

April 2016



# Orchestra

## AMERICA

Time for Three  
In Concert at the  
2016 Music for All  
Summer  
Symposium

*Photo by Shervin Lainez*

Meet the Conductor:  
Jeffrey Grogan, 2017 Honor  
Orchestra of America

Jason Seber – Up Close  
and Personal

Extended Rhythmic Techniques  
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Thought Multi-Tasking (or What  
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by Dr. Katrin Meidell

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# MEET THE CONDUCTOR: JEFFREY GROGAN

CONDUCTOR, 2017 HONOR ORCHESTRA OF AMERICA  
CONDUCTOR AND ARTISTIC DIRECTOR,  
INTERSCHOOL ORCHESTRAS OF NEW YORK

Jeffrey Grogan, interview with Kathleen Heuer

*Jeff Grogan has come a long way since the days of conducting the then newly-released Star Wars soundtrack on his dad's record player in fourth grade. Today, he is the conductor and artistic director of the InterSchool Orchestras of New York, as well as the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra Academy Orchestra, and Artistic Director and Conductor of the New Jersey Youth Symphony. He is in his 10th season as the education and community engagement conductor for the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, where he leads the NJSO in a variety of concerts each season. One notable performance is #OrchestraYou, where amateur musicians can bring their instruments to a concert and play along with members of the NJSO in the lobby after the performance.*

*He also spends a large percentage of his time working with other school music programs, festivals, and conducting all-state orchestras throughout the country. Grogan has been on faculty at the Ithaca College School of Music, the University of Michigan, and Baylor University. He taught public school in the DeSoto (Texas) Independent School District, and is a graduate of Stephen F. Austin State University and the University of Michigan.*

## **Jeff Grogan's experience with the Music for All National Festival...**

Jeff is a familiar face at the Music for All National Festival. In March, he served as an evaluator for both the chamber ensembles and orchestras.

"I have the greatest jobs in the world!" he laughs. As conductor of the 2017 Honor Orchestra of America, he'll add one more, bringing his expertise to a whole new group of young instrumentalists.

"It's just such an incredibly well-run festival. You do a lot of these in our line of work, and nobody does it better than Music for All. Every detail along the way—it's just an amazing experience. It's an inspiring event. Several students from my youth orchestras here in New York City were in the Honor Orchestra of America or participating ensembles, and they were all just blown away by the experience."

## **On being the conductor of the 2017 Honor Orchestra of America...**

As the conductor of the 2017 Honor Orchestra of America, Jeff will have a whole new set of responsibilities.

"The secret is picking the perfect program," he says. He shared the example

of 2016's Honor Orchestra of America conductor Larry Livingston selecting the finale to Mahler.

"That was a huge success. The music of Mahler makes you want to work and be better than you are, just because the music is so unbelievably engaging." The goal, he explains, is creating a program that results in a good balance of inspiring students and pushing them musically.

## **Why should students apply to the Honor Orchestra of America?**

For starters, the students will reap incredible benefits on a personal level. When they're in a room with the best players from a lot of different schools, it gives each of those students a whole different experience than what they encounter every day. They'll get to hang out with other kids just like them, and share the experience of being inspired and pushed as a member of the Honor Orchestra of America.

"The kids come from all over the country from different programs, and music pulls them together in such a wonderful way. [The Festival is] going to be a memory they have for life, and it's going to make them a better musician and a better person," he says.

The schedule of the event gives students time to socialize as well as to make music together. That creates a bond that can last a lifetime. "The students continue to keep in touch with each other and become close friends," Grogan observes.

But it's not just the students that will benefit from their participation in the Honor Orchestra of America. They'll take their experiences back to their own programs.

"I think that the best thing that can happen to all of our students is for them to get a different experience with other students in a different setting. Almost always, the students come back so inspired, and they become this beacon of light to all the other students around them."



Photo courtesy of Fred Studer

For a director, that might appear to be a somewhat selfish reason to encourage students to apply. But by encouraging a student to bring excellence back to his or her own program, that positively life-changing experience will have a noticeable positive ripple effect across the entire organization.

our families, our relationships, and our artistic growth.”

**So how can a music educator get past burnout?**

“At some point you just have to say, ‘I need this time for me; I need this time for my family.’ And make sure that when you schedule each week, that you schedule

**What is one thing you know now in your career that you wish someone had told you at the start?**

Often those at the beginning of their careers look at their early positions as stepping stones to the job they really want. A great piece of advice Jeff got early on? “Take the ensemble that you have, the kids that you’re with, and do everything in your power to make them the best they can possibly be. If you do that, not only are they going to be amazing, but other things are probably going to fall in your lap from thinking that way. It took me a while to figure that out, and it has served me very well throughout my career.”

**What one thing would you advise music education programs to do today that will make their program better in the future?**

“It’s so easy to get into a rut,” Jeff says, about rushing from performance to performance. “So many of us spend all our time in survival mode, because we want to play the most difficult piece, and we never get beyond survival mode. Beyond survival mode in music is the most beautiful part about it. It’s the part where the emotion comes out, where you have this comfort level, and you’re able to own it and perform. That’s the ultimate carrot for a student that will keep them going for life.”

His goal with the 2017 Honor Orchestra of America is to get his performers to that beautiful place “beyond survival mode,” back to where it all began for him a long time ago, in a galaxy far, far away.

