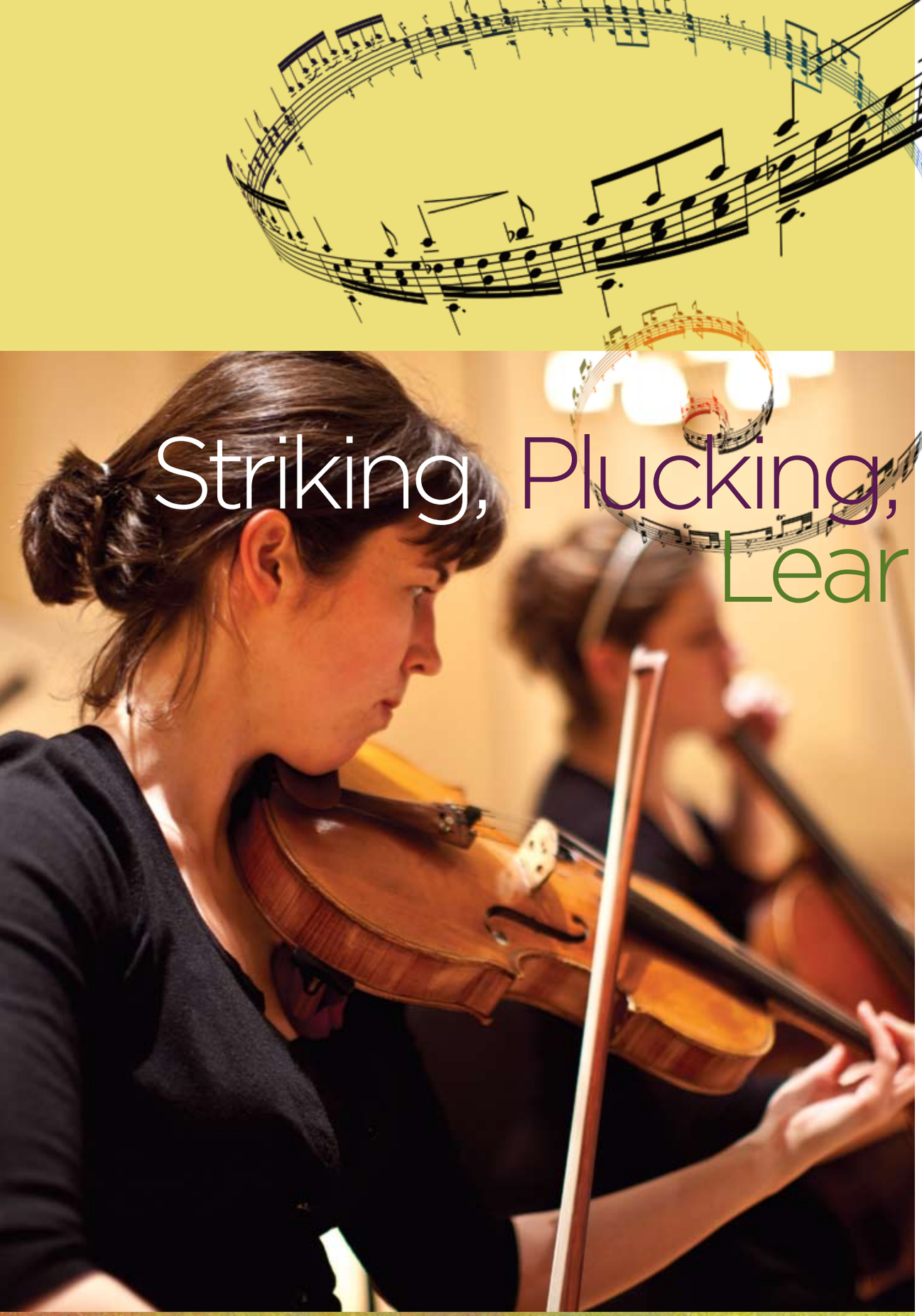
DePaul's string performance majors are required to be enrolled in a chamber ensemble each quarter. The chamber ensembles are chosen at the beginning, either by students forming groups on their own or by assignment by chamber music coordinators. Each ensemble has weekly coaching with a faculty member, attends or performs at masterclasses six times per quarter, and participates in a chamber music showcase at the end of each quarter. As in the professional world, we have had ensembles that are delighted to work together and those that have had issues. This is a fantastic learning experience for students because they must simultaneously work through issues as esoteric as musical markings and expressions and as mundane as what to do with the ensemble member who just can't show up on time.

As a consequence, students really must work through these issues to focus on the music. Ultimately, each ensemble is a marvelous learning experience, with the ultimate goal of performing the assigned pieces with professionalism and musicality. Chamber music requires a subtle dialogue that is relatively nonexistent in orchestral or solo performance. Each artist brings his or her strengths to the group.

As a cellist, while I have had incredible experiences as a soloist and as an orchestral musician, most special musical memories involve the give-and-take of chamber music. While the power and exhilaration of an orchestra can't be denied, my most memorable moments tend to be my affiliations with smaller, often informal, groups. I have been fortunate to have been involved with the salons and chamber music parties of my friends and colleagues.

Ultimately, this enjoyment of chamber music is a tradition that gets passed down from teacher to student. It is our job as instructors and mentors to build upon individual strengths, minimizing any weaknesses in favor of the group's overall strength. We are so pleased when the weeks of coaching and rehearsals result in performances that bring the joy of chamber music to our musicians and audiences.

Stephen Balderston, *professor of cello and strings coordinator, joined DePaul in 2003 after 20 years as a full-time orchestra and chamber musician, including ten years as assistant principal cello with the Chicago Symphony Orchestra and ten years with the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra. Since 2002, he has been a teacher, coach, and soloist at a number of prestigious summer venues, including the Marrowstone Music Festival, International Festival — Institute at Round Top, Midwest Young Artists Festival, the ARIA International Festival, and the Northwestern University High School Institute.*



Striking, Plucking, Bowing, Learning and Growing

by Rosalie Harris

The word "audition," traced to 1590, is from the Latin *auditio*, "a hearing," from *audire*, "to hear." What do those with decision-making responsibility for incoming string students hear at auditions? What do they listen — and look — for? How do they decide if an applicant will succeed in their studios?

Con Brio recently posed these questions in a discussion with string faculty members Ilya Kaler, professor of violin; Olga Kaler, associate professor of violin; Rob Kassinger, adjunct professor of double bass, and Mark Zinger, professor emeritus of violin and string pedagogy.

The nature of auditions

"The first thing I listen for in an audition is intonation, which is a clue to whether or not an applicant will succeed here," said Kassinger. Olga Kaler agrees that a sense of pitch is, first and ultimately, the most important criterion for admission to DePaul's string program. "I also look for musicality, a natural connection to the instrument, good coordination, and the ability to phrase. Body language tells me a lot about intelligence, attitude, personality, and a lack of arrogance."

