

# **How Did They Learn?**

*An Overview of Violin Pedagogy with an Emphasis on Amateur Violinists*

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## Definition of Amateur Musician

What is an amateur musician? The word amateur is a derivative of the Latin verb *amo* meaning: to love. Therefore, amateur musician means: to love playing music. Common usage of the term, however, often differs from this meaning. Some of the definitions of amateur found in the Oxford English Dictionary include: 1)“one who loves or is fond of,” and, 2)“one who cultivates something as a pastime, as distinguished from one who prosecutes it professionally; hence, sometimes used disparagingly, as—dabbler, or superficial student or worker.”<sup>1</sup> It is this second definition, a condescending view of amateur musicians as being inferior dabblers, that often prevails in our era. Historically, this has not always been the case. As one author noted: “At other times and places, musical amateurism has carried with it a very high level of status indeed, a status significantly higher than that of professionalism.”<sup>2</sup> For example:

In the Medieval and Renaissance periods, distinctions of ability between professional and amateur musicians were not at all clear: the professional made his living with music, whereas the amateur—often of the aristocratic class—had the luxury of making music for the sheer love of it, and amateurs often outstripped professionals in the quality of their training and musical skills! History is dotted with such musical amateurs: King David, singer and lyre player; Frederick the Great, flutist; Thomas Jefferson, violinist. The late Renaissance composer Gesualdo was an aristocratic amateur whose economic independence freed him to make audacious experiments with harmony, and—more recently—Charles Ives’ profession as an insurance mogul gave him the financial resources to experiment boldly without worrying about pandering to the public or even to the critics. amateur musicians, no less than their professional brethren, follow in the footsteps of giants.”<sup>3</sup>

Up through the early twentieth century, it was fairly common for individuals to be amateur musicians. Musicologist Ralph P. Locke examined factors which shaped the developmental path of art music in America, and found that one of the primary differences between those who attended concerts in the early twentieth century and those who go to concerts today, is that concert attendees in the past were often musical amateurs.

Locke explained:

Art music was hardly a new or foreign experience for many first-time concertgoers, whether they were housewives or lawyers, schoolteachers or college students. Quite the contrary, the music of the opera house and the concert hall was a direct extension of the primarily European or plainly European-derived repertoires that many members of the audience—from the rising classes as well as, or even more than, the elite—regularly sang or played with relatives or friends at home, or in the church choir or amateur choral society (thanks to Lowell Mason and his co-reformers), or in the town band. This is perhaps the most striking difference between the concertgoer of a hundred years ago and of today: whether interested in “classical” or “popular” music, she or he was often not only a consumer but an active and sometimes interactive player or singer.<sup>4</sup>

Numerous factors contributed to a decline of musical amateurs in the twentieth century, including technological advances that led to the widespread availability of recorded music.

Musicians such John Philip Sousa predicted that the phonograph and other music recording devices would produce dire consequences in our musical culture:

Sousa feared the replacement of music making with passive listening; the gradual silencing of the town band, the amateur singer and pianist, ‘until there will be left only the mechanical device and the professional executants.’ ‘Wherever there is a phonograph the musical instrument is displaced. The time is coming when no one will be ready to submit himself to the ennobling discipline of learning music. . . Everyone will have their ready made or ready pirated music in their cupboards.’<sup>5</sup>

Another interesting factor that led to a decline in musical amateurs in the early twentieth century, was a trend for concert audiences to become educated, passive, listeners: “Active amateurism was supplanted by a culture of musical connoisseurship grounded in the cultivation of high orders of ordinary literacy. Musical education became highly dependent on reading about music.”<sup>6</sup>

Some individuals, alarmed by a decline in active music making, suggested that an increase in musical amateurs would help elevate musical culture, a view that is applicable today:

Berlin music critic and polemicist Karl Storck closed the second edition of his *History of Music* with the lament that musical culture was at a startlingly low point. The cause of the “impoverishment” of musical culture, Storck thought, was that music was no longer practiced in the home. Chamber music, for example, had become exclusively concert music. The level of musical education left the public without the capacity for true musical judgment, a fact that, in turn, made vulgar popular musical taste the norm. Despite the growth in the size of the audience, the numbers of those who could “take part” in musical life had grown smaller. The need was for a new form of *Gebrauchskunst* (practical art), written by professionals, which could encourage the revival of a high level of amateurism.<sup>7</sup>

Amateur violinists, those who love playing the violin, have existed since the early days of the violin. Whether they were members of the aristocracy, playing for pleasure, or schoolchildren learning how to play the violin in a group class, amateur violinists have played an important role in the history of string education.

