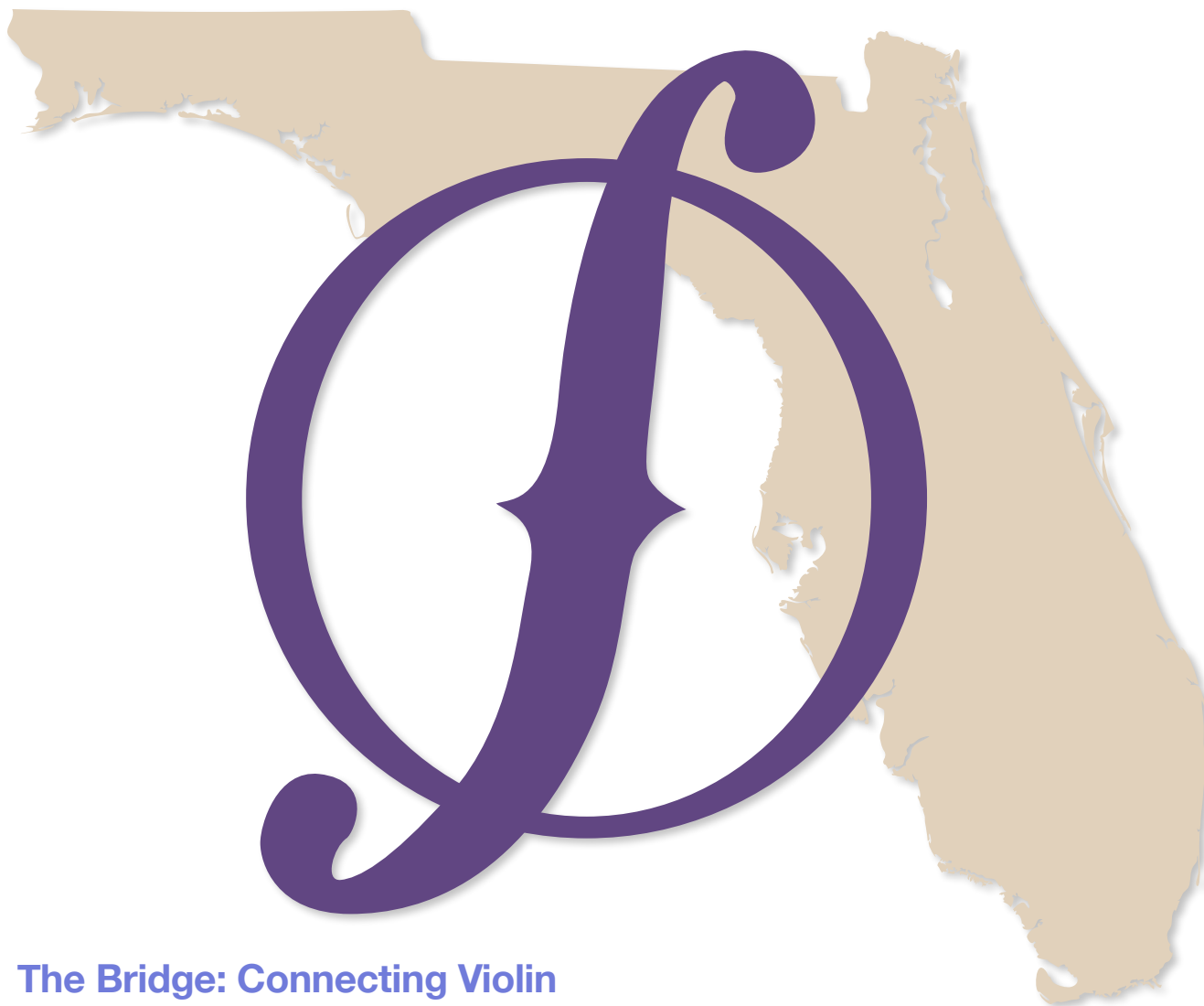


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# THE STRING SECTION

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**The Florida American String Teacher Association**



**The Bridge: Connecting Violin  
and Fiddle Worlds**

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**Collegiate Corner: Breaking  
Down Walls**

## Contents

President's Message	3
Florida at National Conference	4
The Conductor's Podium	5
Collegiate Corner	7
The Bridge: Connecting Violin and Fiddle Worlds	9
Upcoming Events	12

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## The American String Teacher Association, Florida Chapter

ASTA is a non-profit organization devoted to enhancing the future of string teaching and playing in the United States; by increasing the amount of string teachers. Fortifying this commitment to the string community, ASTA has introduced many programs, services and foundations throughout the years. Among these outlets include the National String Project Consortium; assisting universities in enhancing the training of string music education majors. Therefore producing qualified string teachers for private and especially public schools.