She is not put off by deficiencies of prior training. "An applicant can just have bad luck with training — whether it's a question of what available resources he or she has at hand or what teachers or instructional methods he or she has experienced. I believe I can fix many problems in just one quarter. If a student is in my studio as an undergraduate, that gives me four years to develop good technique; if I see a student through graduate studies, I have a full six years."

It is very important for students to come prepared for the audition," said Zinger. "But I also believe that before an audition, whenever possible, applicants should play an etude or a concerto, by memory, for a faculty member. This gives the faculty member an intimate clue as to whether or not he or she will succeed here and also gives the student a sense of support."

Progress in the studio

Each week, students head to the studios for an hour of instruction. As described in the Admissions section of the DePaul School of Music web site, http://music.depaul.edu/Admissions/index.asp, string studios prepare students to become musicians of the highest caliber. Faculty members emphasize ensemble and chamber music experiences, along with opportunities to explore a wide variety of solo literature. Strict attention to traditional methods, repertoire, and performance, combined with all that Chicago has to offer aspiring musicians, results in a learning environment that reflects the Chicago

music scene itself: world-class, diverse, hard-working, and innovative.

"Here in our studios, we usually begin by teaching students basic skills," Ilya Kaler said.

"We ask them to do things differently than they're used to," said Kassinger.

"We teach them to think for themselves," said Olga Kaler.

"We teach them to turn on their brains and practice correctly. What are the problems? What needs repeating — and how to repeat? How can you avoid wasting time?" Zinger said.

DePaul string prospects apply to a specific studio and, for some who enter the school, the experience starts even before the first quarter begins. As soon as a freshman student confirms his or her decision to join Olga Kaler's studio, she contacts them for a formal lesson. "It's a chance to see if we'll get along," she said. "We agree to a binding contract — strict deadlines for fixing the things that need fixing, accomplishing technique goals, learning repertoire, and preparing recitals."

The first major component of studio study is technique, technique, and technique. A close second is core repertoire.

"Until a student has a solid technique, there is no room for individual expression or interpretation," Ilya Kaler said. "When there's solid technique, that's when a student can let it go."

"Bass players move between the classical music and jazz studios," Kassinger said. (Note sidebar story on Kelly Sills.) "We don't separate the genres in terms of developing technique — bowing, for example. All freshmen work on certain technical cornerstones, including scales and etudes."

Equally important to technique, students learn core repertoire as part of the studio program. "Studio instruction is individualized; no two students play the same repertoire," said Olga Kaler.

In their later undergraduate years, string students play more and more repertoire, especially in their roles as members of DePaul Symphony Orchestra or DePaul Chamber Orchestra.

Students learn both technique and repertoire in studios, performance classes, and masterclasses, and by listening to live and recorded performances. Classical music has been a staple of recorded music since the invention of the phonograph by Thomas Edison in 1877. The earliest documented string recording, according to the U.S. National Park Service, is a performance of Beethoven's *Minuet in G Flat Major* and *Valse Bluette* performed by violinist Kathleen Parlow, a onetime child prodigy from San Francisco, and pianist George Falkenstein. They recorded the piece in 1912 on an Edison Amberol cylinder; it now is available as a ring tone from www.beemp3.com.

Today's music-delivering conduits include iPods, iPads, radios, and CDs. Too much? No, said Kassinger. "I still tell students to listen to everything they can get their hands on."

Ilya Kaler agrees. "There is a beautiful archive online, especially with collectors of archival records sharing previously unavailable masterpieces with the world."

> THE POINT OF TEACHING STUDENTS TO LISTEN *is for them to find ways to develop their own approaches, not to copy what they hear.*

"The point of teaching students to listen is for them to find ways to develop their own approaches, not to copy what they hear," said Zinger.

Everyone performs

All DePaul string students — whether aiming for a career as a soloist, orchestra or chamber member, music educator, sound recording professional, or arts manager — are required to take weekly one-hour performance classes, where they rehearse recitals for fellow students. For many, their peers are the toughest audience they face. But in performance class, students "learn to love their audience, not see them as enemies," said Olga Kaler. "By learning to play to one person, they learn to connect to everyone." The Kalers contrast violinist Jascha Heifetz — stony and apprehensive on stage — with violinist Fritz Kreisler, "who always came on stage with a smile on his face," Ilya Kaler said. "Heifetz had horrible stage fright and was constantly competing against himself. He felt everyone in the audience was there to judge him. Kreisler loved his audience and saw every single individual in the hall as a friend. When performers concentrate on the music, all distractions disappear."

Students in performance classes also become the #1 champion of their peers' fan clubs. Sometimes even the simplest audience etiquette must be taught. "Some students haven't learned to applaud," said Ilya Kaler, demonstrating a weak patty-cakes gesture. Then, bringing his hands together with an impressive clap, he said, "I tell students to be enthusiastic. As they say, 'if you don't go to your friends' funerals, they won't go to yours.'" Mutual support as an audience member also lends itself to the collaboration required in orchestral and chamber music. To put it another way, Kassinger said, "You have to impart a spirit of generosity to other musicians."

Feel the love

Zinger makes teaching sound easy. "If you want to be a teacher, don't teach," he said. But what he actually conveys is quite complex: "I tell them to play with their heart." Because some 90 percent of his students have gone on to teach, his philosophy has affected several generations of students around the world.

What is his secret for nurturing a musical heart? It is not contained in a pedagogical tome, but in a popular book published in *1988: All I Really Need to Know I Learned in Kindergarten*, a book of short essays by American minister and author Robert Fulghum. The book, now in its 15th printing, posits how tried and true messages learned early can bring lifelong success and satisfaction. Familiar instructions include "share everything"; "play fair"; "hold hands and stick together." These core values are essential to a musician, Zinger believes.

To students, he mentions his own teacher, Piotr Stolyarsky, who added motherhood. "I've heard children immediately deliver a more emotional performance simply by asking them, 'How much do you love your mother?'" Zinger said. "This works for university students, too; although you must ask, 'How much do you love your girlfriend? How much do you love your boyfriend?'"

Ilya Kaler, *professor of violin at DePaul since 2003, previously was professor of violin at Indiana University School of Music and Eastman School of Music. He is a Gold Medal winner of three of the world's most prestigious competitions: the 1986 Tchaikovsky (Moscow), 1985 Sibelius (Helsinki), and the 1981 Paganini (Genoa.) He received his bachelor's, master's, and doctorate degrees in music from the Moscow Conservatory. Recitals and solo engagements with*

orchestras continue to take him all over the world, where he has been compared to the likes of Heifetz and Perlman. The Washington Post *lauded him as "a consummate musician … in total control at all times, with peerless mastery of his violin." He was named Artist of the Month for April 2011 by Chicago classical music station WFMT-FM, from which he frequently broadcasts live performances.*

After joining the DePaul faculty in 2004 as applied violin teacher and string pedagogy class instructor in 2004, **Olga Kaler** *was appointed an associate professor of violin effective Fall 2011. She received her bachelor's and master's degrees in music from the Moscow*

Conservatory and currently is a doctoral candidate at the Northwestern University School of Music, planning to graduate June 2011. She is an active soloist, chamber and orchestral musician, and educator. Since 2005, she has been a member of the World Orchestra for Peace, under the direction of Valery Gergiev and, since 1994, a member of the Chautauqua Symphony of New York.