### **Historical Background of the Violin**

Before discussing the history of violin pedagogy, it seems relevant to first consider: when did the violin emerge, who played the violin, and why did they play it? Scholars have found it difficult to determine the definitive origins of the violin. John Dilworth noted this when he stated:

Tracing the origins of the violins is not easy. Instruments played with a bow appear in European carvings and illustrations from around 900 AD, but interpretation is difficult, and the names given for them in texts vary and overlap. Broadly speaking, however, they fall into four categories: the rebec, the medieval and Renaissance fiddle, the *lira da braccio* and the viol.<sup>8</sup>

Although it is outside the scope of the present paper to consider in detail contributions early stringed instruments may have made towards the evolution of the violin, research by Peter Holman indicates that the violin family emerged between 1495-1505 in Italy. Most histories of the violin tend to rely on iconographical evidence such as visual depictions of the violin in artwork in order to date its beginning. Holman, however, sought to establish the date of the violin's inception by examining how the early violin was used and played. He determined that the first usage of the violin was in a consort. Violin music seems to support

Holman's assertion, because the majority of violin literature from the 16th and early 17th century appears to be for violin consorts, and it was not until the mid-17th century that solo repertoire for the violin developed.<sup>9</sup> Neal Zaslaw described who was likely to play the violin during these early years:

During the first part of its meteoric career, the violin was played in public by formally trained professionals, servants, and illiterate folk musicians. Ladies and gentlemen, when entertaining themselves in private circumstances, preferred the elegant sounds of viols and lutes to the raucous power of brash fiddles. The violin appears first to have entered 'polite society' as a consort instrument.<sup>10</sup>

Holman suggested that the viol consort and violin consort were developed for the same reason: "to provide an alternative to wind instruments in polyphonic music." Holman further clarified the different uses for these consorts:

Throughout the 16th century the two families were used as alternatives by professional musicians; the soft sonorous viol, with its reedy, incisive tone, was ideal for contrapuntal music, and for accompanying the voice, while the sprightly violin quickly became the favourite instrument for dance music.<sup>11</sup>

There is even some indication that in the early years of the violin's introduction, violin and viol consorts may have been used interchangeably. Holman stated: "From the way that the string consort is described in court documents in the first decade of its service in England, it looks as if it used viols and violins interchangeably until the end of Mary's reign."<sup>12</sup>

Viols and violins also differed in terms of their difference in social status. David Boyden referred to this when he stated:

For the most part, reputable people and musicians in the sixteenth century thought of violins as instruments of lowly origin played mainly by professionals. In comparison, viols and lutes, both belonging to an older and more aristocratic tradition, were played not only by professionals but also by amateurs and gentlemen, who ardently admired these instruments. To play the viol or especially the lute was considered an admissible, even highly desirable, part of the general education of the well-born; and these instruments enjoyed a vogue among persons of social standing, who as amateurs generally regarded music as a commendable avocation, but not as a proper profession. The violin enjoyed none of this social prestige.<sup>13</sup>

Jambe de Fer, author of the 1556 treatise, *Epitome musical*, described the fretless appearance of the violin, how it was tuned, and noted that the violin was primarily used to

perform dance music, or sometimes double vocal parts. His views regarding the lowly status of the violin are apparent in the following passage:

The violin [*violon*] is very different from the viol [*viola*]. First of all it has only four strings, which are tuned in fifths . . . and in each of the said strings there are four tones [*tons*] in such a way that in four strings there are as many tones as in the five strings of the viol. The form of the body is smaller, flatter, and in sound it is much harsher [*rude*]; it has no frets . . . [tuning instructions follow] and the French and Italians differ in no way as regards playing the instrument. Why do you call one type of instrument viols and the other violins? We call viols those with which gentlemen, merchants, and other virtuous people pass their time . . . I have not illustrated the said violin because you can think of it as resembling the viol, added to which there are few persons who use it save those who make a living from it through their labour.<sup>14</sup>

Early writings about violin playing tend to be descriptive such as de Fer's description of the violin. This dearth of pedagogical information can be attributed to the apprenticeship system of musical instruction that prevailed during this era among professional musicians.