ASTA has also developed programs for professional development and instrument and bow outreach for schools, studios, and students in need. More recently, ASTA developed The National Foundation to Promote String Teaching and Playing. This segment executes grants, awards, and competitions enriching the quality of string education. In addition to advancing string education and performance throughout America, it fosters a variety of projects around the world. ASTA keeps thousands of string educators connected through The American String Teacher, a quarterly journal that keeps ASTA members informed on the latest news on teaching, products, and the string community as a whole. For more information about ASTA please visit [www.astaweb.com](http://www.astaweb.com).

## Message from the President

Dear Colleagues,

For many of us the Fall semester is already in full swing. As we settle into our new routines, I would like to remind you of our upcoming Fall Conference in Orlando September 28-29. This is a month earlier than usual. Among our numerous distinguished guest speakers and clinicians are Dr. Robert Gillespie, Dr. Alex Jimenez, Gregg Goodhart, and Mark Thielen. The sessions topics this year include bass pedagogy, effective practicing, effective tuning, MPA preparation, rehearsal strategies, and more. Finally, I hope that you will join us for the Florida ASTA luncheon on Friday, September 29 after the general meeting. We had a wonderful time last year at the Hilton Bistro and we look forward to once again seeing everyone in this more relaxed social setting. Please be on the lookout for more information in the coming weeks.



I wish you all the best for this new school year and I hope to see you at the ASTA/FOA Fall Conference in Orlando September 28-29!

Kasia Bugaj

President, FL-ASTA

## Florida at the ASTA National Conference

FL-ASTA had a wonderful representation at the American String Teacher National Conference in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania. We students performing for the National Orchestra Festival and collegiate chapters who won national awards.



### Avalon Middle School Sinfonia

**Vincent Conrod, director**  
**Orlando, FL**

Our Avalon Middle School Sinfonia students thoroughly enjoyed their performance experience with the 2017 National Orchestra Festival. Our Orchestra program took it as a huge honor to have been invited to perform at the festival, and our students really took ownership of making sure they put on a great performance. The performance

environment was extremely professional, and was an experience that our students will enjoy for many years to come. Following our performance, our students and parents enjoyed visiting exhibitors and music school booths, as well as participating in some of the conference educational sessions. We had a fantastic time in Pittsburgh, and would highly recommend participating in the National Orchestra Festival in the future!



### Lawton Chiles High School Chamber Orchestra

**Christopher Miller, director**  
**Tallahassee, FL**



### Florida State University, Student Chapter

**Dr. Kasia Bugaj, faculty advisor**  
**Amber Svetik, chapter president**

The FSU Student Chapter of ASTA currently has 26 members. They were awarded the Outstanding Student Chapter at the 2017 National Conference for their excellence and community service. FSU-ASTA currently serves the community by hosting the North Florida String Festival. Members of FSU-ASTA also assist local string teachers with concerts, rehearsals, and other string orchestra needs.

Graduate members, Annalisa Chang and John-Rine Zabanal, presented at the juried poster session, their topics were on *The Effect of Posture on Adjudicators' Perception of Overall Music Performance Quality* and *Music Performance Anxiety Among High School Band, Chorus, and Orchestra Students* respectively

Be sure to check out the  
new ASTA website: [www.astastrings.org](http://www.astastrings.org)

A modern and sleek look for the 21st century, easier  
navigation, more connections to resources

National ASTA Conference  
Atlanta, Georgia on March 7-10, 2018  
Be sure to register!