Rob Kassinger *was appointed adjunct professor of double bass at DePaul in 1998. Since 1993, he has been a member of the double bass section of the Chicago*

Prepare to Enter

As university admissions directors reach out to the best available music students, they have tools unimagined by their predecessors. Today, by the creative use of resources such as web sites, email, videos, Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube, the channels of communication are wide open. According to Ross Beacraft, the DePaul School of Music Director of Admissions, "the Internet is the tool of our time. Information there can allow a prospective student to get a strong sense of one's program."

While communications conduits are useful and necessary on many levels, university music recruits who turn to them are most interested in the quality of faculty and student ensembles.

"Undergraduate and graduate students want to build an absolutely sound foundation by working with those who can polish their skills and expression and help open the door to careers, said Beacraft. "Students understand that these goals are best achieved by studying with faculty who, themselves, have reached the top of their profession.

"After a prospective student has had a look online, we encourage them to visit our campus, schedule a lesson with our faculty, and listen to our ensembles rehearse. The web is a wonderful portal but it isn't a substitute for a first-hand, in-person experience."

A solid foundation

Recruiting really begins by assembling a first-rate team of faculty and staff who work together to make tomorrow's school better than today's. According to Beacraft, "it's a bit like practicing; one strives to be better each and every day. This year the DePaul School of Music's violin faculty grew to three full-time teachers," he said, referring to Ilya and Olga Kaler and Janet Sung. They have joined Rami Solomonow and Karen Dirks on viola, Stephen Balderston and Brant Taylor on cello and Robert Kassinger, Jason Heath and Kelly Sill on double bass, with Michael Hovnanian teaching orchestral repertoire, to form a very formidable string faculty. "The response has been a huge increase in string applicants playing at the highest level we've ever heard."

For applicants, the most important criteria include audition preparation, intelligence, discipline, a positive work ethic, and seriousness of purpose. "Once a student is accepted, our admissions office works very hard to make DePaul affordable by combining music performance awards, academic scholarships, and need-based awards for maximum affect," Beacraft said.

"Today one can get a sense of what is happening in almost any place in the world via a website, social networking page, twittering, etcetera. But these are really just research tools. I believe what ultimately attracts a prospective student is the quality of a program as measured by the success of its graduates and the students currently enrolled. One only has to listen to our orchestras and string ensembles or take a look at where our graduates are performing to gain some insight into that. My job is just to help those prospective students see who we are."

Symphony Orchestra. He also performs locally with the Revolution Ensemble, the Orion Ensemble, Fulcrum Point, Ars Viva, Music of the Baroque, the Callisto Ensemble, and MusicNow. A Boulder native, he began his bass studies at the University of Colorado and moved to New York to study at the Manhattan School of Music, where he received his bachelor of music degree. Rob then pursued his master's degree at the Juilliard School. His experience as a jazz performer dates back to his early teens, working in the house rhythm section at the infamous Denver jazz club El Chapultapec. Over the years, he has performed with Wynton Marsalis, Branford Marsalis, Kenny Burrell, the Woody Herman band, and Richard Stoltzman, among many others.

Mark Zinger *joined the DePaul violin and string pedagogy faculty more than 30 years ago and retired in 2007 as professor emeritus. Many of his students are teaching on faculties of music conservatories and performing in orchestras around the world. A native of Odessa — birthplace of great violinists, such as Oistrakh and Milstein — he received his undergraduate and graduate music degrees at the Odessa Conservatory and a liberal arts diploma from Moscow University in Russian history. He was a solo performer with the Odessa Philharmonic Society and a member of the St. Louis Symphony, among others. He continues to reside in Chicago, where he teaches from his home on the North Side.*

Esperanza: New "Hope" for Bass Players

A Justin Bieber audience is all about feverish screaming. But here is how a *Florida Times-Union* writer reported reaction to a recent Jacksonville performance by Esperanza Spalding: "The click of a pen seemed as loud as the crack of a whip." In this Gaga Age, it is something of a miracle that quiet mastery of the jazz bass won out as the Grammy's Best New Artist in 2011, beating teen idol Justin Bieber and putting not only the musician but also the instrument front and center.

"Every once in a while, someone steps up and sweeps you off your feet," said Rob Kassinger, adjunct professor of bass. "It's nice to see the spotlight on a bass player who can be an inspiration to young bass players — especially women. Esperanza Spalding is an extraordinary player, singer, and composer. Even more important, it's clear that she works very hard for her success."

As the International Music Network commented, "If *'esperanza'* is the Spanish word for 'hope,' then bassist, vocalist, and composer Esperanza Spalding could not have been given a more fitting name at birth. Blessed with uncanny instrumental chops, a multi-lingual voice that is part angel and part siren, and a natural beauty that borders on the hypnotic, the…prodigy-turned-pro might well be the hope for the future of jazz and instrumental music."

PHOTO: SANDRINE LEE

Studio Jazz

In the *Star Trek* television series, Q is a character with omnipotent powers. In the DePaul jazz bass studio of Kelly Sill, Q, for Quality, is everything.

"Innovation, uniqueness, individuality, cutting-edge, and communication are self-defeating goals," he said. "If you go after quality, you'll find that you end up with each of those aspects in your music, whether you want them or not. Quality can be pursued by focusing on a number of different elements of music — theory, jazz conception, repertoire, technique, improvisation, structural hierarchy, lineage, and evolution of style, among others. Non-musical elements such as the business, inter-ensemble relationships, stylistic differences, and agendas also come into play. Addressing each of these elements separately and solving whatever problems lie within can help a cohesive whole develop.

"The most important thing that my students take from my studio after leaving is an understanding of their weak areas and the knowledge of devices to strengthen these areas."

When first meeting the undergrad and graduate students in his studio, Sill looks for a focus on quality in each of the elements of musical craft. His expectations are high, encompassing playing experience that shows an appropriate comfort level with the bass and/or with music.

Sill's students also study classical music — in fact, some are classical music majors and some even are non-bass playing jazz majors. "The study of music is the study of music," he said. "Style is only one small aspect. Everything affects everything. As long as the training is good, the student will do well."

Living in the Chicago area since 1976, Sill observes that because Chicago is a major metropolitan area with a vast jazz heritage, the city is hospitable to a pool of players who congregate here to live, work, and collaborate — advantages for DePaul students and faculty.

"The jazz and other music programs at DePaul are very strong," he said. "They attract a number of talented people who can play off of each other, both musically and socially. I use the experience gained in my own performances as a way for my students to embrace the pragmatic aspects of what it's like to be a working jazz musician.

