

President's Corner

Eric Crawford

Greetings, fellow KASTA members! For those of you that I have not yet met, my name is Eric Crawford, and it will be my pleasure to serve as your KASTA President for the next two years. I would like to thank Karen McGhee-Hensel on her years of dedicated service and leadership as she moves to the role of Past-President. I would also like to thank our outgoing Secretary, Cody Toll for his wonderful work, and welcome in our new Secretary, Karen Chapman, and our new President-Elect, Brigid Mayer. We are looking forward to working to serve the KASTA membership to the best of our abilities, and continue on the tradition of excellence set by our predecessors.

Some of my goals for my term as President are to help to support the success of the Kansas Intercollegiate Orchestra and the KASTA Solo Competition. It is my hope that we can increase participation and interest in both of these events to solidify them as part of our KASTA culture. I would also like to continue to foster the relationships we have developed with affiliate organizations such as KMEA and KSHSAA. We have several great collaborative projects in the works with these groups, including a newly unveiled KSHSAA adjudicator training session that will take place at next February's KMEA Workshop.

My final goal requires all of us. I challenge each and every one of you to reach out to your fellow string educators that are not members of KASTA, and ask them to join. I cannot think of any reason why a string educator would not want to be networked with such an amazing group of teachers. KASTA also serves as the voice for our affiliate organizations, and provides countless opportunities for the teachers and students we serve.

Thank you to the entire KASTA family!

I hope your school years are off to a great start!

Eric Crawford

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Use of the Right Arm in Low Strings: Weight vs. Pressure

Benjamin Cline, Fort Hays State University

Efficient use of the right arm is one of the more rewarding aspects of teaching and playing, because the impact can be immediate and it directly affects tone production. Since it is the sound of the instrument that draws students to play it, attention to the right arm is critical. However, it is not uncommon that students are more preoccupied with the left hand because it appears that this is where all the action is occurring.

When I speak of the right arm in my teaching, I use the term weight, and never pressure. This is for a very simple reason – I want students to adopt a “less is more” approach to playing their instrument, which ultimately will lead to better muscle control and tone production. We know that too much tension is the enemy of great tone, so words like pressure or pushing are avoided. I don’t want to students to feel they are bearing down on the bow or pushing the bow into the string.

Instead, gravity is the greater force (this is evident in the mirror every year I grow older), and every action taught is always in reference to gravity and weight. The weight of the arm is significant, and more than enough to pull the bow into the string. Students should visualize this when working on bow exercises. To teach the difference between weight vs. pressure, try the following steps:

1. Teach students the difference between the trapezius and the deltoid muscles. There are many YouTube videos to illustrate how these muscles work; type in “deltoid muscle animation” and “trapezius muscle animation” to find videos you can reference.

- The trapezius is our “shrugging” muscle used to raise or lower our shoulders, and is connected to the upper part of our spine, clavicle (collar bone), and scapula (shoulder blade). This is a muscle that is often used when students think about “pushing” the bow into the string, but that motion is counterproductive. You may have seen a student with raised shoulder when told to put

seen a student with a raised shoulder when told to put pressure into the string. Have students shrug their shoulders up and down, raising the shoulder towards their ears and then to the floor. We want to deemphasize these motions and avoid actively engaging this muscle.

- The deltoid muscle is the “chicken wing” muscle that allows us to flap our arms up and down. It is what allows the arm to extend laterally outwards from the body. It is connected to the clavicle and scapula as well, but also to the humerus, and that is key to good tone control. Have students bring their thumbs to their armpits and raise and lower their upper arms like a wing. Having them do the chicken polka can help loosen up this motion. The deltoid is the most important muscle in learning how to use the arm for bowing, so learning to understand how to control this motion is key.

2. From a standing position, have students hold out their arms to their sides so that the arms are parallel to the floor (this motion uses the deltoid muscle). Being sure that nothing is in the way, have them drop their arms to their sides, literally letting their arms flop down. For many students, this is hard work! They will want to control the speed of fall, rather than letting go and letting gravity do the job. However, with a few attempts and some attention to letting muscles relax, this can be accomplished. By practicing this motion, students will see just how much natural weight exists in the arms and the power of gravity when not fighting against it. It will also reinforce using the deltoid muscle. (Be sure that students are not raising their shoulder with the trapezius).
3. For help in visualizing this, have students stand and imagine their rib cage, with the scapula and clavicle sitting on top. They should feel

relaxed, and feel that their rib cage is supporting the shoulder bones. No muscle use is required for the shoulders to just sit there. You may need to place a book or something similar on top of a shoulder if students are having trouble feeling if their shoulder is moving upwards or not.