*Listen to the whole conversation with Jeff Grogan on the Marketing Music Education podcast at <http://marketingmusic.education/jeffgrogan>.*



Photo courtesy of Holsch Enterprises

**Why do you believe music education is vital and important?**

Virtually everyone who has participated in music education changes for the better because of their experiences learning music. Our culture prizes instant gratification, but playing a musical instrument requires dedicated effort over a long period of time. The process inherently teaches grit and “stick-to-it-iveness.”

“Early on when you’re learning a musical instrument, to figure out how to make a French horn work and get good sound, and fingerings, and reading the music—it’s a really hard thing to do!” he says. “And if you can pull that off, you’re pretty much ensuring that you’re going to be able to do just about anything in life.”

Music for All has long worked to ensure that students everywhere have access to quality music education in their schools.

**Burnout—It’s no secret that life as a music educator takes a lot out of you. Everyone has had brushes with burnout, and Jeff Grogan is no exception.**

“I think the best music educators give everything to their students. It’s just a fault of ours. We want to give them our all, and sometimes that comes at the expense of

*JEFF GROGAN WORKS WITH ONE OF THE ORCHESTRAS AT THE 2016 ORCHESTRA AMERICA NATIONAL FESTIVAL, DURING THEIR POST-CONCERT CLINIC.*

those things in your life, otherwise you will burn out.”

**So what do you like to do when you put down your baton and close your laptop?**

You might not be surprised to learn that he’ll take a busman’s holiday.

“Our profession is also our hobby, and our love, and our passion, so we tend to go to concerts and do those kind of things. Traveling oftentimes involves going to a concert. We visited Scotland for a month a couple of years ago and went to the places where Mendelssohn spent time writing his works.”

When he does listen to music for fun, he and his wife often listen to folk music or bluegrass. “There’s a group called The Wailin’ Jennys that are out of Canada; it’s sort of like the Dixie Chicks unplugged. I enjoy that it’s a little more simple music than what I’m dealing with normally, so I can really just listen and enjoy without having to think too much.”



**JEFF GROGAN**

Conductor, Artistic Director, InterSchool Orchestras of New York and New Jersey Symphony Orchestra Academy Orchestra; Artistic Director, Conductor, New Jersey Youth Symphony

*Kathleen Heuer is the owner of Broken Chord Communications, host of the Marketing Music Education podcast, and mom of two young musicians.*

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**JEFFREY GROGAN**

**2017 Conductor, Honor Orchestra of America**  
*Education and Community Engagement Conductor, New Jersey Symphony Orchestra; Conductor and Artistic Director of the Greater Newark Youth Orchestras, the InterSchool Orchestras of New York, and the New Jersey Youth Symphony.*



**LARRY J. LIVINGSTON**  
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**Honor Orchestra of America**  
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University of Southern California*



**SEY AHN**  
**Assistant Conductor,**  
**Honor Orchestra of America**  
*Fellow, American Academy  
of Conducting at Aspen*



The national Honor Orchestra of America is an inspiring, meaningful, and thrilling experience for outstanding high school orchestra musicians. Students get to rehearse and perform with renowned conductors and perform for a “dream audience” of outstanding school musicians and educators from across the United States.

Honor Orchestra of America members hail from across the country, from music programs large and small. Honor ensemble alumni perform in professional symphonies and top military ensembles, teach music in schools and colleges nationwide, perform professionally, hold a wide variety of college degrees and embark on illustrious and diverse careers that span the spectrum of business and professional enterprise.

**Application/Audition Deadline:**

October 1, 2016 – Deadline for Strings Eligibility for Livingston Scholarship

October 1, 2016 – All Winds and Percussion

November 1, 2016 – Strings Final Deadline

Applications and audition requirements are available at:  
**[www.musicforall.org/honor-ensembles](http://www.musicforall.org/honor-ensembles)**

# FROM BEHIND THE SCENES TO ON THE PODIUM

Brian Worsdale | Music for All Orchestra Committee Chair

**Honor Orchestra of America Coordinator Brian Worsdale shares his insights for your students on the process from audition to the final bow as a member of this national honors orchestra.**

Deciding to audition for anything requires a great deal of confidence. Through encouragement from your teachers and your loved ones to yourself you make a decision to put yourself out there to be judged by others that you have what it takes to get accepted to something you have applied to. Musicians, athletes, and performers all have this process take place long before they even think about college applications. This process can be a lonely one at times so work on assuring yourself of not only your abilities but your desire to make this special.

When you decide to audition for the Honor Orchestra of America you are making the same decision as hundreds of students throughout the United States. To take part in something that brings you together with other musicians from across the country is a special event. Here are some thoughts about the entire process from audition to acceptance to your trip to Indianapolis and finally to the final bow.

## The Audition

Give yourself time for the audition. Don't try to squeeze it in between a plethora of other things. The mental preparation for an audition through the internet is just as important as any audition you travel to. Give yourself an hour before the audition to get yourself prepared.

Play to your strengths – Demonstrate reliable skills in the piece you choose. When you play music in an honor ensemble like this, it is important that we know you have confidence in the work you selected. Don't overreach.

When auditioning, be in a well lit room with little to no reverb.