"And as far as my fellow educators go, I've played with all of them. I've recorded with Bob Lark, Tim Coffman, Mark Colby, Bob Rummage, Tom Matta, Ron Perrillo — and probably a couple about whom I'm forgetting. All of these guys can really play!"

Kelly Sill *joined the DePaul faculty in 2000. With a double major in math and philosophy at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign, he also worked on music, including playing gigs — which he pursued when he graduated, in 1974. He enjoys long-standing professional relationships with jazz musicians including Mose Allison, Dave Liebman, Scott Hamilton, Chris Potter, Herb Ellis, Ruth Brown, Eddie Harris, and Red Rodney, performing at Symphony Center, Ravinia, the Jazz Showcase, the Green Mill, George's, national and international festivals, concerts, and clubs. He has recorded on almost 50 albums and CDs, some of which contain his own compositions.*

Heartstrings

Nurturing the Spirit of an Orchestra

When teaching central string repertoire, DePaul faculty members draw on the four centuries of music that make strings essential to the canon of large orchestral ensembles, small chamber groups, and opera orchestras.

"Since the violin, viola, and cello appear in a well-developed form useable by modern standards by 1700, the string family had a real advantage over the woodwinds and brass, whose development occurred later," said Cliff Colnot, director of orchestral activities and conductor of the DePaul Symphony Orchestra and the DePaul Wind Ensemble. "Of course, composers were then inclined to write their music featuring the strings, whose viability was already well-established."

The evolution of the role of strings in operatic music is aptly demonstrated by way of the three productions presented by the DePaul Opera Theatre in this academic year, according to its new music director, Steven Mosteller. He said, "Monteverdi's *L'incoronazione di Poppea* is one of the earliest of the genre, from around 1640. It is arguably the greatest work of its time, but fraught with stylistic problems for the modern player. The string ensemble plays only in *sinfoniette* and overtures, connective material for a long evening of vocal recitative accompanied by a continuo group. We affectionately refer to them as the 'pickers and strummers.'

"The continuo cellist is crucial to the success of the performance, playing the solo bass part in every bar of the opera, while following the text, understanding the drama, and communicating with the keyboard player. The violin of the 17th century was much lighter in tone and the bow was very different from the modern instruments our students play: the down bow would have been stronger than the up bow. In addition, vibrato was very limited in the 17th century and the use of open strings prominent.

"This is really a different sound world, but students are able to enter the spirit of the opera, the hallmarks of which are energy, excitement, and verve.

"Gilbert and Sullivan's *The Gondoliers*, performed in March, is an operetta with the usual string complement, the kind of playing everybody is used to. The strings are the most prominent group of the orchestra. Our spring opera on May 20 and 22 is a double bill of two French one-act operas from the 1920's — Darius Milhaud's *The Poor Sailor* and Jacque Ibert's *Angélique*. In these, the strings share more of the responsibilities with the woodwinds, brass, and percussion."

In contrast to symphonic and opera orchestras, "a chamber orchestra is limited mostly by its instrumentation, not necessarily by its historical context," said Michael Lewanski, conductor of the DePaul Chamber Orchestra and Ensemble 20+. "Which is to say the obvious thing — when dealing with a small string section, one cannot play music that involves a large quantity of brass instruments that overpower the string players. This rules out the performance of any number of pieces; though many of these are from the mid- to late-19th and 20th centuries, there is still plenty of music from all periods for c hamber orchestras to perform."

Studio to stage

Close cooperation between studio faculty and ensemble directors is crucial to a curriculum requiring that students perform in ensembles. The expectation is that studio experiences help produce the kind of musician treasured by ensemble directors. "I rehearse students just like I would a professional orchestra, with the blessing of many more rehearsals," Mosteller said. "I ask the strings for a constant musical investment throughout the opera whether it is a big tune or a simple accompaniment. This opera orchestra concentrates remarkably well and seems to enjoy probing the meaning of the music beyond the printed notes. My experience so far at DePaul is that the students are well prepared and talented musicians. They also are very good colleagues, which I feel shows an extraordinary maturity on their part. That to me is professionalism."

Lewanski said, "To a person, faculty members understand the importance of learning to play in a large ensemble, just as they recognize the need for their students to play in chamber music ensembles and play solo repertoire. Our faculty's support of the orchestra program is really quite striking and unusual; I don't think I've seen such a level of collegiality and mutual respect at any other university. So supportive are our faculty that many of them do sectional rehearsals for both orchestras. This is invaluable for me and for the students, who get rare technical and musical insights. As they are all active performers, many of whom have played in orchestras for years, the studio faculty provides insider information that is hard to come by otherwise.

"I can't actually think of a time when a difference of interpretation has come up, because faculty members are extremely respectful of the ensemble conductors' roles. Occasionally I will ask them their advice about a matter of technique or about a bowing, and they are inevitably eager to help out."

Colnot agrees. "Many music schools have significant antipathy between the orchestra conductors (and their programs) and the string faculty. I am proud and pleased to note that no such turf wars exist at DePaul.

"As the symphony orchestra developed in quality and pride, and new string faculty members were hired, an increase in the cooperation, mutual respect, and willingness to work as a team became palpable. The interactions that I have with the string faculty around symphony orchestra repertoire are exemplary. Orchestra music is worked on during private studio lessons, and faculty members are open and responsive to specific requests I make when students need help with certain passages."

The respect is mutual. Rob Kassinger, adjunct professor of bass, said, "I get lots of emails from Cliff, who might have a question with the low strings. He'll ask, 'What should I do? What interpretation do you suggest?' He's inquisitive and receptive. That doesn't always happen between studio faculty and orchestra directors."

Mosteller cites early music studies as an example of DePaul's commitment to students with specialized musical interests. "The early music trend has been growing for many years now. If a student has a love for this music and the sounds of the instruments, they should be able to explore

> IN MANY OPERAS, THE STRING SECTION IS PLAYING CONSTANTLY — *they are the basis of the orchestra. The singers are most often accompanied by the strings, especially in the most famous of Gilbert and Sullivan traditions, the patter song. It helps one hear the words.*

it. In every major city,there are early music ensembles hiring musicians. This means that there is some money to be made in a field that is actively producing and needs educated players. In addition, many opera orchestras need their players to understand the style for their production of Baroque operas. So DePaul started a Baroque performance class with harpsichordist Jason Moy and violinist Brandi Berry and purchased a number of Baroque-style bows, so that students can feel the difference. I am hoping this will create a beautiful synergy with the production of Baroque opera each year."

Things strings bring

"I think being in a string section is probably a very different experience from being in a woodwind or brass section," said Lewanski. "A sort of group mentality gets developed, and it's extremely interesting to watch. All of those players listening to each other — and all playing the same notes — makes the individuals react in a very unusual way. They really seem to become part of a collective musical consciousness in which somehow the sum is different than the parts. For instance, string sections tend to play behind a conductor's beat in ways that brass and woodwind players do not; yet they tend to play together. They learn how to do it as a result of how string sections play. No one person decides that they are going to play behind, yet they all do it. And they all do it at the same time."