Walter Woodfill referred to the apprenticeship system when he stated:

While originally developed primarily to serve economic ends, the system of apprenticeship, the means by which guilds and companies discharged their educational function, had taken on independent life of its own by the late Middle Ages, so deeply had its roots grown into the social fabric: many companies tried to maintain the system of apprenticeship long after its economic usefulness to them had disappeared. Musicians found it as valuable in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries as it had ever been, and the educational function of their company ranked second to none. Besides serving economic ends, the system provided the sole school for professional secular musical training, contributed to the preservation of order and morality and tended to maintain or raise standards of musical performance and professional discipline. Traditionally apprentices lived with their masters, who were expected to bring them up in religion and good citizenship as well as in the customs and techniques of their trade.<sup>15</sup>

It should also be recognized that professional musicians, particularly those employed by the court, were often family members, therefore, written instructional treatises would be unnecessary, particularly when information was passed down from father to son. Holman described the connection between family relationships and how court musician positions were awarded.

Like most court business, the outcome of such contests [royal musicians chosen by the sovereign] tended to depend more on family connection, influence, or

chance than on the merits of the case. The instrumental consorts, in particular, employed members of the same family over large periods of time. Four generations of Lupos served in the court string consort, from 1540 until the Civil War; there were Bassanos for even longer in the wind consorts, for Henry Bassano did not die until 1665. Such nepotism was unremarkable in a system founded on family interest, and in an age when professional musical skills were commonly passed down from father to son.<sup>16</sup>

**Music Appendix 1: *Fantasia*, violin consort music composed by Thomas Lupo, an English court musician from 1591 until his death in 1628.<sup>17</sup>**

**Early Violin Pedagogical Material**

As mentioned earlier, during the sixteenth century, music for the violin primarily consisted of consort music for dancing.<sup>18</sup> Some scholars have observed that some of this consort music may have been used for pedagogical purposes. “Surviving manuscripts suggest that, in Elizabeth I’s reign, consort music was used for didactic purposes as much as for social recreation.”<sup>19</sup>

In the seventeenth century, a new form of violin music emerged: solo violin music. Zaslow described this occurrence:

In the early 17th century, in Italy again, as the polyphonic style was giving way to a new style of solo singing in madrigals and motets as well as in the newly-created genres of opera, the violin struck out on its own. Italian composers began to write autonomous music for one, two, or more violins, usually with basso continuo. No longer supporting singing and dancing or serving as an anonymous member of a consort, the violin. . . aspired to the same flights of fancy and bursts of virtuosity granted the heroes and heroines of opera.<sup>20</sup>

In addition to the development of solo violin music, the seventeenth century also marked the emergence of pedagogical directions for violinists. Treatises such as Francesco Rognoni's *Selva de Varii Passaggi* (1620), provided explicit musical examples and directions for violinists to follow in order to perform *passaggi* properly, and Gasparo Zanetti's *Il scolaro . . . per imparar a suonare di violino, et altri stromenti* (1645), contained numerous bowing indications, as well as a violin tablature of the music. Pedagogical information relevant to the violin can also be gleaned from instrumental treatises written for other instruments such as

Ganassi's two-volume viol tutor : *Regola Rubertina* (Venice, 1542, 1543), one of the most significant instrumental treatises in the 16th century. Technical instructions provided in Ganassi's tutor included: posture, bowing and fingering techniques, string crossing, shifting, double-stops and diminution guidance.<sup>21</sup> General musical directions for a variety of instruments were also present in treatises such as Giulio Caccini's *Le nuove Musiche* (1602), one of the earliest codifications of ornamentation, and embellishment treatises such as those by Diego Ortiz (1553) and Giovanni Bassono (1585).