With or without an accompanist or recording, make sure the work you are performing is at a reasonable tempo to the work and that you give us as much music making as you can. (An on camera audition will sometimes not have the best audio so making sure you play with dynamic and rhythmic contrast is important).

## The Acceptance

If you are accepted into the Music for All Honor Orchestra of America, that's great! If you are not invited to take part this year, take heart you did something amazing by auditioning to begin with. We don't all pass our driver's test the first time around (it took me two times in high school) so ask for the feedback we are willing to offer and take our audition again.

This is where our participant relations team joins the conversation with you as a member of the Honor Orchestra of America. There will be lots of information thrown to you but remember that the experience is all about what you do to prepare and what will come as you get closer.

## Practice, Practice, Practice

As a member of the Honor Orchestra of America, you are now part of an orchestra that will only experience their sounds together on the first day of rehearsal of a three-day rehearsal block. Having your music prepared is an important part of this process. Since practicing like this can be a solitary experience, do something special: Take the music to your teacher! They have endorsed you being a part of this awesome experience. Be sure to ask their advice as to preparing your music.

## Travel

I have found myself on the road more and more these days and I try my best to remember that there are important aspects to travel that happen before hand.

• Careful Packing – Be sure you have everything you need (participant relations helps with this)

• Careful Health – Sleep well before your flight. Drink water before and during your flight. Flying can dehydrate you and I always take airborne or some other immunity booster before I travel (but ask your parents how this works for you).

## The First Day

You will see that the schedule is jammed packed with rehearsals and we do all we can to give you time away from your instruments as much as possible. Know your limits and make sure you stay hydrated and healthy while on this special trip.

Meet People. During a meal, be sure to sit with someone you have never met and introduce yourself. Make new friends. Part of this experience is about making friendships that could last a lifetime.

## The Performance

Be sure to enjoy every experience from the beginning to the end. Your conductor will take good care of you and the performance is JUST the beginning. You have taken a journey that few have traveled and it will be something you will have with you for years to come.

## Remember to Have Fun!

### BRIAN WORSDALE

Conducting faculty,  
Manhattan School of Music;  
Artistic Director,  
The French Woods Festival  
of the Performing Arts



*Brian Worsdale has been a member of the Music for All Orchestra Team since 2010 and now serves as chair of the Orchestra Committee and coordinator for the Honor Orchestra of America. He is presently on the conducting faculty of The Manhattan School of Music where he leads the Precollege Division Symphony Orchestra. He is also the artistic director of The French Woods Festival of the Performing Arts located in Delaware County, New York.*

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## 2016 ORCHESTRA FACULTY WILL ALSO INCLUDE:

### ORCHESTRA PROGRAM

Music for All Summer Symposium offers string students an exciting experience, learning from award-winning faculty and internationally-recognized artists. Students develop skills and musicianship working in diverse styles, from classical and jazz to pop and world music. The hands-on curriculum uniquely integrates collaborative learning side-by-side with world-class performers. Orchestra students get to immerse themselves with **Time for Three**, during both master class jam sessions and on-stage, in concert for an audience of over 1,000!

**Christian Howes** 2016 Artist-in-Residence Yamaha Performing Artist Jazz violinist, educator, and producer Christian Howes brings jazz and improv to the MFA Orchestra Division. One of the world's most respected jazz violinists, Christian studied classically from the age of five, performing as a soloist with the Columbus Symphony Orchestra at age 16 and receiving his bachelor's degree in Philosophy from The Ohio State University. In 2013, he was voted among the top three violinists in *JazzTimes*' Expanded Critics Poll and ranked as the #1 "Rising Star" violinist in the *Downbeat* Critics Poll. Learn more at [christianhowes.com](http://christianhowes.com)



Christian Howes – Artist in Residence – Yamaha Performing Artist

*Because of the concerts & sessions with the stunning Christian Howes, I was completely blown away!*

*This was an amazing camp! I am absolutely thrilled to be a part of this wonderful experience!*



Time for Three – Master Class and In Concert (Photo by Sherrin Lainez)



#### **Douglas Droste**

Director of Orchestras,  
Ball State University;  
Artistic Director,  
Muncie Symphony Orchestra;  
Symposium Orchestra  
Coordinator, Conductor



#### **Joel Braun**

Ball State University;  
Bass



#### **Nicole Deguire**

Fishers High School;  
Violin



#### **Andre Gaskins**

Indiana University–Purdue  
University at Fort Wayne;  
Fort Wayne Philharmonic;  
Cello



#### **Katrin Meidell**

Ball State University; Viola  
Principal Viola, Anderson  
Symphony Orchestra, IN



#### **Joel Powell**

Carmel Schools, IN;  
Violin



# SCHOLARSHIPS - 2016 SUMMER SYMPOSIUM

## Instrumental Division Student Scholarships

Instrumental merit scholarships for members of honor ensembles who enroll in these MFA camp student divisions: Concert Band, Jazz Band, Orchestra and the concert track of the Percussion division.

**National Honor Ensembles Instrumental Scholarship – \$200 savings** For members of the 2013 or 2014 national honor ensembles, including the Music for All Honor Ensembles and ensembles like the GRAMMY Jazz Band, ASTA's National Honors Orchestra or NAFME's All-National Honors Ensembles. Applies to registration for the following divisions ONLY: Concert Band, Jazz Band, Strings and concert track of National Percussion Symposium.