## The Conductor's Podium

Ensembles, organizations, and events highlighted here are recipients of the FL-ASTA Special Project Grant. This grant is awarded near the beginning of each calendar year. If you wish to apply for the grant, please visit the website for more information. If you have any highlight you wish to add for the next issue, please contact us at [florida.asta@gmail.com](mailto:florida.asta@gmail.com)

### Strings on the River

**Jacksonville:** Strings on the River took place on April 21 in Lazzara Hall of the UNF Fine Arts Center. This gala concert raised funds for all the string programs in Duval County Public School. Over 200 students from elementary to college participated in this concert. Dr. Simon Shiao was the featured soloist for Jacksonville's String on the River concert. Pictured top right.



### Kids Go for B'roque

**Tallahassee:** The Bach Parley *Kids Go for B'roque* cancer is an honors recital featuring musicians 18 years old and younger, who are currently studying with a music teacher, plays pieces of the Baroque period, 1600-1750. This program was designed to showcase the talented young musicians in the community and further their musical experience through the performance of Baroque music. Pictured immediate right.



### Alhambra Orchestras "Be Better with Bergonzi" Chamber Music Workshop

**Coconut Grove:** The Alhambra Orchestra's thirteenth annual weekend chamber music workshop was recently completed, with 31 participants in ten groups. FL-ASTA funding helped us provide scholarships for four high-school students, who are members of the Greater Miami Youth Symphony, and two young adults. We also hosted a young quartet from a Dreyfoos School of the Arts in West Palm Beach. We offered solo coaching for two students, and they performed their sonatas with piano accompaniment at the recital. Nineteen participants were returnees from prior years, and twelve

were new to this workshop. Beethoven works were chosen by three groups, with the others playing Mozart, Vivaldi, Brahms, Haydn and Prokofiev. The Saturday session included a group class where the instructors coached and "sat in" with the various groups to work on ensemble pieces in a master-class format. For Saturday evening, the Bergonzi Quartet gave a one-hour string quartet concert for our participants, also open to friends and families. The workshop consisted of two evenings and two days of intensive playing, listening, and coaching, with each group concentrating on a single work. Each ensemble had four hours of private coaching. The weekend was capped by a participants' recital on Sunday afternoon, to which the public was invited.



## North Florida String Festival

**Tallahassee:** The North Florida String Festival is an opportunity for area string students to perform a solo or in an ensemble in front of qualified string adjudicators on campus at Florida State. It also provides FSU students an opportunity to communicate with parents and work with their students, providing valuable experience as part of their teacher training. This year NFSF served over 150 students ranging from elementary school to high school ages.



## Florida Southern College String Camp

**Lakeland:** The focus of the FSC String Camp is to inspire young string students to continue with string education where through public school education or private lessons. The camp also aids in developing students' technique and communication skills in an ensemble. Participating in daily elective classes, students strengthen musicianship in music theory, aural skills, world drumming, fiddle and improvisation, group piano and movement class. In addition,

students are involved in daily ensemble rehearsals and string sectionals and masterclasses with professional artists from The Florida Orchestra, Sarasota Orchestra and Orlando Philharmonic. The camp overseen by myself, the FSC String Camp Director and the FSC Director of Orchestra and Strings program.

The FSC String Orchestra Camp's goal is to also promote excellence in string and orchestra teaching and playing. We aim to achieve this goal by providing an annual String Camp to the local and state string community. Working with professional string artists from around the state, string students at the Camp receive high quality individual feedback and evaluation on a daily basis. Students at the camp gain more confidence, self-pride and better preparation going into the upcoming school year. Finally, we hope students leave our camp passionate about music and encouraged to grow technically and musically on their instruments.

## Elementary Music Reading Master Class

**Gainesville:** The grant for the Elementary Music Reading Master Class held Thursday, May 25 at the historic Thomas Center in Gainesville was met with many smiles and a good time had by all. There were 15 students registered for this free session and one accompanist – a wonderful pianist and also a violin student of mine. Since these students had different teachers and varied backgrounds, I chose the unison selections from the “Concert Tunes for Beginning Strings” by Dale Brubaker. It gave the students an opportunity, some for the first time, to read notes, rhythms, and follow a conductor. They also played the familiar “French Folk Tune” and of course a marching “Twinkle, Twinkle Little Star.” After a delicious pizza lunch, the students decorated their bows using colorful streamers and received T-shirts to commemorate the day. At the end of the session, there was a short recital featuring the new music, some soloists, and familiar Suzuki favorites. A thank you to Dustin Adams from the Alachua County School Board for allowing the students an excused absence for the day, the parent volunteers, and the FL-ASTA Board for funding the event.