### **Music Treatises for Amateurs**

During the 16<sup>th</sup> century, large numbers of instructional treatises for amateur musicians were published. Thurston Dart and William Coates commented on the heightened interest of amateurs in music instruction during this time period:

By 1575 or so there was every sign of a steadily increasing public and private demand for vocal and instrumental music. London bookshops sold tutors for the lute and cittern, books of printed music paper, and collections of printed and manuscript music mainly imported from the Low Countries; musical instruments were becoming less costly, music teaching less exclusive, musical notation less abstruse.<sup>22</sup>

David Price offered several reasons why amateurs became so interested in music literacy and performance during this era:

By the middle decades of the sixteenth century, and in some places even before then, the reading and writing of music had taken its place within a broadening spectrum of educational possibilities. Literate musical ability was reflected in and stimulated by literature, by travel, by the entertainment or imitation of royalty, and by social ambition. Perhaps this developing literacy was to be seen most clearly in the lives of members of the governing classes but nonetheless simpler expressions of the pleasure of reading and writing music revealed themselves among all classes of society. Indeed the growing number of musical tutors, primers and treatises suggest that a revolution in musical education accompanied that in general standards of literacy, thereby creating its own class of potential musical patrons.<sup>23</sup>

Examples of musical instruction for amateurs include vocal tutors such as Thomas Morley's *A Plaine and Easie Introduction* (1597), lute tutors geared for amateurs such as Adrien Le Roy's English version of *A briefe and easye instrution to learne the tableture*



(1568), William Barley's *A new booke of tabliture* (1596), Thomas Morley's *The first booke of consort lessons* (1599), and Alfoanso Ferrabosco's *Lessons for 1, 2, and 3 viols* (1609).

### **Violin Tutors for Amateurs**

Towards the end of the seventeenth century and beginning of the eighteenth century, numerous violin instruction books were published. These violin tutors were designed for amateurs, not professional violinists:

In the professional tradition of the violin, instruction was given orally from master to pupil, and when violin methods first appeared in the 17th century they were aimed primarily at the amateur, not the professional violinist. Methods for advanced players hardly appeared before 1750.<sup>24</sup>

Boyden commented on the popularity of these early violin method books:

The first violin tutors were essentially ‘do-it-yourself’ books. Often regarded as a modern phenomenon, such books flourished during the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries not only in music but in many other fields as well, and they furnish a vivid social commentary on the times.... Perhaps more important, the appearance and continuing publication of these elementary manuals show that the violin had ceased to be the sole property and concern of professional violinists and that it had begun to appeal to a far broader social group among players.<sup>25</sup>

Between 1658 and 1731, over thirty amateur violin instruction books were published.<sup>26</sup> Some of the more notable publications include John Lenton's *The Gentleman's Diversion* (1693); John Playford's *A Brief Introducion to the Skill of Musick*, second revised edition (1658), which contains a section entitled "Playing on the Treble Violin;" *Nolens Volens or You shall learn to Play on the Violin whether you will or no* (1695, author anonymous) and *The Self-Instructor on the Violin* (1695, author anonymous).

A minimal amount of technical advice was found in these early instruction books, and most simply contained fingerboard directions and a few simple pieces. Many of these publications appear to have been published solely to satisfy public demand for new violin music:

The latter[violin tutors], printed in considerable numbers in the last years of the seventeenth century and first quarter of the eighteenth century, point to the rise of a potent number of amateur violinists and to the voracious appetite for violin music. Each violin tutor and each subsequent edition of the same tutor used entirely different pieces of music—obviously to satisfy the demand for new, if easy, music.<sup>27</sup>

The rising amateur market apparently led composers to begin composing instrumental music specifically for amateurs. Historian Michael Talbot observed that composers began simplifying their music to make it more appropriate for the amateur market:

Italian composers began to write music with the partly amateur northern European market in mind. The result was an increased sensitivity to fashion, a certain cosmopolitanism, a restraint in matters of instrumental technique and an avoidance of those elements of *bizzarria* (deliberate strangeness) which might captivate an Italian connoisseur but would be found freakish and unnatural by a Dutch or English gentleman. There were also commercial consequences: it became profitable for the publisher actually to pay the composer for his works—provided, of course, that he kept for himself the receipts from sales.<sup>28</sup>

An example of music composed and published with amateurs in mind, is the following excerpt from Vivaldi's Op. 5 Violin Sonatas, published in 1716 by the Amsterdam publisher Estienne Roger.

### **Music Appendix 2: *Allemanda* from Sonata No. IV, Op. 5 by Antonio Vivaldi**

Some composers, such as violinist Nicolo Matteis, wrote music that contained clear pedagogical benefits for amateurs. Peter Walls commented on the didactic nature of Matteis's violin music:

Matteis has a very special claim to having taught the English the Italian style. There is a didactic strain running through the *Ayres* which makes it possible to regard them almost as an advanced tutor, or at least as a set of graded etudes. . . . Thinking of the third and fourth parts of the *Ayres* almost as a tutorial manual and comparing this with the naive instruction books of Playford and even Lenton, it seems that Matteis more than deserves his reputation for showing the English a new way.<sup>29</sup>

### **Music Appendix 3: *Arietta No. 62* from *Ayres for the Violin* (c. 1685) by Nicola Matteis**

Although amateur violinists had no impact upon technical advances in early violin performance practices, some scholars claim amateur musicians helped elevate the social status of violin playing.