**All-State Instrumental Scholarship – \$150 savings** For members of 2013 or 2014 All-State Band or Orchestra. Certificate or letter from teacher required for verification. Applies to registration for the following divisions ONLY: Concert Band, Jazz Band, Strings and concert track of National Percussion Symposium.

**All-City/District Instrumental Scholarship – \$75 savings** For members of 2013 or 2014 All-City or All-District Band or Orchestra. Certificate or letter from teacher required for verification. Applies to registration for the following divisions ONLY: Concert Band, Jazz Band, Strings and concert track of National Percussion Symposium. Call 800.848.2263 for a registration form to mail or fax.

**L.J. Hancock Scholarships** The L.J. Hancock Summer Symposium Scholarship Fund was created in honor of educator L.J. Hancock (1952-2002), long-time MFA camp director and BOA Hall of Fame member. The scholarship fund assists individual students who have the interest, but not the financial means to attend the Summer Symposium. Application information is available at [www.musicforall.org/scholarships](http://www.musicforall.org/scholarships).



### Music for All Newsletter

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## REGISTRATION DEADLINES & FEES

PAYMENT OPTIONS	DEADLINE	RESIDENTIAL
Full Fee	Register and pay by 5-20-2016	\$645
Add Leadership Weekend	Register and pay by 5-20-2016	for as low as \$250*

Instrumental Merit Scholarships are available for selected members of national, All-State, All-Region, and All-District Honor Ensembles enrolling in the Orchestra Division, learn more at [www.musicforall.org/camp](http://www.musicforall.org/camp).

\* Visit [musicforall.org/camp](http://musicforall.org/camp) for more details, and for commuter pricing.



*Leave the driving to us...Music for All has developed routes from many areas of the country with buses already scheduled to transport students to the Summer Symposium. Learn more at [www.musicforall.org/bus](http://www.musicforall.org/bus)*

# EXTENDED RHYTHMIC TECHNIQUES FOR VIOLIN AND CELLO (BEYOND “THE CHOP”)

By Christian Howes

*Christian Howes 2016 Artist-in-Residence, Yamaha Performing Artist Jazz violinist, educator, and producer Christian Howes brings jazz and improv to the MFA Orchestra Division. One of the world's most respected jazz violinists, Christian studied classically from the age of five, performing as a soloist with the Columbus Symphony Orchestra at age 16 and receiving his bachelor's degree in Philosophy from The Ohio State University. In 2013, he was voted among the top three violinists in JazzTimes' Expanded Critics Poll and ranked as the #1 "Rising Star" violinist in the Downbeat Critics Poll. He regularly tours throughout Asia, Europe, and the U.S. Learn more at christianhowes.com*

Chopping, strumming, and other techniques for the bow and plucking hand are popular among string players, but rather than focusing on the mechanics of one technique, I'm more interested in helping you take a broader approach to creating your own rhythmic accompaniment.

Many students and teachers ask me to teach them some specific groove/funky thing to do, but learning one rhythmic pattern will only serve you in very limited musical situations, and furthermore, learning “a technique” or “a lick”, is just like studying classical music, and you've already got plenty of that on your plate, right? For balance, you need strategies which will enable you to think for yourself to discover things that haven't been dictated down note for note.

In the video “Extended Rhythmic Techniques for Violin and Cello (Beyond “The Chop”)” on my “Christian Howes” YouTube channel, I'm demonstrating a process for subdividing rhythm physically with your arm, whether strumming or playing arco at the tip or the frog. I hope this approach will help you as much or more than any specific technique (like “the chop”!).

Incidentally, one of the most important



aspects of accompaniment for any bowed string player should be knowing when NOT to play, and different instrumentations require different approaches to accompaniment. For

**“Practice these techniques with a metronome & listen back to yourself to notice & improve your rhythm.”**

example, I would almost never use a “chopping” technique while playing with a drummer, since the drummer is already covering the percussive role. Often, even without a drummer or percussionist, a minimal use of percussive effects on the violin, viola, or cello is more tasteful.

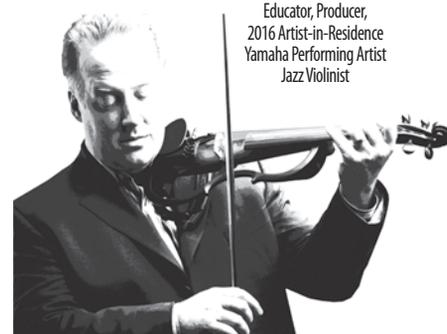
Another reason to play less is that it's so important when playing a percussive or rhythmic role to be playing exact rhythms. Oftentimes, string players have the luxury in classical music settings to develop a lazy rhythmic sense, playing with a constant give and take of the pulse.

Groove-based music requires a higher standard of rhythmic precision, so if you're a classical player you should retrain yourself to approach these scenarios differently. Oh, and by the way, much of classical music is dance music. If you focus on learning how to groove, you'll make people want to dance when you play Gavottes, Allegrettos, Rondos, Andantes, etc., and that would be a good thing :)

Chopping and strumming on the violin can be cool, but the coolest thing is always to “never do harm” to the music. So by all means, practice these techniques with a metronome and listen back to yourself to notice and improve your rhythm. In the meantime, on stage, heed the wisdom of jazz musicians and “when in doubt, lay out”.