## Collegiate Corner

### Florida State University

## Breaking Down Walls: What Preservice Band Educators Can Learn at a String Conference

**Benjamin Hart, FSU collegiate chapter member**

Having been four weeks into my string methods course at Florida State University, I never thought I would have the opportunity to attend the American String Teacher Association's National convention in Pittsburgh, Pennsylvania, with the student ASTA chapter at FSU. I was speaking casually with my good friend (who happens to be the President of FSU ASTA) and the conference came up. She mentioned the details, which aligned with my schedule, and invited me. I thought about the perspectives I could learn from as well as the benefits of networking at large. This small interaction is an example of the inclusive culture that I have come to expect from the string world. The Florida State University College of Music has provided me experiences, like this, that are geared toward making me the most well rounded music educator. I saw this convention as an opportunity to gain more insight on how an organization outside of my discipline functions and what kind of culture is attributed to it.

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**As I listened and learned the specific pedagogical approaches to a heterogeneous string class, I began a quest to find ways to transfer these concepts to the band classroom.**

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It came to my attention in the first session I observed that fundamentals were a huge focus. I have not yet attended a band fundamentals clinic where the focal point was on making fundamentals fun. It doesn't appear to be a difficult concept to

support. It is generally assumed that fundamentals are important in pedagogy as it should be discussed, practiced, evaluated, and assessed on a consistent basis. Unfortunately, fundamentals tend to have a negative concomitant due to the way it is usually taught. These concepts can be approached in a positive way that can generate more emotional involvement from the student, which will allow for more success in the student's playing and understanding of the basic approaches to create music.

Research indicates that the transfer of new concepts to ideas that students have experienced is a highly effective way to teach (Madsen & Madsen, 1998, pp.29-31). Transferring concepts from string pedagogy to the fundamentals on the clarinet, for example, is a way of transferring concepts. There were several examples of this concept through the duration of the conference. As I listened and learned the specific pedagogical approaches to a heterogeneous string class, I began a quest to find ways to transfer these concepts to the band classroom, improving my ability to transfer and gaining insight on the commonalities of the string and band classrooms.

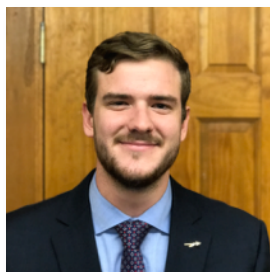
Studies have shown that there are differences in student personality based on instrument families (Cutietta & McAllister, 1997; Kemp, 1981). As an attendee of professional conferences for band and now ASTA, I was fascinated by the differences that prevailed between the two professional fields in music education. At most "band" specific conferences, the means for interactions were based on a social hierarchy. For example, a first-year college student would have a difficult time communicating with an executive board member of a professional band organization due to their position in that organization. During my time at the ASTA conference, I witnessed little to no social hierarchy in this way; instead the attention was focused on the subject matter. Coffee breaks and lunch breaks were placed to encourage higher attendance in sessions. The structure was obviously focused in the right place, which allowed for a more informative conference experience. I saw professional titles and social norms get thrown out the window for the sake of education. It was one of the most humbling experiences of my college career.

Taking the time to learn from a different perspective could potentially change your approach. In my case, I approach teaching with passion and a desire to foster a love for music among students through reinforcement with other subject matter. Fostering transfers of information could yield better student retention of information. Seeing cultural differences allows the observer to refine behavior to better serve the objective. The American String Teacher Association served as an example of dedication and passion for music without diversion, which is an ideal that can be transferred to any musical discipline.