"In many operas, including *The Gondoliers*, the string section is playing constantly," Mosteller said. "They are the basis of the orchestra. The singers are most often accompanied by the strings, especially in the most famous of Gilbert and Sullivan traditions, the patter song. It helps one hear the words. The other sections add color, support, and solos and build the orchestra's musical climaxes in the larger scenes."

"Musicians in a chamber orchestra, including string players, have a unique challenge," said Lewanski. "Ideally, all orchestral musicians should really think of themselves as part of a large chamber music ensemble. But because there are fewer players and, therefore, parts are more exposed in a chamber orchestra, it is beneficial for these musicians to develop extremely refined chamber music skills. Really, all orchestral musicians should develop these skills; in a chamber orchestra, though, it's really a necessity, as there is nowhere to hide."

Conductor, composer, and master arranger for classical music, jazz, and commercials, **Cliff Colnot** *joined the DePaul faculty in 1982. He is director of orchestral activities and conductor of the DePaul Symphony Orchestra and the DePaul Wind Ensemble. Colnot has worked extensively with Daniel Barenboim and Pierre Boulez and is principal conductor of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's contemporary MusicNOW series and the Civic Orchestra of Chicago. He also conducts the International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE), Contempo at the University of Chicago, and orchestras at Indiana University.*

Michael Lewanski *joined the DePaul faculty in 2007 as conductor of the DePaul Chamber Orchestra and Ensemble 20+. Heavily involved in new music, he is conductor of the ensemble dal niente, assistant conductor of the Civic Orchestra, and has conducted the International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE) and the Anaphora ensemble.*

Prior to joining DePaul last fall as the first full-time music director of DePaul Opera Theatre, **Steven Mosteller** *was, for 15 seasons, conductor of the New York City Opera. For five years, he was music director of The New Jersey Opera.*

Showcasing Strings

Each quarter, for the last eight years, chamber music ensembles comprised of DePaul string students have been featured in chamber music showcase performances in DePaul Concert Hall. String Chamber Showcase audiences include fellow students, faculty members, and staff, as well as the general public who also attend dozens of other free performances throughout the year.

"The showcases give student groups the opportunity to present the culmination of their hard work in a concert setting," said Stephen Balderston, cello professor and strings coordinator. "Performing on stage in front of the public is in itself a valuable learning tool and students have much to gain from the experience. It takes them out of the practice room and presents a whole new set of challenges, such as stage presence, tonal projection, and so on. Performers need to perform!"

Janet Sung, violin professor and strings chamber music coordinator, said, "The objective of the showcases is to provide opportunities for the ensembles to perform the work, or a portion of the work, that they have been studying intensively during the chamber music course. Before the showcase performance, there is extensive preparation that happens in rehearsals, weekly coaching with faculty, and performances in class." Sung believes that what stands out in DePaul's chamber music program are the chamber music classes, a required component. The classes serve as musical laboratories that provide an opportunity for the groups to perform their repertoire — still works-in-progress — and get feedback from the faculty and their student peers. "It is a learning experience for those who are listening and observing, as much as it is for those who are playing," she said.

Chamber music coordinators are responsible for assembling the groups, although some groups are formed by the students themselves, and are encouraged to stay together, if they wish. New students who do not yet know other students are placed in groups according to the judgment of the coordinators. "We try to take into consideration the level of experience for each individual and their personalities," said Sung. "Repertoire is chosen after discussion amongst the group and the coach. Choices are ultimately based on what is appropriate for the ensemble." According to Balderston, criteria for repertoire include the level of difficulty, instrumentation, musical and stylistic challenges, and personal preferences.

At a recent showcase, 21 students — almost equally divided between undergraduates and graduate students — coached by five coordinators, performed movements from seven trios, quartets, quintets, and a sonata by Beethoven, Schubert, Dvořák, Brahms, Martinů, and Ravel.

Balderston said, "As a coach, I have many roles: to help students better understand the historic, musical, and technical aspects of music; teach them how to rehearse and listen, and to open their minds and imaginations as artists. The role of the coach is to be constantly shifting between these points, keeping them engaged and on their toes."

The showcase rehearsal process includes musical and practical matters. Balderston said, "Different groups have different approaches. But, ideally, they first will meet and play through the first section or movement of the chosen work. Then they will make a plan of action and begin to take it all apart. They all have scores and learn each other's parts, in order to become completely familiar with the work as a whole. There is quite a bit of slow work, focusing on group intonation, phrasing, and dynamics. At the end of the session, they get out their calendars and make a rehearsal schedule, a detailed plan of what they will work on in the next series of rehearsals."

"Students also learn how to rehearse so that the ensemble becomes 'tighter,' and develop skills relating to what to listen for and who to listen to. They work out intonation and rhythm issues within the ensemble," Sung said. "Ultimately, each ensemble member has to find a way to work together and communicate ideas, both verbally and musically. These are amongst the invaluable skills that they acquire and develop while playing chamber music, skills they carry over into their solo and orchestral playing."

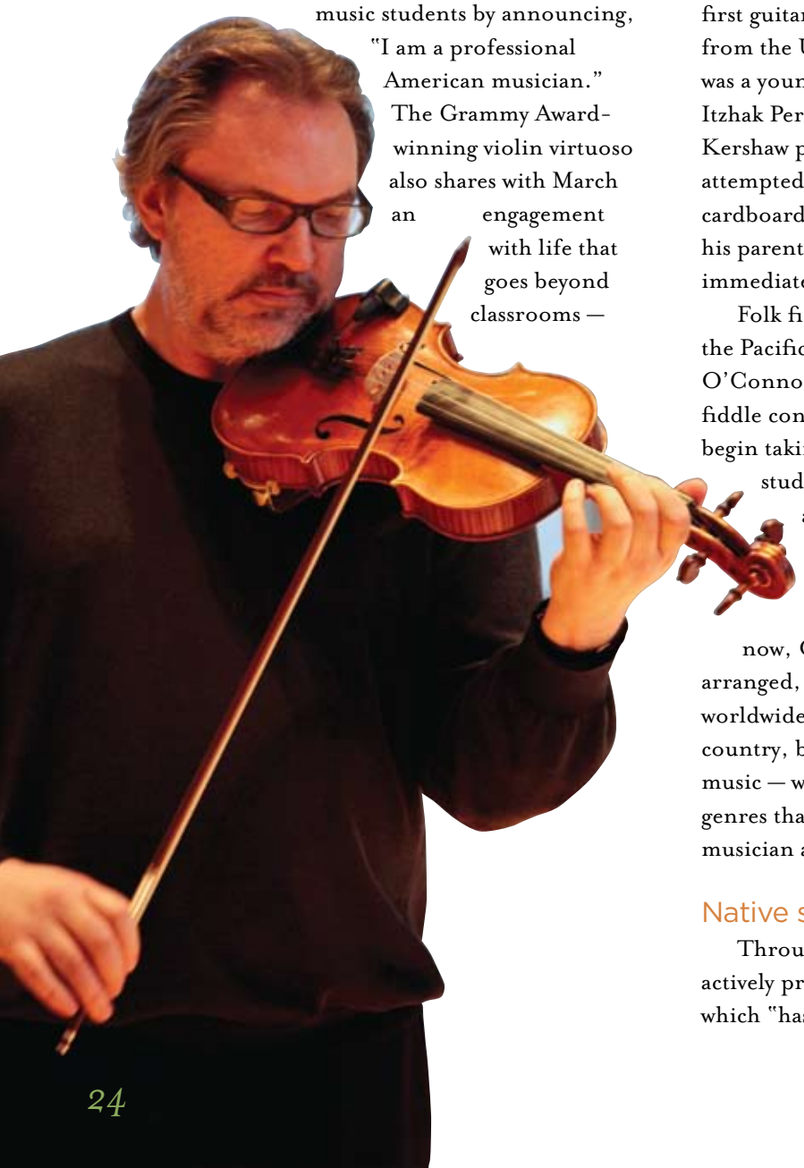
The students sitting in the audience also benefit from a learning experience, said Balderston, "First, I would hope that they are gaining inspiration from their colleagues. They should be listening for musical line, phrasing, balance, and musicianship and observing stage presence and decorum, among other things.