4. Have students place the bow on the string at the frog, and encourage them to “drop” their right arm weight. For visualization, have them imagine a weight hanging from their elbow, dragging the arm down. For more literal-minded students, you may need to help them support the bow on the string so that they don’t pull the bow off the string as they let their arm fall towards the floor). Be sure that the shoulder is not raised via the trapezius.
5. While in this position with the bow (described in No. 4 above), have them try to raise and lower their “wing.” The deltoid should engage and raise the humerus upwards. In order for this action to work, the wrist should also be loose, and in a neutral position. In effect, the elbow will rise and fall with this motion, with the arm being “hinged” at the wrist and shoulder.

Once these steps have been practiced, it is time to put them into motion. For beginning students, whole bow exercises are impractical, but shorter strokes at the middle of the bow are appropriate and can be used to reinforce the idea of arm weight.

For intermediate and advanced students (and for beginners as soon as they are using the entire bow), I use the first set of open-string bow studies in Fritz Magg’s *Cello Exercises*. These can easily be adapted for bass. It is important to teach the use of the hand on the bow and how it relates to the motion of the deltoid. In a later article I will go in depth regarding the right hand. For the purpose of these exercises, at the frog the hand should be fairly neutral, leaning slightly toward the first finger. At the tip of the bow the hand should be well pronated, so that the hand is leaning toward the tip of the bow and increased arm weight is

Use of the Right Arm, Cont.

transferred into the bow through the index finger. As the bow travels from frog to tip, increased weight is placed upon the first finger by means of pronation, which is aided by the deltoid. As the bow travels from tip to frog, pronation decreases, so that the natural weight of the arm is used to create tone. Done well, there is a seamless transition from frog to tip and back with no loss in tone or power, all the while keeping the muscles relaxed and the weight of the arm pulled downward into the string.

The key to remember in these frog-to-tip bow exercises is the angle of the bow to the string. If the bow is not riding perpendicularly to the string, check to see how the deltoid is being used, and if the hand is pronating when moving towards the tip, or if it is too tense at the frog. These motions work synergistically, and a fault in one of them will show up in how the bow moves across in the string and loss of tone production from frog to tip.

During these exercises, the point of reference is always great tone. Encourage students to listen throughout the length of the bow stroke. Have them identify when their instruments are projecting full and sustained tone throughout the bow stroke, as opposed to thin and waning tone. Encourage them to watch the bow as they do these exercises, so that they will see how the bow is behaving on the string. This will enable them to identify good sound with good physical practice.

Bibliography

Magg, F. (1965). *Cello exercises: A comprehensive survey of essential cello technique*. New York, G. Schirmer.

Mantel, G (1975). *Cello technique: Principles and forms of movement*. Bloomington, Indiana, Univeristy Press.

Sazer, V. (1995). *New directions in cello playing: How to make cello playing easier and play without pain*. Los Angeles, Ofnote.



2014-2015 Season

David Littrell, conductor

Tuesday, September 16

Doug Cameron, contemporary violinist

with Gold Orchestra and Silver Orchestra as guest performers

Tuesday, October 21

Manhattan's Czech Connection to Its Partner City, Dobřichovice

Smetana • Three Dances from *The Bartered Bride*

Martinů • *Memorial to Lidice*

Dvořák • Te Deum, Op. 103 • Flint Hills Masterworks Chorale, Julie Yu, conductor

Dvořák • Slavonic Dances, Op. 46, Nos. 1, 2, 4, 8

Tuesday, December 9

Humperdinck • Prelude to *Hansel and Gretel*

Holst • "Mars" and "Jupiter" from *The Planets*

1 Concerto and 1 Aria Winner

Shostakovich • Symphony No. 5, 2nd and 4th movements

Friday-Saturday-Sunday, March 6-7-8 Opera

Humperdinck • *Hansel and Gretel*

Tuesday, April 21

TBA

1 Concerto Winner & 1 Aria Winner

Sibelius • Symphony No. 2

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KMEA Harp Audition Information

Martha Barnhill, KMEA State-Wide Orchestra Chair

KMEA will be holding harp auditions for the 2014-15 State-Wide Orchestra. Auditions will be blind and live and will be held at Salina Central High School on Saturday, January 10. To be eligible to audition, a student must be deemed an eligible sophomore, junior, or senior in good standing in their high school, as per the KSHSAA rules. The student's orchestra or band director must submit an online audition form and a printed form with payment to the KMEA Festival Manager for each student auditioning. The form must be submitted by the AUDITION FORM DEADLINE established by KMEA. This year's deadlines are as follows: December 17, (\$10 fee), December 31, (\$30), January 9, (\$50), January 10 (\$100).