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*Benjamin Hart, originally from Lakeland, Florida, is currently a senior Instrumental Music Education Major focusing on Winds and Percussion at The Florida State University. Benjamin currently serves as Secretary of the Collegiate NAFME chapter at FSU. He has performed in all the University Bands offered at FSU including The Wind Orchestra, and studied saxophone privately with Patrick Meighan and currently studies with Dr. Katherine Weintraub. To further his education, Benjamin has pursued leadership responsibilities with FSU's Marching Chiefs and is employed by FSU's Summer Music Camps as a teacher and counselor. Benjamin is also seeking level one Orff certification in the summer.*

## Florida-ASTA Teacher Award Nominations

**Do you know a string teacher who has made a significant difference in his or her community? FL-ASTA annually recognizes phenomenal people in the Florida string community for outstanding achievement in the following categories.**

School Teacher of the Year  
New Teacher Award  
Young Artist Award  
Outstanding Education Support

Studio Teacher of the Year  
Service Award  
Lifetime Achievement Award  
Dr. Michael Allen Distinguished Service Award

**Nomination applications will be posted on [flasta.org](http://flasta.org).  
Recipients will be awarded at the FL-ASTA general meeting at the FOA/FL-ASTA conference**



# The Bridge: Connecting Violin and Fiddle Worlds

by **Annemieke Pronker-Coron**

Over the last decade a budding movement has blossomed: fiddling and non-classical violin playing is becoming increasingly popular among young aspiring violinists. It appears that droves of young and talented players want to cross the bridge from classical violin playing to fiddling. Have their teachers crossed the bridge yet? Do violin students across the nation know the road to that bridge? Without some in-depth research I am not able to answer these questions. However, I can share some observations as part of our ongoing conversation about the current teaching styles in violin methodology. Here are some other questions: do violin teachers have a broad enough understanding of how to support the demands of young violinists? Does the current curriculum answer to these needs? Are we in touch with the changing violin climate and the changes teachers like I have witnessed?

Last year I attended the American String Teachers Association (ASTA) National Convention in Florida. I roamed the floor of the exhibition hall. The live acoustics of the space created a cacophony of musical fragments, especially when more and more musicians played simultaneously, trying out instruments and electronic gadgets, selling their music, their method, or a specific teaching tool. Clusters of young violinists from participating orchestras were eagerly checking out new equipment. Fiddlers jammed on electric violins and cellists walked around with the new Block strap, sharing their freshly acquired chop-and-groove techniques. Some of the greatest violinists/fiddlers were walking the floor: Darol Anger, for instance, and Mark O'Connor with his wife, the violinist/fiddler Maggie, as well as Scottish violinist/fiddler Hanneke Cassel and her husband, cellist Mike Block, all incredibly talented musicians whose work I adore. They represent the leadership in this exciting new movement where current techniques, such as the chop-and-groove, have become part of the violinists' repertoire; this is a movement, moreover, where improvisation is no longer a stranger to droves of young and talented violinists.

I am excited about this movement and at the same time I am ill at ease. In this busy and loud hall, I felt an absence of what I imagined was the atmosphere at the ASTA convention floor not long ago: classical music, concertos, virtuoso soloists filling the space, while trying out instruments. I missed hearing this more conventional sound and I was reminded of why I felt ill at ease: I grew up with the familiar sound of concertos and virtuoso passages and noticed the void. Instead now I heard the chop and fiddle tunes. I witnessed impromptu fiddle jam sessions where eager musicians showed off their virtuoso fiddle technique. Was it just my observation or was there a tension apparent between the exciting groovy Americana/fiddle musicians and the stronghold of classical musicians? It was only a few years ago, in 2009, when Mark O'Connor launched his new *American Violin Method*.

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The *American Violin Method* reaches out to this new movement among young talented violinists; it helps teach the chop-and-groove as well as improvisation techniques. It accommodates teachers reaching out to students with interest in non-classical styles of music.

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**I believe it is a good idea to reach out and respond to the needs of the young and eager musicians who are trying to learn to play this new style of music that evolves from the older fiddling traditions. Equally so, I believe it to be of utmost importance to not let go of the wealth of education the classically trained musicians have to offer.**

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Throughout my career I have noticed that not all students make the same choices when starting to play violin. I have used different methods of teaching, depending on their interest. When I moved to the United States twenty-five years ago I learned that, generally speaking, in order to learn to play violin, one would have to learn the Suzuki method. Coming from Europe I was trained differently and learned about a range of distinct violin methods, including the English method, *Eta Cohen*, the German method, *Sassmannshaus*, or the Hungarian method, *Sandor*. It seemed to me that—as a violin teacher—I had come to a ‘closed market.’ This is no longer the case, and I realize other methods are used more often now as part of the teaching curriculum. These three other methods took a step away from a mostly classical approach. They all richly incorporate folk tunes and elements of folk tunes in their curricula.