The phenomenon of the amateur violinist is of no importance in the technical advance of the violin in the eighteenth century, but the increasing number of amateur violinists—literally, ‘lovers’ of the violin—has an important effect in raising the social status of the violin to a position it had not enjoyed when solely in the hands of professionals.<sup>30</sup>

### **Traditional Violin Pedagogy**

Instructional material designed for professional violinists did not begin to appear until the mid-eighteenth century. Many authors consider Francesco Geminiani’s treatise, *The Art of Playing on the Violin* (1751), to have been one of the first violin treatises to detail specific instruction for professional violinists. Geminiani’s treatise is a systematic explanation of violin playing. He covered topics such as: the proper playing position for the violin and bow, scales, fingering, position-work and shifting, bowing and bowing variations, double-stops, arpeggios, ornamentation, expression and dynamics. Twelve new compositions towards the end of the tutor were simply labeled "compositions," and are the equivalent of modern etudes.

### **Music Appendix 4: *Composition VI* from *The Art of Playing on the Violin* by Geminiani**

Musicologist Robin Stowell observed that it was not until the late eighteenth-century that pedagogical material specifically labeled as etudes became widely available for students of the violin:

Early writings about violin playing were descriptive and included little of musical content. However, as violin treatises began to multiply and their texts became more detailed, their musical content generally became more copious, many incorporating short dance pieces or even substantial etude-like compositions designed to assist in the mastery of particular technical problems. Pieces in binary form were most common, but sonata, variation, fugue and other forms, including two-movement structures, were also employed. By the end of the eighteenth century, several books composed solely of studies had begun to appear independently as pedagogical works in their own right, marking the beginning of the enormous etude literature of the nineteenth century.<sup>31</sup>

Although the focus of this paper is the amateur violin student, the following selected list provides a chronology of traditional violin instructional material.

### Selected Chronological List of Traditional Violin Instructional Material

1751	Geminiani. <i>The Art of Playing on the Violin</i> . London.
1756	Mozart, Leopold. <i>A Treatise on the Fundamental Principles of Violin Playing</i> . Ausburg.
1756	Tartini. <i>L'arte del arco</i> . Paris.
1761	L'abbe le fils. <i>Principes du violon</i> . Paris.
1771	Tartini. <i>Traite des agremens</i> . Paris.
1782	Corrette. <i>L'Art de se perfectionner dans le violon</i> . Paris.
1791	Galeazzi. <i>Elementi teorico-pratici</i> . Rome.
1796	Kreutzer. <i>42 études ou caprices</i> .
1798	Cartier. <i>L'Art du violon</i> . Paris.
1798	Woldemar, Michel. <i>Methode pour le violon</i> . Paris.
1800	Gavinies. <i>Les vingt-quatre matinees</i> . Paris.
1803	Baillot, Rode and Kreutzer. <i>Methode de violon</i> . Paris.
c1800s	Fiorillo. <i>Etudes de violon formant 36 caprices</i> . Vienna.
c1815	Rode. <i>24 caprices enforme d'etudes</i> . Berlin.
1820	Paganini. <i>24 capricci</i> . Milan.
1824	Campagnoli. <i>Nouvelle methode de la mecanique progressive du jeu de violon, op. 21</i> . Leipzig.
1832	Spohr. <i>Violinschule</i> . Vienna.
1834	Baillot. <i>L'Art du violon</i> . Paris.
1844	Alard. <i>Ecole du violon</i> . Paris.
1850	Dont. <i>Etudes for the violin</i> .
1854	Wieniawski. <i>L'ecole moderne, op. 10</i> . Lepizig
1855	Dancla. <i>Methode elementaire</i> .
1858	de Beriot. <i>Methode de violon, op. 102</i> . Paris.
1864	David. <i>Violinschule</i> . Leipzig.
1867	Kayser. <i>36 Studies for violin, op. 20</i> .
1873	Courvoisier <i>The technics of violin playing</i> .
1875	Schradieck. <i>School of violin-technics</i> .
1880	Mazas. <i>75 Etudes melodiques et progressives pour violon, op. 36</i> . Brunswick.
1881	Sevcik. <i>Schule der Violintechnik, op. 1</i> . Prague.
1895	Sevcik. <i>Schule der Bogentechnik, op. 2</i> . Leipzig.
1902-5	Joachim and Moser. <i>Violinschule</i> . 3 vols. Berlin.