**CHRISTIAN HOWES**

Educator, Producer,  
2016 Artist-in-Residence  
Yamaha Performing Artist  
Jazz Violinist



# JASON SEBER - UP CLOSE AND PERSONAL

Jason Seber, interview with Debbie Laferty

*Jason Seber is celebrating his eleventh season as Music Director of the Louisville Youth Orchestra (LYO) and third season as Education and Outreach Conductor of the Louisville Orchestra. During his tenure with the LYO, the organization has grown from four orchestras to nine ensembles and orchestras serving 350 members. He has recently been appointed Assistant Conductor of the Kansas City Symphony, a position he will begin in the fall of 2016.*

## **Where did you go to college? What degrees did you earn?**

I went to the Baldwin Wallace University Conservatory of Music for my undergraduate work, where I received a B.M.E. and a B.M. in Violin Performance. I earned my M.M. in Orchestral Conducting from the Cleveland Institute of Music.

## **Tell us about the places you've taught and conducted in the past.**

After graduating from Baldwin Wallace I taught orchestra for five years at Strongsville High School right outside of Cleveland, OH. After Strongsville is when I went back to get my master's degree and then I moved to Louisville, KY. Here in Louisville I have been Music Director of the Louisville Youth Orchestra for 11 years, and I've spent the last three seasons as Education and Outreach Conductor of the Louisville Orchestra. Before working with the LO, I was Director of Orchestras at the Youth

### **JASON SEBER**

Assistant Conductor,  
Kansas City Symphony;  
Music Director,  
Louisville Youth Orchestra



Performing with the Louisville Youth Orchestra

in Louisville. I've also been fortunate to guest conduct many great orchestras all across the country. I've guest conducted the Indianapolis Symphony, Colorado Symphony, National Symphony, Windsor Symphony, Cleveland Pops, Charleston Symphony, Mansfield Symphony, and the Denver Young Artists Orchestra. This season I will conduct concerts with the Kansas City Symphony, Houston Symphony, and the Cleveland Pops.

## **You were recently named Assistant Conductor of the Kansas City Symphony. Tell us about your role there and your path from school music teacher to symphony orchestra stage.**

I am really looking forward to beginning my new position with the Kansas City Symphony. They are a fantastic orchestra and organization, and I am eager to get started! As assistant I will be conducting most of the programs outside the Classical series, so programs such as Pops, Family, Holiday, and concerts in the Kansas City community. They have two outstanding unique series that I will be leading as well, Classics Uncorked (which are shorter, more informal Classics concerts on weeknights) and Screenland at the Symphony (where the orchestra accompanies live films). Next year for instance we will be playing the brilliant John Williams scores along with the movies E.T., Indiana Jones and the Raiders of the Lost Ark, and Home Alone. I'm going there in a few weeks to conduct a Pixar in Concert program, featuring short clips from many of the great Pixar films.

My whole career I feel like I have been extremely blessed to have the best of both worlds. I have worked some really terrific kids in various school and youth orchestra settings, and I've been able to balance that with a lot of work with professional orchestras as well. Both worlds are extremely rewarding and fun, and I feel like I've been able to build a lot of great connections between professional orchestras and the youth in the communities they serve with my various roles.

## **What are one or two (or more!) thing(s) you'd say to a young orchestra director who asks you "what do you wish someone had told you just starting out?"**

Great question! As you know, if you're going to do the job right, you're going to be throwing your whole self into it, working many late hours, thinking creatively all the time, not having much of a social life, etc. And I think that's okay, especially when you're first starting out and trying to really build something. But you DO need balance in life – and I think it's important to find other things you enjoy doing and are passionate about besides music. I love playing poker, I'm a huge sports fan, and I love to cook. Make sure you make time for yourself and those you love. That balance can go a long way in ensuring your overall happiness and make you a more productive teacher.

Another thing I would suggest is to have lots of mentors, professionals, and other people in your life who have done this longer and are much better than you at it. And call upon them, use their wisdom and advice, and have them work with your students – as often as humanly possible. You will not only become a better musician, teacher, and person as a result, but your kids definitely will, too! I have always wanted my students to be super motivated and inspired (don't we all?), and what better way to do that than to surround them and yourself with outstanding music educators. Develop great relationships with your band teacher and choir teacher. I have been so lucky to have great teachers in those areas with which to work my entire career. Learn from each other, support each other. Trust me – your students see and know everything. They will develop a stronger bond with you and with each other if they consistently see you building these fantastic partnerships with other professionals. And they will reap the benefits immensely. Take them to festivals, get them outside of their bubble in their own communities. Show them what other great orchestras sound like. Always strive to find people who are doing it better than you and learn from them.

## **Tell us about your participation with Music for All and its orchestra programs.**

When I was Director of Orchestras at YPAS, I brought my students twice to the Orchestra America National Festival. Hands down the most inspirational four days they can spend doing anything as a high school orchestra. My students LOVED their experience both times, and so did I.

The high standard of music making paired with the professionalism, camaraderie, and networking opportunities (as well as the opportunity to hear other fantastic ensembles from all across the country) is unparalleled.