I believe it is a good idea to reach out and respond to the needs of the young and eager musicians who are trying to learn to play this new style of music that evolves from the older fiddling traditions. Equally so, I believe it to be of utmost importance to not let go of the wealth of education the classically trained musicians have to offer. The one does not need to exclude the other.

Maybe it is this sense of a still existing gap between the new movement and the more traditional way of playing that I witnessed at the ASTA conference in Tampa. Maybe this is what fed my sense of feeling ill at ease. I understand the deep concerns felt by violin teachers. Learning to play violin in the classical style demands great knowledge of this music as well as refined bow and left-hand techniques.

When studying fiddling, we learn that there, too, a good amount of technique is involved. Bow holds may look haphazard; however—as in baroque performance technique—we find that these holds suit the needs of the fiddler. Some fiddlers play

most effectively the majority of the time in the middle of the bow. It suits them particularly well for the rendition of fast passages or a flurry of notes. These may embellish a simple melody. The hand may be higher up the bow and indeed create a lighter feel of the bow. Violinists, playing baroque music, may choose the same approach. Their musical needs, I learned over time, are very similar to the needs of fiddlers; hence the popularity of the baroque bow among fiddlers.

More similarities can be found between specifically old time fiddling and baroque violin playing. A relaxed bow arm, for instance, or circular bowing helps with slightly stronger down bows. A series of other similarities include *scordatura*, *cross tuning*, as well as *notes inégales* and *swing strokes*. When studying the history of the violin, we find common roots. Looking beyond old-time fiddling, we can see a similar development: longer bow strokes, vibrato, and playing in positions. Looking at bluegrass fiddling and the current popular music trend, a virtuoso technique is not uncommon. And yet not all is the same: we find a relatively easy structure in much of fiddle music; a beautiful starting point for endless improvisation, creating a deeper understanding and feel for the harmonies and keys on which the melodic line is based. Rhythm, too, is a strong element in fiddling. Exploring these venues can and will enrich the violinist, even when she or he is not interested in pursuing any specific fiddle style.

Besides violin methods and teaching, it is of paramount importance to immerse oneself in the style of music one intends to play. As much as we need technique and guidance to bring flexibility to our approach, we need to be among peers playing the style of music we aspire to. Both a classically schooled violinist and a fiddler will need to immerse themselves in the baroque way of playing in order to get the *feel*. Similarly, of course, a violinist needs to immerse themselves in the fiddle field when interested in playing fiddle music.

I have witnessed how there was a resistance to the authentic baroque performance technique in the 1960s, a resistance that still exists today. I was introduced to the baroque performing technique at the conservatory of Amsterdam, where I received my training. During that particular time, differences of opinion continued to exist regarding baroque performance authenticity. Yet it was sufficiently accepted and popular when I was a student. I notice a similar lack of openness by the established violin population both with the authentic baroque performance movement as with this new fiddle-based music style.

I believe the concern I described earlier is what holds the American violin school back. It is the concern of losing the highly valued identity of the violin tradition, culminating in virtuoso techniques, and representing classical music as a whole. It will take convincing arguments for teachers to become confident and step away from the safety of the method they grew up with. Teachers need to be learners as well.

I believe there is room for exploring the new chop-and-groove style as well as improvising and other fiddle techniques, without losing the classical identity. Instead there is reason to believe that incorporating this style in the regular curriculum will

enhance the musicality of the budding violinist greatly; a motivation to explore a more in-depth crossing of the bridge between violin playing and fiddling.



Annemieke Pronker-Coron is the author of *The Bridge: Connecting Violin and Fiddle Worlds* (Culicidae Press, 2015), which explores the connection between the fiddle heritage and the baroque and classical violin. The book is

particularly suited to support a violin teaching career. Annemieke lives in Gainesville, Florida, with her husband and son. She teaches both violin and fiddle and directs an adult string orchestra, The Annasemble. She has taught string programs in local schools, including at the Einstein school for children with learning disabilities. Annemieke performs with the baroque trio The Alachua Consort (with oboe and organ/harpsichord) and plays electric violin with the Greek band: EMBROS.