1916	Capet. <i>La Technique superieure de l'archet</i> . Paris.
1921	Auer. <i>Violin Playing as I Teach It</i> . New York.
1923-8	Flesch. <i>Die Kunst des Violin-Spiels</i> . Berlin.
1941	Dounis. <i>New aids to Technical Development, op. 27</i> . London.
1962	Galamian. <i>Principles of Violin Playing and Teaching</i> . Englewood Cliffs, NJ.
1963	Galamian and Neumann. <i>Contemporary Violin Technique</i> . New York.
1961	Havas, Kato. <i>A New Approach to Violin Playing</i> . London.
1964	Havas, Kato. <i>The Twelve Lesson Course in a New approach to Violin Playing</i> . London.
1969	Suzuki, Shinichi. <i>Nurtured by Love</i> . New York.
1970	<i>Suzuki violin school</i> . Princeton, New Jersey.
1971	Menuhin. <i>Six Lessons with Yehudi Menuhin</i> . London.
1971	Rolland, Paul. <i>Prelude to String Playing</i> . New York.
1974	Rolland, Paul. <i>The Teaching of Action in String Playing</i> . New York.
1981	Havas, Kato and Jerome Landsman. <i>Freedom to play: A string class teaching method</i> . New York.
1986	Menuhin. <i>The Compleat Violinist: Thoughts, Exercises, Reflections of an Itinerant Violinist</i> . New York.

It should be noted that two string pedagogues listed above, Paul Rolland and Shinichi Suzuki, have also exerted an influence on many contemporary amateur string players.

Rolland pioneered new concepts regarding freedom of motion in violin playing as demonstrated in *The Teaching of Action in String Playing*, a University of Illinois String Teaching Research Project. Rolland produced seventeen demonstration films that correlated with his method book *Prelude to String Playing*, and many string educators have utilized his theories in teaching strings.

Suzuki's methodology, also referred to as Talent Education, is centered around the "mother-tongue method," defined by Suzuki in the following terms:

Talent Education has realized that all children in the world show their splendid capacities by speaking and understanding their mother language, thus displaying the original power of the human mind. Is it not probably that this mother language method holds the key to human development? Talent Education has applied this method to the teaching of music: children, taken without previous aptitude or intelligence tests of any kind, have almost without exception made great progress<sup>32</sup>

*Key elements of Suzuki's Talent Education include:*

- 1) The philosophy that all children can be educated through the proper environment, and that environmental factors are more important in the musical growth of a child than so-called talent.
- 2) Listening is emphasized, and students are encouraged to frequently listen to recordings of music they are learning.
- 3) Parents are active participants in the student's learning process
- 4) Students begin lessons at an early age, sometimes as young as two.
- 5) Students learn to play by rote.
- 6) Each piece is memorized, even after reading music has commenced.
- 7) Technique is learned through the repertoire found in Suzuki's music books.
- 8) Teachers are encouraged to use physical activity games to free the body from tensions.
- 9) Frequent performances are encouraged.
- 10) Teachers emphasize proper posture, good sound production, and secure intonation.<sup>33</sup>

A 1996 article cited the following statistics regarding the number of Suzuki pupils in America: "More than 5,000 teachers belong to the SAA [Suzuki Association of the Americas] and use Suzuki's philosophy and methodology with more than 150,000 students."<sup>34</sup>

### **Conservatory System**

Although the apprenticeship system and private instruction were the primary means of instruction for professional violinists, musicians were also trained in church cathedral schools and conservatories. The precursor of modern conservatories were 16<sup>th</sup>-century Italian orphanages: *cori* and *ospedales*. One of the most renowned *ospedales* was *Pio Ospedale della Peta (la Pieta)* in Venice, an orphanage for illegitimate, orphaned, or abandoned girls.

Antonio Vivaldi was affiliated with *la Pieta* from 1703-1740, and composed hundreds of his concertos and symphonies expressly for student and faculty associates of *la Pieta*.