Students interested in auditioning will find the audition excerpts posted on the KMEA web site. (www.ksmea.org) Please note that there is one requirement listed on the web site that **does not apply** to harpists. Harpists are **not** required to be a performing member of their District's 2014-15 KMEA Orchestra, Band or Jazz Ensemble. All eligible harpists can proceed directly to the State Live Auditions in Salina.

As with any change in procedure, we will need to feel our way through this process. The decision to make the harp auditions live like the rest of the string auditions was made at the executive level in order to insure as equitable procedure as possible. As State Orchestra chair, I would appreciate any help from directors and from harp teachers in disseminating this information to all harpists and teachers in the state. Please forward this email to any interested parties you know of. We will also be looking for qualified judges who would be willing to come to Salina to listen to the auditions. If you would be able to help with the judging, please notify Wesley DeSpain, the assistant orchestra chair (wdespain@usd260.com).

Many thanks,

Martha Barnhill

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Panel Discussion with Creative Rush

Eric Crawford

Every single day I find that I have an opportunity to speak with fellow musicians about music, or fellow educators about teaching, or fellow bass players about bass playing. The list goes on and on. On September 2, however, I had the opportunity to do something a bit off the beaten path. I was invited to participate in a panel discussion for a group called Creative Rush. This group is based out of the Positive Directions Art Studio in Wichita. The group meets on the first Tuesday of each month, and consists of arts patrons from all different genres, best described as an eclectic hodge-podge of supporters and enthusiasts. Some are trained musicians, but most are not. They are just like-minded arts supporters that meet to hear from prominent artists in the area, just to keep their finger on the pulse. Past panelists have included poets, visual artists, and performers. This time their focus was on music educators!

My fellow panelists were Dr. Mark Laycock from Wichita State University, and teaching/pedagogy legend Jacquelyn Dillon. The three of us were rather unclear as to what to expect when we arrived, but it soon became obvious that this was the most laidback gig any of us done in a while! Most people were in jeans and T-shirts. Our event coordinator, Kylie Brown, put us at ease as she walked through what the event might look like. We had a moderator that asked questions for about an hour, and then he turned it over to questions or comments from the group for another thirty minutes. About 30 people attended the event.

Most of the questions were exactly what you might expect, but were ironically the hardest to answer. "What was the greatest moment on stage that you've had with a group?" "How did you choose this path?" We all agreed that we didn't choose music. It chose us. Still, other questions were rather astute. "Are there days when you give up because you become so frustrated?" "When do you know the ensemble is really clicking?"

My favorite moment of the evening was when a woman in her mid-twenties told Jacque that she was a former student of hers from the Wichita Youth Symphony Chamber Players (a group I now get to direct), and that the things she learned from playing in orchestra have helped her on her current career in marketing. Things such as teamwork, accountability, and working individually within a group for a common goal were important life lessons that she learned as an orchestral musician.

As trained musicians, we don't have to look very far to find people preaching about the death of our art. Even some of our fellow musicians and educators will confide at times that it is only a matter of time. After meeting with this group, however, I can see that our base is solid, as long as we reach out to them. I would encourage all of you to find a way to reach out. I promise there are curious individuals out there just waiting for you to engage.



