



Nuts and Bolts: Teaching Strings for the Non-String Player

Kristi Ramsey
Kim Dunninger

Presenters

Kristi Ramsey - Flutist

- Durango High School Orchestra, 2 time, Outstanding Orchestra, Colorado West Invitational Music Festival
- Orchestra Grades 5-12, Commerce City, CO
- Orchestra, Band Grades 5-12, Durango, CO
- Orchestra, Band, 6-12, Aurora West College Prep, Unique situation, Title-I school.

Kim Dunninger - Soprano

- CMEA Middle School Orchestra Performance, 2009, Miller Middle School, Durango, CO (1999-2011)
- Durango High School, Best In Class & Best Overall, Lone Star Showcase of Music
- Rocky Top Middle School, 8th Grade Orchestra, Superior 2015 & 2016, Colorado West Invitational.
- Trail Ridge Middle School, Longmont, Best Overall MS Orchestra, Music in the Parks 2013

Start With What You Already Know

- You are a musician.
- Note values
- Reading notes
- Rhythm studies
- The Ensemble
 - Playing together
 - Intonation



Beginners

- They need the basics. You need the basics.
 - Posture and setup; it is essential. Sitting on the front of their chair, feet planted on the floor.
 - Learn left-hand. (hand shape and thumb placement. *Use tapes)
 - Learn right-hand.
 - Then put them together.
 - Constantly correct posture, left hand and bow hold.
 - **Learn to tune using the pegs; before your first day.**
 - **Learn how to change strings.**

Teaching the Basics

- Start with rote instruction focusing on playing skills.
- French Folk Song pizzicato guitar style. Starts with fingers down allowing work on hand shape.
- Once students can demonstrate proper hand shape, move to pizzicato under the chin.
- At the same time work on the bow hold. Games, student leaders, student discourse.
- Students learn all of the notes for D Major. Work on note reading.
- Open D and Open A string bowing. Can often start in the book at this point.
- French Folk Song with the bow.

Intermediate & Advanced

- Concentrate on The Ensemble
 - Playing together
 - Intonation
- Score study.
 - Again, start with what you know.
 - Aural skills training - intervals.
 - Ask other string players to look at parts for fingering and bowing suggestions.
- Start developing knowledge of bowing skills, vibrato, shifting, positions, and extensions.

Learn Bow Technique

- **Bow Technique:**
 - Important to understand Contact point (bowing lanes), bow speed, and arm weight.
 - Identify the middle of the bow.
 - Bow games on one note - four down bows, 2 below the middle, 2 above the middle; four up bows, 2 above middle, 2 below middle.
- **Bow terms:**
 - On the string - *detache*, *accented detache*, *hooked bow*, *portato or loure*, *staccato* (hair stays on string)
 - Off the string - *spiccato* (hair leaves the string)
- **Bow in General:**
 - On the string - *detache*, *accented detache*, *hooked bow*, *portato or loure*, *staccato* (hair stays on string)
 - Off the string - *spiccato* (hair leaves the string)
- **Bow Identification:**
 - Violin, viola, cello all use French bow.
 - Bass can use either French bow or German bow. Having them use French Bow simplifies teaching the class as all are using a uniform bow.
 - Violins have a square frog. All others have a rounded frog.

PLAN, PLAN, PLAN!

- Get a copy of the district required text.
- If none, look at method books and ask for advice.
- Read and understand everything before you teach it to your students; Any materials you will be using.
- Try playing anything you will be teaching before you teach it.
- Score study.
 - Again, start with what you know.
 - Ask other string players to look at parts.
 - Key signatures, new notes, shifting etc.

Learn to play.

- Find a private teacher or use an on-line resource such as *theviolinlab.com*
- Learn the basics.
 - Posture and setup; it is essential.
 - Fortunately it is all external.
 - Left-hand
 - Right-hand.
 - Together
 - Bow hold.
 - Tuning - learn to tune using the pegs.
 - Before your first day.



ASK FOR HELP!

- Local college or university.
- Other string teachers.
- Bowings, fingerings.
- Hire clinicians for the kids. Don't use it as "office" time but rather as "professional development" your time to learn.
- Orchestra Retreat with clinicians and guest conductor. Again it is professional development time not "free time".
- Combined Orchestra, Festival Orchestra experiences with guest clinicians.
- klramsey@aps.k12.co.us
- dun016675@adams12.org

It Takes Time

- Just as it takes time to learn an instrument, it takes time to learn to teach it. Be patient with yourself. :)
- Continually reinforce the fundamentals of good string playing with your students at all levels.
- The kids will appreciate that you are learning along with them.
- Have fun and let advanced students “teach you.”
- Use fun videos and graphics to engage them



Don't
Be Afraid to Fail.
Be Afraid
Not to Try.