The same can be said for the Music for All Summer Symposium at Ball State, with which I've had the good fortune to serve as the violin coach for the past three summers. Doug Droste does a tremendous job working with the orchestra there, not only giving the string players a peak musical experience for a week with challenging repertoire played at a high level, but the guest artists that he and Dean Westman bring in to work with the orchestra really make the Symposium a prime destination for high school string players. Artists such as Christian Howes, Time for Three, Project Trio, and the Ahn Trio have not only given the orchestra track students the chance to play with them, they lead awesome masterclasses with the kids that teach them skills such as improvisation, critical listening, building inner rhythm, collaboration, and jazz. There is a true sense of community amongst all the tracks at the Symposium, and it is 2,000 kids and a tremendous faculty and staff coming together for a week of incredible music, leadership and life skills, and lots and lots of fun.

**What are some of the highlights and memorable moments from your experiences related to Music for All.** Wow. There are so many. I think for me, the first time I brought the YPAS Philharmonia to the Orchestra America National Festival (OANF) would certainly be one. From playing in Hilbert Circle Theatre (one of my favorite halls to this day, from the OANF performances to several concerts with the Indianapolis Symphony that I've conducted there), to the masterclasses with ISO members, to hearing some really terrific bands, orchestras, and percussion ensembles, to the world class clinicians who worked with my kids, it was a very positive experience both times we went. I mean, where else can you go and not only get really helpful feedback but also a clinic as excellent as the one you get at OANF with people like Doug Droste, Larry Livingston, Franz Krager, and Jeffrey Grogan?? And ALL of them worked with my students and me, not just one of them. Both times we went to OANF, this

was the highlight for all of us. Like I said, people at the absolute top of their game inspiring students, and at the same time, giving them very practical helpful advice to take their playing to that next level. I really can't describe it, other than to tell you that you really need to apply to the festival and take your orchestra and see for yourself.

Another highlight for me for any MFA event, whether it's the Orchestra America National Festival, or Summer Symposium, or my students who have participated in the Honor Orchestra of America with Larry (Livingston) or Gary Lewis, has been the presentations by some of the most inspirational people I know – Dr. Tim and Fran Kick. Both of these guys are AMAZING. It doesn't matter how many times I see them talk to a group of kids and

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## KEEP PUSHING YOURSELF, YOUR COLLEAGUES, AND YOUR STUDENTS TO BE BETTER THAN YOU THINK YOU CAN BE.

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teachers. They make my passion for music education go through the roof, they make you laugh, they make you cry. Dr. Tim can make a whole room of high school kids and teachers cry, in the best possible way. These are memories I will never forget, nor will the kids I've worked with. You come back to your school with a whole new perspective on what it is we do and why we do it. Did I mention that you really need to bring your kids and send your kids to these events?

### **What would you like to see Music for All focus on or accomplish in the future?**

I think MFA does so many things well, if you can't tell from my answers to the last few questions. I hope that more orchestra teachers across the country will get on board with these great programs they offer. I feel like despite the terrific job MFA has done in trying to build the orchestra side of things they do, there is still a hesitancy it seems from orchestra teachers across the country to participate in these experiences. I know that many people might associate

Music for All with Bands of America and with the national marching band events they have held for many years. I realize the orchestra side of things is still relatively new, with most opportunities having started in the last 10 years. But I can assure you that the organization is very committed to bringing the same quality life changing opportunities to orchestra students and orchestra teachers that they have for bands for many years. I have taken students to many national festivals, workshops, clinics, and other events, and I promise you that you will not find the same quantity and quality of experiences that you find at an MFA orchestra event.

**What music are you listening to for enjoyment right now?** All sorts of music! Well, this week it's been a lot of Pixar scores for these concerts I have coming up. But lately I've also been listening to a lot of Stravinsky, My Morning Jacket, Punch Brothers, Miles Davis, Billy Joel, Rufus Wainwright, Matthew Stevens (a great jazz artist my wife and I saw in New York last spring), Chris Theofanidis, and as always, music from the greatest decade ever, the 80s.

**What else should we know about you?** I'm recently happily married! I have a wonderful wife and two amazing step-daughters.

**What else would you like to say to your fellow orchestra directors/teachers/conductors?** Thank you for all of the great work you do day in and day out to not only teach kids how to play string instruments and love music, but for making them better people too. We are very fortunate to do what we do. Keep pushing yourself, your colleagues, and your students to be better than you think you can be.

*Debbie Laferty is Vice President of Marketing and Communications for Music for All.*

# SCENES FROM THE 2016 ORCHESTRA AMERICA NATIONAL FESTIVAL

MARCH 10-12, 2016

INDIANAPOLIS, INDIANA

*part of the Music for All National  
Festival, presented by*  **YAMAHA**

Student instrumentalists gathered in Indianapolis March 10-12 for the Orchestra America National Festival, part of the 25th annual Music for All National Festival, presented by Yamaha. The 50+ school ensembles who were invited and performed in concert included orchestras from **Dobyns-Bennett H.S., Kingsport, TN**, directed by **Ross Bader** and **Satellite H.S., Satellite Beach, FL**, directed by **Patrick Phillips**.