Successful state-run music conservatories were founded in locations such as: Paris (1795), Prague (1811), Vienna (1817), London (1822), and Brussels (1832). The Leipzig Conservatory, founded by Felix Mendelssohn in 1843, quickly achieved an international reputation for excellence and became a model for many conservatories throughout the world.

Keene described the purpose of early European conservatories:

In many instances the European conservatories were sponsored by governments for the purpose of preserving a country's musical culture. Ordinarily, they were free for all, their directors realizing that musical talent was no respecter of social class. In general the curriculum consisted of applied music, solfeggio, harmony, and other theoretical branches. The aim of the conservatories was to produce excellent performers with broad musical backgrounds.<sup>35</sup>

In the late 1800s, six major conservatories opened in the United States: Oberlin (1865); Boston (1867); Cincinnati (1867); New England (1867); Chicago Musical College (1867); Peabody (1868). Sollinger described how these American conservatories sought to do more than merely educate the musically gifted:

Today the term, conservatory, connotes an institution accepting only the most talented students for professional training. While the nineteenth century conservatory prepared many fine professional musicians, its philosophy extended beyond that goal. The founders, such as Eben Tourjee of the New England Conservatory, were concerned with uplifting the cultural level of the whole nation. In order to educate as many students as possible, the conservatory system of class instruction was used and students of all ages and levels of ability were accepted, not just the talented few.<sup>36</sup>

An indication of the popularity of conservatory instrumental classes is indicated by enrollment figures at the Boston and New England Conservatories:

Conservatory founders were concerned with the whole nation's culture and with students of all ages. As a result of these broad aims (and for financial reasons) large numbers of students were admitted for study. From 1867 to 1886 at the Boston Conservatory, a total of 15,000 students had been taught; from 1867 to 1878 at the New England Conservatory, a total of 14,000 students had enrolled. Many additional thousands were taught in

conservatories established in all major cities and many smaller towns.<sup>37</sup>

### **Conservatory Class Instrumental Instruction**

Conservatory students often received instrumental instruction in group classes.

Phillips described why this was necessary when he described the Leipzig Conservatory: “All subjects, including instrumental performance, were taught in classes, a procedure which was mandatory, if the logistical and financial demands of the new educational venture were to be met.”<sup>38</sup>

Lowell Mason, a well-known music educator from the United States, described instrumental classes he observed at the Leipzig Conservatory in 1852:

Objections have been made to the system of instruction in classes at the Leipzig Conservatory, but these are applicable to other studies as well as music. To be sure, where a pupil in a *private lesson* receives the undivided attention of his instructor for the space of an hour, in the *class* he receives only a fraction of the same. But this comparatively trifling evil is more than counterbalanced by the advantages as we have hinted above. The pupil becomes acquainted with many different styles, sees the beauties and faults of each, and is imperceptibly led in this way to the formation of his own. Again, by being constantly compelled to perform before others, he cannot fail to acquire a degree of confidence, which is beneficial and necessary to every public performer.<sup>39</sup>

Conservatories in the United States patterned their instrumental instruction after the Leipzig Conservatory. The following description in the Oberlin Conservatory catalogue explains their use of instrumental classes:

Those who secure their education by means of private lessons alone, know little of the difficulties to be conquered, which lie outside of their own individual experience; and when they come to impart instruction themselves, they are met, perhaps at the very outset, with difficulties which they never noticed, and know not how to overcome. Pupils often see defects in a classmate which they do not find in themselves, and are thus enabled to see how the teacher manages and corrects them; so that when, in after years, the same difficulties are seen in their own pupils, they are not at a loss to know how to deal with them.<sup>40</sup>

An 1871 bulletin from the New England Conservatory also described how the class method of instruction was an integral part of their instructional program:



Mendelssohn, whose judgment in musical matters none will question, says, ‘By the participation of several in the same lessons and in the same studies, a true musical feeling is awakened and kept fresh among the pupils; it promotes industry, and spurs on to emulation; it is a preservative against one sidedness of education and taste,—a tendency against which every artist, even in the student years, should be upon his guard. Upon the principle here advanced, is based what is now known as the Conservatory system of instruction. The great music schools of Leipsic [sic], Prague, and Paris, and other important centres of the science, owe their success, in large measure, to this system, and for the reasons that by it the best instruction is made available to the greatest number, and the greatest proficiency acquired on the part of the pupil in the shortest space of time.’<sup>41</sup>