Summer Workshops

- University of Michigan (June 23-25, 2016)
- http://www.music.umich.edu/special_programs/adult/michiganstringworkshop.htm
- Hayes School of Music, Appalachian State University
- <http://music.appstate.edu/academics/special-programs/string-pedagogy-workshop/workshop-schedule>
- Vandercook School of Music (June 20-24, 2016)
- http://www.vandercook.edu/programs/su16_meca6046/

Workshops

- ASTA Summer 2016 Boot Camp
- http://www.astaweb.com/Public/Member_Resources/2016_Boot_Camp.aspx
- How to change a string video
 - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5cs2iLzIL_g



ASTA Orchestra Teacher BOOT CAMP

For the Non String Player

BROCHURE .PDF

REGISTER ONLINE

DOWNLOAD
REGISTRATION

An intensive three-day workshop

June 28-30, 2016
Benito Middle School
10101 Cross Creek Blvd.
Tampa, FL 33647

Register for this three day workshop, and:

- Establish strong posture and instrument positions
- Learn basic and intermediate bowings
- Understand beginning shifting
- Discover beginning vibrato exercises for the heterogeneous class
- Connect with other orchestra teachers
- Added benefits: Receive Book I and II of two different method book series

Who should attend?

Orchestra teachers who are not string players and want to learn the skills.

Clinicians:



Judy Evans
Florida



Pamela Tellejohn Hayes
South Carolina

Both clinicians have over 30 years' experience teaching beginning, middle and high school orchestra levels.



Learning broken down by day:

June 28

- 8:30 a.m. - Noon and 1:30 - 4:30 p.m.
- Body posture and instrument positions
 - Book I of heterogeneous class method
 - Bowing skills

June 29

- 8:30 a.m. - Noon and 1:30 - 4:30 p.m.
- Bowing skills
 - Shifting

June 30

- 8:30 a.m. - Noon and 1:30 - 4:30 p.m.
- Refine basic and intermediate bowing skills
 - Effective rehearsal strategies
 - Book II of heterogeneous class method

(This 3-day workshop is available only as a package. No single day registration. Meals, travel and hotel are the responsibility of the participant. Space is limited to the first 43 paid registrants.)

Membership Highlights

Member Benefits

"Of all the music organizations I belong to, ASTA feels most like 'home' because it satisfies the most needs" - Judy Palac

"I joined ASTA as soon as I graduated from Hartman School of Music in 1969. I have found my membership to be an incredible source of inspiration, motivation and string community connections. I joined because I felt it was my responsibility as a teacher to be the very best at my craft. As I am retired now, I still have the fire instilled in me throughout my teaching career. My favorite ASTA moments were many...taking part in the OHIO State String Workshops were highlights, also the first ASTA Conference, my acceptance of my orchestra to be in the National Orchestra

Resources

- American String Teachers Association
- www.astaweb.com
- www.stringskills.com
- www.orchestrateacher.net
- www.stringtechnique.com
- www.stringsmagazine.com
- www.discovereso.com
- www.8notes.com
- www.nafme.org
- <https://www.johnsonstring.com/resources>
- www.smartmusic.com
- Suzuki association of the Americas
- <https://suzukiassociation.org>
- *Strategies for Teaching Strings: Building a Successful String and Orchestra Program*
- www.violinlab.com
- *Strategies for Teaching Strings: Building a Successful String and Orchestra Program - Donald Hamann & Robert Gillespie*
- *Teaching Music Through Performance in Orchestra Vol. 1-3; GIA pub. inc.*

Kid Friendly Videos

- Classical Music Mash-Up:
 - <https://youtu.be/7OYkWSW7u4k>
- 2 Cellos Thunderstruck:
 - <https://youtu.be/uT3SBzmDxGk>
- 2 Cellos Smooth Criminal:
 - <https://youtu.be/Mx0xCi1jaUM?list=RDuT3SBzmDxGk>
- Optus Whale Song:
 - <https://youtu.be/A-dR3uEvDSQ>
- Elephants Dance to Suzuki Violinist
 - <https://youtu.be/QaFaelwEaL4>



Things NOT to Do When A Non-String Player Asks for Help

i.e. What Kristi & Kim encountered when asking for help

- Tell the teacher “I don’t work with beginners.”
- Tell the students “too bad your teacher isn’t a real string player.”
- Ignore them. (Return phone calls, email or refer them.)
- Don’t charge them \$\$ to bow a grade 2 piece.
- It’s about the kids, not everyone’s egos.

IN CONCLUSION...

- Please be willing to help.
- It is about the kids!!