"DePaul's String Chamber Showcase is truly home grown and has evolved significantly," said Balderston. "In my view, the showcase will be a permanent fixture within the overall chamber music program."

As American as Hoe Down and Hip-Hop

Proclaiming a new kind of American literary hero, Saul Bellow famously began *The Adventures of Augie March*, in 1953, with a bold statement: "I am an American, Chicago-born…and go at things as I have taught myself, free-style, and will make the record in my own way."

Fifty-eight years later, violinist Mark O'Connor introduced himself to DePaul music students by announcing, "I am a professional American musician." The Grammy Award-winning violin virtuoso also shares with March an engagement with life that goes beyond classrooms — not on the Chicago streets, but on the worldwide stage. It's there he has been comfortable and celebrated since he made his debut as a child prodigy, age 12.



The Seattle-born son of ballroom-dancing teachers, O'Connor started music lessons at the age of five; for seven years, he studied classical and flamenco guitar with Calvin Christ, who, O'Connor said, was the first guitar major to receive a music degree from the University of Washington. When he was a young boy, O'Connor heard violinists Itzhak Perlman, Jean-Luc Ponty, and Doug Kershaw perform on television. After he attempted to craft his own violin with cardboard, guitar strings, and bungee cords, his parents bought him a violin and he immediately took to the instrument.

Folk fiddler Benny Thomasson, living in the Pacific Northwest, heard 11-year-old O'Connor preparing for a performance at a fiddle contest and invited the youngster to begin taking Texas fiddle lessons. O'Connor studied with Thomasson for three years and, at the age of 17, began touring with famed jazz violinist Stéphane Grappelli, another influential mentor. For more than 30 years now, O'Connor has toured, recorded, arranged, composed, and taught, enjoying worldwide acclaim for his command of country, blues, folk, jazz, and classical violin music — with natural ability and ease in all genres that belies the notion of a "crossover" musician as a mere gimmick.

Native son, native music

Throughout his career, O'Connor has actively promoted American string music, which "has been largely forgotten for the last 100 years. In the 18th century, the violin was central to American music, particularly in the South. The blues were created on the violin; ragtime was created on the violin. Then we forgot about it," O'Connor told his DePaul audience. "But the violin is the perfect instrument to express our musical DNA — the music that is familiar to us, even if we've never heard a particular tune before."

O'Connor's devotion to American music is not dogged fanaticism; his favorite composer is Beethoven. But he believes that collective amnesia with regard to American violin music has caused serious attrition among children "who quit because they don't like the music they're forced to play.

Recognizing that he needed to do more than validate American string music in his roles as a performer and composer, O'Connor introduced the "O'Connor Method," a system of early music education, in 2009. Music of the Americas comprises both of the two volumes he has released so far; included with the music are cheerful illustrations and annotations, including lyrics, which teach children and parents musical and nonmusical American history. For "Boil 'Em Cabbage Down," the very first fiddle piece O'Connor learned, it's pointed out that the hoe cakes referred to in the lyrics were baked in the fields at the end of a hoe — and that hoe downs were held when workers put their hoes down at the end of the work day. The tunes themselves — whether unattributed or composed, such as Stephen Foster's "Oh, Susanna" — can be deceptively simple. O'Connor proved this during his lecture-demonstration, when he led students in increasingly complex and expressive versions of "Oh, Susanna."

In a recent interview with the *Chattanooga Times Free Press*, O'Connor said, "Without the language of the hoe down, you wouldn't have the language of bluegrass music. Without the language of bluegrass music, you wouldn't have the language of rock 'n' roll.… Without gospel and the blues language, you wouldn't have R&B. Without R&B, you wouldn't have funk and hip-hop." His new manifesto, "A Reemerging American Classical Music," co-written with his son, Forrest, argues for a continuing and seamless American string music tradition.

O'Connor hopes that the "O'Connor Method," presented at workshops for teachers and fiddle camps for students, will inspire teachers to incorporate the American Songbook; young string musicians to continue their studies, and composers to write string music that incorporates indigenous musical idioms. Examples from his own works include *Appalachia Waltz*, recorded with Yo-Yo Ma and Edgar Meyer by Sony in the 1990's, and *Improvised Concerto*, which received its world premiere in March in a performance by O'Connor and the Boston Youth Symphony Orchestra.

"Everywhere I go, I see growth in the numbers of percussionists and wind ensembles here," O'Connor said. "American composers constantly are writing for these instruments and students are drawn to the music. Now, I love percussion, wind, and brass music. But the last I looked, most orchestral music calls for more strings than any other instruments. It would be a tragedy if orchestras couldn't supply enough talented string players."

DePaul Partners with CSO Outreach Program

Musician

"In meeting its public service responsibility, the university encourages faculty, staff, and students to apply specialized expertise in ways that contribute to the societal, economic, cultural, and ethical quality of life in the metropolitan area and beyond. When appropriate, DePaul develops service partnerships with other institutions and agencies."
DePaul University Mission Statement

"Citizen Musicians use music to create moments of community and share their experiences and enthusiasm with others. Citizen Musicians can be professional musicians, music educators, amateur musicians, and music lovers, as well as musical and educational institutions."
Chicago Symphony Orchestra

At noon on a damp January 29th, at the easternmost end of the Chicago Pedway — a six-mile underground passage of shops, restaurants, and transportation connections — Yo-Yo Ma walked out of a Starbucks. But he wasn't carrying a latte; he was carrying his cello, on his way to joining 85 members of the Chicago Children's Choir for a performance in Metra's Millennium Station. The *Chicago Tribune* reported, "The iconic musician promptly corralled the onlookers to stand among the singers to perform the Latin canon 'Dona Nobis Pacem' with his accompaniment. The audience and performers had become one."