## Interested in submitting your ideas to The String Section?

The String Section is a publication of the Florida Chapter of the American String Teacher Association. Our mission is to promote a sense of community among collegiate, pre-service, and professional string educators throughout Florida by communicating critical thought, opinion, and holding ideas of string-related topics. The String Section is also dedicated to sharing the achievements successes of the Florida string community.

We would like to share member news, highlight FL-ASTA sponsored events in the Conductor's Podium, and share any upcoming events in the FL-ASTA community. We would also like to promote articles submission among the members. Articles can range from specific pedagogy practices to general article topics. We also encourage members of collegiate chapters to submit articles highlighting their activities, events, and experiences as grow from preservice music educators to inservice music educators.

For any questions concerning The String Section, please email [Florida.ASTA@gmail.com](mailto:Florida.ASTA@gmail.com), or refer to the FL-ASTA website at [www.flasta.org](http://www.flasta.org).

## Upcoming Events

### University of Central Florida All-State Preparation Clinic

**August 26, 2019**

The University of Central Florida is hosting an all-state preparation event at UCF Performing Arts Center. It will assist students in preparation for FMEA 2017 All-State Band, Orchestra, and Jazz And auditions. Please visit [music.ucf.edu/allstate](http://music.ucf.edu/allstate) for more information.

### University of Florida Viola Day

**September 2, 2017**

The University of Florida is hosting an all-day event for ages 12 and up which includes All-State Preparation Workshops (grades 7-12), masterclasses, viola ensemble, and a recital. Visit [arts.ufl.edu/violaday](http://arts.ufl.edu/violaday) for more information.

### FOA/FL-ASTA Fall Conference

**September 28-29, 2017**

Our annual fall conference will occur at the Hilton Orlando once again! Come join us and fellow string educators for another year of professional development and self-improvement. Our keynote speaker will be Dr. Robert Gillespie, professor of music at the Ohio State University, past national president of ASTA, co-author of *Essential Elements for Strings*, as well as clinician and conductor. Other presenters will include Judy Evans, Gregg Goddard, Dr. Alex Jimenez, and Mark Thielen. Please visit <http://www.flasta.org/foa-fl-astaconference> for more information.

### Florida State University High School String Seminar

**October 13-14, 2017**

Students will be able to join the acclaimed University Symphony Orchestra, an ensemble of graduate students and upperclass undergraduate students, to rehearse and perform a work on the October 14 concert; they will receive private lessons and masterclass hearings from the esteemed string faculty of the FSU College of Music; they will collaborate with their colleagues in

the Seminar on string chamber works, coaching these works with FSU faculty, and performing them in a recital prior to the USO concert. Visit <http://music.fsu.edu/fsu-high-school-string-seminar> for more details.

### Jacksonville Cello Workshop

**February 2-3, 2018**

The Jacksonville Cello Workshop (JCW), newly created in 2016 by Dr. Nick Curry, hosted on the beautiful University of North Florida campus, is a 2-day event for cellists of all ages and levels of expertise. UNF's JCW includes master classes and group classes for all students that attend. The world's foremost cello teachers (with specializations from teaching young students all the way to teaching students competing in the top international competitions) from around the country are brought in each year to work with cellists from the Jacksonville area and from around the region. Attending this 2-day event allows each student the opportunity to play in two master classes, participate in several group lessons and observe multiple master classes given by all workshop teachers.

Please check the registration page and mail in the form to secure your place today to join us in Jacksonville February 2-3, 2018. Participants that register before January 13, 2018 avoid paying a late registration fee. For more information and for applications visit: <https://jaxcelloworkshop.org/>

### North Florida String Festival

**February 3, 2018**

The North Florida String Festival is a solo and ensemble festival sponsored by the Florida State University chapter of ASTA. It provides students of all ability levels an opportunity to perform for an adjudicator and receive constructive feedback.

#### Do you have an upcoming event?

Message [Florida.ASTA@gmail.com](mailto:Florida.ASTA@gmail.com) with the subject, "Upcoming Event," to share! Please provide relevant information, including date and location, as well as a brief description. Information will be included on the next issue of *The String Section* and posted on the FL-ASTA website, [flasta.org](http://flasta.org).