KMEA All-State Orchestra Audition Excerpts

Recorded and edited
by K-State professors
Dr. Cora Cooper and
Dr. David Littrell



Violin and Viola:

<http://www.k-state.edu/music/KMEAViolinViola.htm>

Cello and Bass:

<http://www.k-state.edu/music/KMEACelloBass.htm>

Kansas ASTA Middle Level State-Wide Orchestra Information

Michael Harbaugh

Kansas ASTA Middle Level State-Wide Orchestra

Date: Saturday, April 18, 2015

Place: Hutchinson Middle School 8th Grade Attendance Center (Liberty), 14th and Adams, Hutchinson KS

Schedule: 8:00-8:30 Registration; 8:30-10:00 Rehearsal #1; 10:00-10:15 Break;
10:30-11:30 Rehearsal #2; 11:30-1:00 Lunch; 1:00-2:00 Rehearsal #3
3:00 Concert

There will be approximately 84 players; 22 first violins, 22 second violins, 16 violas, 14 cellos, and 10 basses. Selection is based on the teacher recommendation and the review of the "paper audition" forms by the player selection committee. Participation is reserved for 7th, 8th, and 9th graders only by the following system:

This group is not an "Honors Orchestra" in the purest sense of the word, but is intended as an opportunity for as many fine players as possible from as many schools as possible to create a "mountain top experience" that can inspire the participants to, in turn, inspire and encourage fellow students in their respective school orchestras.

The 2015 clinician will be Dr. Jacob Dakon of the University of Kansas.

Music to be used by the 2015 orchestra:

String Orchestra Selections

Artemis Rising- J. Bishop – (we will use as String Orchestra this year) - C Alan /

McClaren Productions

Fantasia on an Original Theme - Joseph J. Phillip – Alfred Publishing Co.

Full Orchestra Selection

Warrior Legacy- Soon Hee Newbold - (full orchestra arrangement only) FJH Publishing Company

Please see page 8 for the application form.

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Kansas ASTA Jr. High/Middle School
State-Wide Orchestra

Paper Audition Form

(Please Type or Print)

please check the appropriate line:

- First Violin application
- Second Violin application
- Viola application
- Cello application
- String Bass application
- designated alternate #1 application _____ instrument
- designated alternate #2 application _____ instrument

Student's Name _____ School Name _____

School Address _____
street city zip phone

School Orchestra Teacher _____ home phone _____

Grade in School _____ Seat No. _____ Section _____ No. Players in Section _____

Check one: teacher recommends student seating in front__ middle__ back__ of section.
 teacher recommends student for section leader __

Please list most advanced solos which have been *performed* in public: include specific names of pieces, books, composers.

Please list most advanced etudes, solos, etc., *studied*: include specific names of pieces, books, composers.

Additional Comments:

Postmark by February 21 to:

Mr. Michael Harbaugh, Beloit High School, 1711 N. Walnut, Beloit, KS, 67420



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Cortland Mahoney

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Cortland Mahoney is a composer and improvisational musician based in Wichita, Kansas. As a violinist, he performs jazz and original compositions regularly with the Agave Democracy. As an educator, he introduces concepts of improvisation to high school and middle school string students through pentatonic scales, blues form, and original jazz string orchestra charts.

Something Else offers students a fun change of pace. By the end of the class, students have a new perspective of their instrument and how they can use it. And it isn't always the students in the front rows that do the best (or have the most fun)!

String programs that have invited *Something Else* into their classroom include Hutchinson High School, the Christa McAuliffe Academy, Haysville West Middle School, the WSU chapter of ASTA, and the Emporia State University string improvisation class. Programs are available for beginner to advanced student ensembles. Small ensembles and individual students also have access to special attention. Preview copies of scores or handout materials available upon request.

For more information contact: Cortland.Mahoney@gmail.com

Wichita State University Symphony Orchestra Season Repertoire 2014-15

Thursday, September 18/Miller Concert Hall

Handel: Concerto Grosso in B Minor, op. 6, no. 12
Libby Larsen: full moon in the city
Brahms: Symphony No. 1 in C Minor

Stephanie Patterson, bassoon

Thursday, October 16/Miller Concert Hall

Rozsa: from *Ben-Hur*
Arlen-Harburg: *Wizard of Oz* Orchestral Suite
Mancini: Songs for Audrey
Powell: *How to Tame Your Dragon*
Williams: *Superman* March
Davis: *The Vagabond*

Featuring Chaplin's *The Vagabond*
with live musical accompaniment

October 30-November 2/Miller Concert Hall

Mozart: Don Giovanni

WSU Opera Theatre

Thursday, November 20/Wiedemann Hall

Beethoven: Concerto for Violin, Cello, and Piano in C Major
Shostakovich: Symphony No. 6 in B Minor

Orfeo Trio:
Evgeny Zvonnikov, violin
Leonid Shukaev, cello
Julie Bees, piano