This was the first official public event staged by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra in connection with their new "Citizen Musician" program. The initiative is led by Ma, in his role as the CSO's first Judson and Joyce Green Creative Consultant, appointed in December 2009.

From start to finish, the launch included significant contributions made by members of the DePaul School of Music staff and faculty. Judy Bundra, associate dean for academic affairs, serves as a member of the Board for the CSO's Institute for Learning, Access, and Training, which oversees the Citizen Musician initiatives; Rami Solomonow, professor of viola, was invited to perform, and Susanne Baker, founder and director of the Community Music Division, welcomed pianist Emanuel Ax to a class.

Bundra on board

In his report for 2009–10, Charles Grode, the director of the CSO's Institute for Learning, Access, and Training, wrote, "The Institute is…transforming lives through active participation in music. (We seek) to create and sustain connections to music for individuals and communities by sharing the extraordinary musical

resources of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association."

The Institute supports more than 20 programs that engage over 200,000 Chicagoans annually in a range of musical learning experiences. These include educational concerts, school and community partnerships, open rehearsals and masterclasses, and intensive training programs including the Civic Orchestra of Chicago. Citizen Musician is the latest program in its portfolio.

Recently appointed to the Institute Board, Bundra previously served for many years as a consultant for the CSO's education and outreach projects. Board members represent many diverse components of Chicago's leadership, including business, education, and the arts.

Bundra agrees with the characterization of Citizen Musician articulated by the CSO's music director, Riccardo Muti: an expansion of the Orchestra's long-standing connection to the Chicago community. "In concept, the CSO has lived the Citizen Musician model for years, identifying points of contact in our community and focusing on the underserved, with a particular emphasis on youth," she said. Just one example is a long-standing program for girls incarcerated at the Illinois Youth Center at the Warrenville Correction Center. "Through CSO workshops, the girls tell their personal stories through music. The healing potential of music empowers participants in the program," said Bundra.

Citizen Music puts a new name to the outreach efforts and its new emphasis reflects the commitment led by Maestro Muti and Yo-Yo Ma, according to Bundra. "Maestro Muti embodies the life of a Citizen Musician," she said, "He is devoted to bringing music into the community, reaching new audiences for classical music. The concert he conducted in Millennium Park last fall will be remembered not only for the beautiful music, but also for the palpable excitement of the massive audience. As for Ma, in addition to being a model Citizen Musician, he has developed materials that are examples of what it means to be serious about being a Citizen Musician."

Commenting on the goals of Citizen Musician, Bundra said, "We believe that the more people interact with music, the more civic pride can be shared by all citizens of Chicago."

Solomonow on stage

Wanted: "Chicago-based 'citizen musicians' whose work in the community demonstrates how the extraordinary power of music can connect people of all backgrounds." *From a CSO program promotion*

For the free Chicago Cultural Center performance on January 29th and an overcapacity Symphony Center concert celebrating Citizen Musician the next afternoon, Yo-Yo Ma chose a few collaborators: CSO concertmaster Robert Chen; Anthony McGill, a Chicago-born clarinetist who got his start at Merit School of Music, trained in the private studios of DePaul faculty members Julie DeRoche and Larry Combs, and now is principal clarinet of the Metropolitan Opera Orchestra; famed pianist Emanuel Ax, an old friend, and two young new friends: violinist Jaime Gorgojo and cellist Gabriel Cabezas.

Ma called on Chen to round out the group. Chen selected his CSO colleagues Susan Synnesvedt, violin, and Catherine Brubaker, viola. He also reached out to Robert Hanford, concertmaster of the Lyric Opera Orchestra, and to violist Rami Solomonow, the sole full-time faculty member chosen. Chen knew Solomonow from performances with Chicago Chamber Musicians, a professional group with a noteworthy outreach program, which Solomonow joined in 1995.

> IN CONCEPT, THE CSO HAS LIVED THE CITIZEN MUSICIAN MODEL FOR YEARS, *identifying points of contact in our community and focusing on the underserved, with a particular emphasis on youth.*

PHOTO: KERI WIGINTON, CHICAGO TRIBUNE

"Although we never met there, Yo-Yo Ma and I were at the Aspen Music Festival in 1978, in the days when Rostropovich and DeLay were on the faculty," Solomonow said. "I'd heard about his generosity to other musicians and to the community, of course. But to experience him close up in both roles was special. He has the talent to draw people from different walks of life into the music. At the Cultural Center, where we played the first movement of Mendelssohn's *Octet in E-flat major for Strings* — repeated at Symphony Center — he had the audience, most not regular concert-goers, in the palm of his hands.

"Although the rehearsals were standard, they were concentrated, with only two rehearsals for every piece. But Ma made them fun for us; it was especially enjoyable to see the interaction between Ma and Ax, who have known and played with each other for many years. The chemistry he had with the young musicians in the group also was inspiring."

Another memorable experience followed an informal conversation initiated by Ma, during which Solomonow told him that his 15-year-old son, Ben, is a cellist. "I want to hear him," said Ma, who came in early before rehearsal and listened to Ben play Tchaikovsky's *Rococo Variations*. "He gave Ben a full lesson, including a demonstration," said

Solomonow, "Ma is Ben's hero, so this was like heaven for him."

But Ma's magnetism that weekend went beyond rehearsals and performances. After Sunday's concert, he took about 30 people to his favorite restaurant in Chinatown. "It seemed like everyone in the restaurant knew Yo-Yo, coming up to him and posing for photos. It was something to see," Solomonow said.

Solomonow is a firm believer that "when you reach some level of playing, it is

necessary to give back to the community." Judy Bundra admires the time Solomonow gives to young musicians throughout the Midwest, in masterclasses and other young artists' programs. "His generosity is amazing," she said.

He has performed in senior citizen residences and public schools and believes that his faculty colleagues not only share this commitment but also transmit it to their students. The rewards are intangible, but often practical. "When students preparing for recitals come to me to say that rehearsal rooms are booked, I ask them, 'Why don't you contact a senior center or a school for your dress rehearsal? Then you've got an audience, you've got real, live people in front of you, to react and enjoy your music.' When you give back, you get so much in return."

Baker in the classroom

When Susanne Baker answered the phone on January 21st Cayenne Harris, director of learning and access initiatives at the CSO, was at the other end. Would it be possible, Harris asked, for Emanuel Ax to visit the Community Music Division's beginning piano class on the 29th, as part of the Citizen Musician program? "Emanuel Ax has been a favorite pianist of mine for so long," said Baker. "To think that he might be walking in the music building seemed unreal."

But there he was. "At about 10:40 a.m., I ventured outside the room and saw Emanuel Ax walking down the hallway, just as I had imagined," said Baker. A special part of DePaul's Citizen Musician experience is wearing special badges — what Judy Bundra refers to as a "badge of honor" — and one immediately was affixed to the celebrated pianist's jacket.