Music for All hosted visiting directors from high school orchestras across the country, to observe and experience the Festival. "I thoroughly enjoyed myself and felt energized as a teacher when I left," said **Sandra Vandertulip**, Director of Orchestras at **Round Rock H.S., Round Rock, TX**. "I was amazed at the positive energy throughout the performances, clinics and social gatherings. Such talented, seasoned veterans who are the top in our industry and their kindness and humility was truly inspiring."

"Thank you for the invitation to take part as a visiting director this year," said **Carole Grooms**, String Ensemble Director at **Freedom Middle School, Franklin, TN**. "It was a terrific experience and I learned more in two and a half days than I ever thought possible!"

Invited orchestras performed in concert in the non-competitive Festival, for an audience of fellow Festival ensembles. Festival orchestras receive recorded and written evaluation from a panel of conductors and music educators, followed by a post-concert clinic. The Festival includes instrumental master classes for students, student and director socials, a motivational session during the Festival opening, and a Gala Awards Banquet that hosted 2,800 guests this year.



**ABOVE, FROM TOP:**

Douglas Droste, Festival clinician and coordinator of the Orchestra camp at the Music for All Summer Symposium, demonstrating in a Festival orchestra clinic.

Franz Anton Krager and Jeff Grogan work with a Festival orchestra during their post-concert clinic.



## *United Sound...*

pairs new musicians with special needs with peer mentors to give all students the opportunity to experience the joys of music-making. The United Sound National Ensemble debuted at the 2016 Music for All National Festival with musicians from the United Sound clubs at **Carmel H.S., IN** and **Ravenwood H.S., TN**. Watch video online of their performance of the premier of "A Celebration for My Three Best Friends" at [Youtube.com/musicforalltv](https://www.youtube.com/musicforalltv) and go to the 2016 Music for All National Festival playlist. You'll also find video of the Honor Orchestra of America.

Apply for the

# 2017 ORCHESTRA AMERICA NATIONAL FESTIVAL

PRESENTED BY  YAMAHA

PRESENTED IN COOPERATION WITH THE  
INDIANAPOLIS SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA



*Photos courtesy of Jolesch Enterprises*

**March 9-11, 2017  
Indianapolis, Indiana**

**Application/Audition deadline:  
June 5, 2016**

The Orchestra America National Festival provides a national forum for performance and recognition for America's outstanding orchestras, as well as a wealth of educational opportunities for the participating ensembles. Highlights for invited groups include:

- **Perform in concert** – for a nationally recognized evaluators and clinicians in a completely supportive non-competitive environment...to be invited is the achievement
- **Written and recorded evaluation** of your concert performance
- **Post-concert clinic** with a Festival evaluator/clinician
- **Student master classes**
- **Student and director social activities**
- **Gala Awards Banquet** recognizing all of the Festival ensembles
- **Opening Session with student motivational session**
- **Photo and recording package** for each student
- **Site visit from Festival official upon invitation**, to answer questions and present your school parents and booster with information about the Festival.

**All ensembles that apply receive written and recorded evaluation from the listening panel.**

Music for All is honored to have the support and involvement of the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra for the Orchestra America National Festival. Master classes are presented by leading applied faculty and artists, including members of the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra. Orchestras will have the opportunity to attend concert performances by both the Honor Orchestra of America and the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra.

The Orchestra America National Festival is part of the Music for All National Festival, presented by Yamaha, which shines a national spotlight on scholastic orchestras in a non-competitive, positive environment.

#### **Venues and Facilities**

Hilbert Circle Theatre, home of the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra, will host the 2017 Orchestra America National Festival concerts. The state-of-the-art Marriott Place Indianapolis, featuring the JW Marriott, will be the official hotel of the 2017 Festival.

**Download the 2017  
Application/Audition Packet  
at [www.musicforall.org/orchestra](http://www.musicforall.org/orchestra)**

# THOUGHT MULTI-TASKING

## (OR WHAT I LEARNED ABOUT PAINTING FROM PLAYING THE VIOLA)

By Dr. Katrin Meidell | DMA

Recently, I purchased a home. It was built in the 1960s, and a lot of the features in the house seem to be original, or at least a good twenty to thirty years old. The house has great bones but really needed some updating. So, for the last few weeks, I have been painting, changing fixtures, replacing outlets and light switches, cleaning, and dealing with many other hands-on home-sprucing activities. As you may imagine, I have not had much desire or energy to practice the viola while doing all of this. But, throughout all of this, I did discover something interesting related to my viola-playing career.

See, as a violist, I think all of the time while I am playing, whether it be rehearsing with my trio or an orchestra, preparing for a solo recital, or especially when warming up. Other than the obvious things like, “What notes and dynamics am I playing?” I am constantly thinking about the following things: my bow hold, releasing unwanted tension in my shoulders or other parts of my body, which fingering will be easiest for the upcoming passage (or inversely, which will provide the greatest shifting or vibrato challenge—especially in boring orchestral parts!), whether or not I am clenching my jaw, vibrato connection between notes, “release and plop,”<sup>1</sup> and a whole host of other considerations. This kind of “thought multi-tasking” within my brain is probably a normal occurrence for most musicians and one of the reasons I love to do “simple” activities, such as cycling, where there is basically only one thing to think about to execute the task accurately—staying upright!