Eight students aged six to eight — selected by Baker for their ability, poise, and reliability — executed the Suzuki group bow. Then came a listening activity — a two-piano performance of Suzuki repertoire by Baker and graduate piano student Michael McElvain. Next, student performances featured one-or two- minute pieces from the folk song repertoire. During a short theory activity, the children notated a tune in bass clef on staff boards. Ax was given a staff board with an alto clef to notate the tune. The final listening exercise featured a short excerpt of a CD of Mendelssohn's *Piano Trio in D Minor*, recorded by Isaac Stern, Leonard Rose, and Eugene Istomin.

Finally, Ax sat at the grand piano in the room and complimented the students. Immediately, eight small hands shot in the air with earnestly posed, prepared questions: *Do you like the life of being a concert pianist? How many concertos do you know? Do you set the order of your pieces in a concert or is it a random order? Do you compose? Do you practice a lot?*

"The children obviously were so interested in finding out about a real concert artist," said Baker.

Before Ax played Schubert, he asked if anyone knew the definition of "variations." One student took a stab at an answer, but it wasn't quite right. So Ax asked, "Does anyone have a birthday today?" Nicolas said, "My party is today even though my birthday was last month." So Ax played *Happy Birthday*, creating several variations. He then performed the theme and several variations of Schubert's *Variations in B-flat Major*. The children — and all the adults in the room — enthusiastically applauded. The class then took a final bow, this time with Ax joining in the Suzuki ritual. "His naturalness as a teacher and his rapport with the children were a joy to witness," Baker said.

Later, thank-you notes were written and mailed to Ax, who reported to Solomonow that he "had a lot of fun." Continuing the experience, Baker plans a group field trip to the CSO's "Keys to the City Piano Festival" and Ax's performance of Beethoven's *Piano Concerto No. 5* next season.

As a very special remembrance, Baker gave each student a copy of the Itzhak Perlman-Ma-Ax CD recorded last year, during the 200th anniversary of Mendelssohn's birth. The gift is a tangible memory of the famous Citizen Musician who was in their midst on one damp winter Chicago morning.

Judy Bundra, *associate dean, joined the DePaul faculty in 1987as director of the music education*

department. She has extensive teaching experience at the university and public school levels and serves as a consultant to music and arts teachers. She has been a member of the Illinois State Board of Education Fine Arts Standards and Alternative Assessment committees and served on the Executive Board of the Illinois Music Educators Association.

Rami Solomonow, *professor of viola, has been a DePaul faculty member since 1981. For more than 20*

years, he was principal viola of the Lyric Opera Orchestra. He has performed as a soloist and chamber musician in numerous concerts, music festivals, and summer music schools in the United States, Israel, Japan, and South America. As a member of Chicago Chamber Musicians, he received a Grammy nomination for a recording of Mozart's chamber works for winds and strings.

Susanne Baker, *a member of the faculty since 1988, teaches piano pedagogy and coordinates the group*

piano program in the DePaul School of Music. She founded and directs the DePaul Community Division, which enrolls 700 students with a 70-member faculty, and is housed in the school. The community school is committed to offering the finest music instruction to people of all ages, skill levels and backgrounds.

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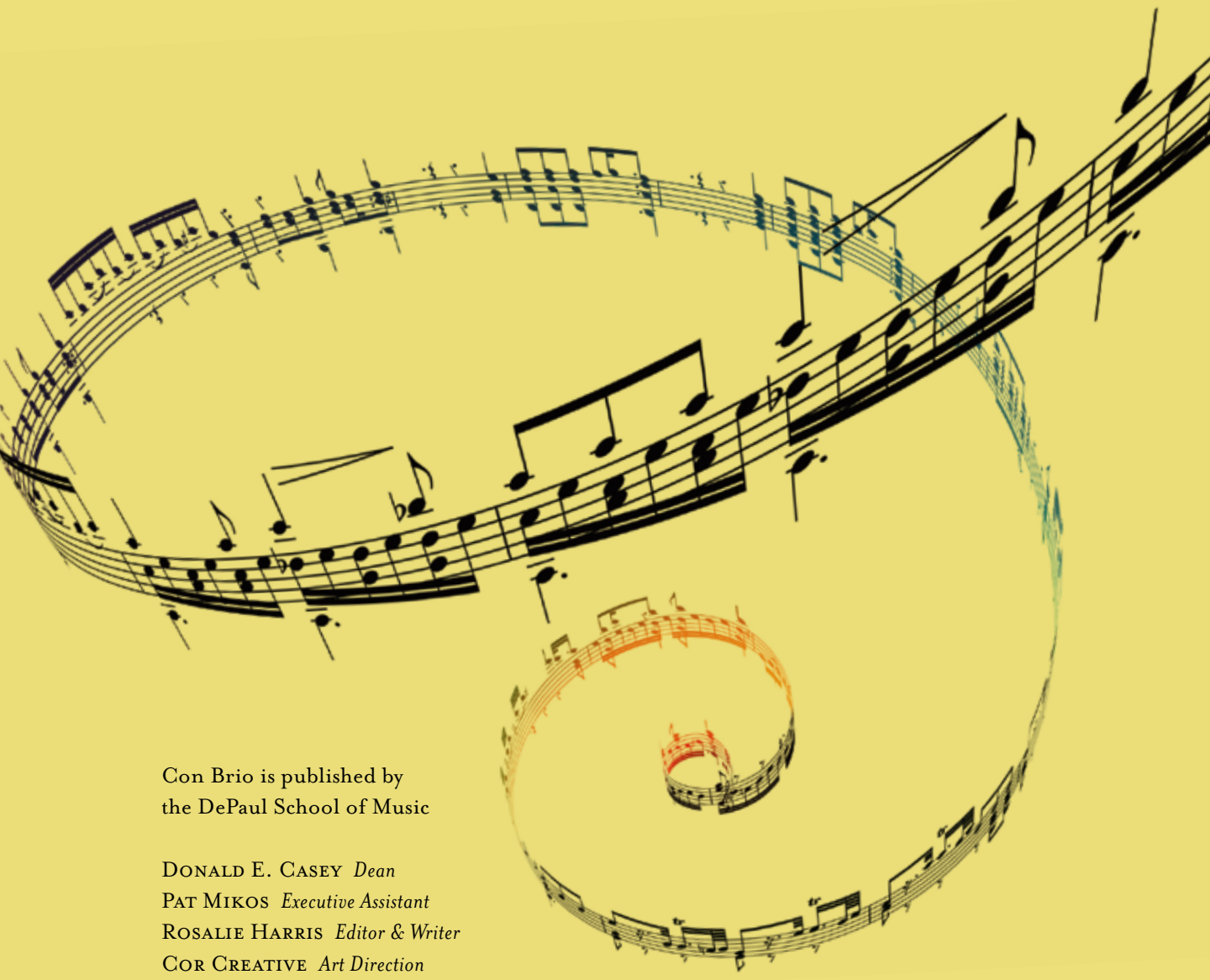

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