So, a few weeks ago, as I was painting the trim in my living room, I was struck by how uncomfortable I was, up on the ladder, compressing myself toward the ceiling to get the edge of the paintbrush perfectly aligned with the trim, so as not to get any paint onto the ceiling. But I was getting paint on the ceiling, and it was so

frustrating! Why was my normally steady hand so inaccurate? Why was I unable to execute this relatively simple task? And why did I care SO much if a little off-white trim paint got onto the white ceiling? I took a break and gave myself a chance to think about all of this.

See, this is my first house, and I care. As a perfectionist in just about all of the tasks I undertake, correctly painting the room in which I will spend the most time while at home is important. To me, the stakes were high. Because of this, I had been seriously clenching my jaw and had been holding tension throughout my body in an unconscious effort to control my motions and to do well.

High stakes and the desire to perform well: Sounds like any audition or performance situation, does it not?

It turns out that, in my mind, painting the trim in my new living room was on the same level as performing the viola well. I climbed back up on my ladder and immediately felt my jaw clench. The ladder had taken on the likeness of the stage, and the painting had taken on the likeness of performing. I loosened my jaw, considered my body position, and decided to stand on the lower step so that I was not as contorted as before. I realized that I had been holding my breath while painting, so I made a conscious effort to breathe and continued to focus on my breathing as I again began to paint.

The “thought multi-tasking” that I mentioned earlier is something I often discuss with my students. Too often, students only think about one or two things while playing, and more often than not, they do not actively listen to the sounds they are producing. In an attempt to increase their awareness of many of the factors required to play the viola well, I ask them to list six items that they are trying to address. For example: stacked body (feet under knees under hips under shoulders), vibrato connection, relaxed

jaw, loose thumbs, relaxed shifts, and breathe. I have them write these six items on a piece of paper and leave that paper on the music stand next to their music. I ask them to scan the paper before they start playing and in every rest or long note. As they start to memorize the six items, I ask them to imagine a cube, with an always-bouncing ball inside of it. Each surface of the cube contains one of these items, and each time the ball bounces against a surface, the student thinks about or executes the item listed on that surface. Because the ball within the cube does not

bounce in the same order, the “thought multi-tasking” could go something like: “relaxed jaw, stacked body, loose thumbs, relaxed jaw, vibrato connection, relaxed shifts, loose thumbs, breathe, vibrato connection, etc.” It is difficult to do at first, and starting with a smaller



DR. KATRIN MEIDELL

Assistant Professor Viola,  
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Principal Viola,  
Anderson Symphony Orchestra

list is perhaps a good idea. But in my experience, this “thought multi-tasking” is what helps students progress more quickly than if they get stuck in only two or three thoughts.

Many years ago, a friend of mine gave me a mobile to which you could attach your own photographs. For a long time, it had pictures of good friends from college, but shortly after starting my job at Ball State, I thought that the mobile would be a perfect “thought multi-tasking” reminder. I created colorful cards with eight of the most common requests I make of my students: relaxed jaw, loose thumbs, squishy knees (misspelled on the mobile! I always spell it “squoshy”), breathe, taffy bow (i.e., right arm weight), round fingers (right pinky), center, and release and plop. The mobile now hangs

in my office, right in eyesight of the music stand at which my students perform. With the room's airflow, the mobile gently vacillates, so that different ideas are visible at different times. Since I hung it, many students have commented that a specific idea comes into sight and they remember to focus on that item. It is a fun and decorative element in my office that also serves a useful purpose.

As I stood there on my ladder-stage, holding my paintbrush-violin, I discovered that my mind had been in a place where I thought of myself as a novice painter, worried about my execution and afraid of making mistakes. Instead of thinking about the task, I was thinking about the judgment that I, as the outside observer of the finished work, would pass. All of the same unconscious habits that I had as a young violist were active in this novel venue. I was tense and mildly nervous, uncomfortable, unbalanced on my feet, and way too worried about the outcome of my painting. The task of painting the trim had taken on the resemblance of a scary viola audition. But then I realized that I could handle this otherwise-simple task by drawing on the years of experience I had in a much more difficult endeavor. My "thought multi-tasking" went something like: "breathe, relaxed jaw, slow stroke, breathe, balance," and I was able to execute my trim-painting much more accurately than I had been able to before I started actively thinking about what I was doing and how my body was doing it.

When I look at my new living room now, I am quite proud of how it turned out. The paint is beautiful—especially the trim.

#### Notes

1. "Release and plop" is a Karen Tuttle Coordination reminder for loose finger action.

*Dr. Katrin Meidell is Assistant Professor of Viola at Ball State University in Muncie, Indiana. Previously she taught at Texas Tech University and Texas Woman's University. She has performed with the Indianapolis and Fort Worth Symphonies, the Fort Wayne and Boston Philharmonics, and freelance orchestras throughout Indiana, Texas, and Oklahoma. She currently serves as principal viola of the Anderson Symphony Orchestra (IN) and, during the 2012-2013 season, served as principal viola of the Lubbock Symphony Orchestra (TX).*

*Reprinted courtesy of the Journal of the American Viola Society.*

## Orchestra America is a program of Music for All

**Our Mission** is to create, provide and expand positively life-changing experiences through music for all.

**Our Vision** is to be a catalyst to ensure that every child across America has access and opportunity to participate in active music making in his or her scholastic environment.

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