The conservatory system of class instruction was the precursor to a form of violin instruction still commonly used today: master classes. Sollinger described the relationship between early conservatory classes and modern master classes:

Today, from time to time, master classes are held by artist teachers in which a group of advanced students is instructed by a teacher or performer who has achieved an outstanding reputation. This is a remainder of the conservatory system of graded classes in which students were carefully classified according to achievement and divided into any number of classes from preparatory to advanced. Different professors taught each level for varying tuition fees; the lowest grade was cheapest and the highest was the most expensive. The master teacher, who headed the department and dictated teaching methods, accepted only the most advanced students in to his master class—from which we get our modern term.<sup>42</sup>

### **Classes for the Masses in England**

During the late eighteenth and early nineteenth century, the Industrial Revolution signaled abrupt changes in the lives of many. Changes in social and economic order occurred as men and women, accustomed to agricultural pursuits, moved to cities to work in factories and other forms of large-scale industrial production.

In cities such as London, class distinctions divided the wealthy upper-class from members of the lower-class. In the 1820’s, philanthropic efforts by the upper-class sought to educate and improve the lives of lower-class factory workers through educational organizations called Mechanics Institutes and other endeavors such as “Concerts for the People.” Although the curriculum offered in Mechanics Institutes was initially designed to upgrade the literacy of adult factory workers, this utilitarian concept was liberalized and

eventually led to the inclusion of art and music courses at most institutes. Percy Young, author of *A History of British Music*, commented on the ulterior motives of the upper-class to placate workers through such courses: “The widespread cultivation of choral music by the working classes (happily self-supporting) was also approved as an aid to pacification of unruly temperaments or tranquilization of unhappy conditions.”<sup>43</sup> Hundreds of thousands of adults participated in sight-singing classes, and some British music scholars have described this time period as “The Sight-Singing Century.”<sup>44</sup>

“Concerts for the People” were also designed to upgrade the quality of life for the working masses. Mackerness, author of *A Social History of English Music*, spoke of these concerts:

The ‘Music for the People’ campaign, which had a considerable success in the last three decades of the nineteenth century, was prompted by the desire to show that the underprivileged had the ability to appreciate good music if only it were offered to them...in London such organizations as the Kyrle Society, the People’s Entertainment Society and the National Sunday League were formed to break down the barriers which seemingly existed between the lower classes and the full enjoyment of music.<sup>45</sup>

Scholes addressed the reason why free or inexpensive cultural opportunities were provided during this era:

Perhaps all large cities have, at one time or another had some organization of this nature [Concerts for the People]. The *MT* Century was the People’s Century. There was a great desire to give the People their share of the good things of life and also, as in the Mainzer, Hullah and Curwen [sight-singing] movement, to help them to make their own good things.<sup>46</sup>

Massive participation in sight-singing classes and inexpensive “Concerts for the People,” led to the introduction of violin classes for adults. Many of these early adult violin classes were patterned after sight-singing classes. For example, violin classes were offered at the Birkbeck Mechanics Institute in 1839, as well as at other locations such as “classes for amateurs” held at the People’s Place School of Music in 1887. Keith Adams, author of a

series of articles on adult violin classes in England, described the connection between singing classes and violin classes: “Singing classes were common and the transition to violin classes necessitates no great difference in teaching technique.”<sup>47</sup> A reviewer for the April 1882 edition of *The Musical Times* described an adult violin classes at the Midland Mechanics Institute in Birmingham, England:

Some 400 or 500 raw recruits may be seen fiddling like one, in more or less correct unison, every Saturday evening, at the modest cost of one penny per lesson! The ordeal must be a trying one to the musical sensibilities of the teacher, Mr. Rickard, but it is scarcely so hard as his experience on the opening night of the class, when some 200 embryo Paganinis presented themselves for instruction with only 40 instruments among them. The establishment of this violin class has naturally given a great impetus to the demand for the choicest Cremonas which can be produced at a price not exceeding 5s. 6d. each and the warehouses of most of the local instrument-dealers have been fairly cleared of resin. Few of these enthusiastic tyros, it is to be feared, will be qualified for places in the Festival band next August; but it is at all events satisfactory to know that there is so much orchestral raw material in a town which has not hitherto been conspicuous for its devotion to the instrumental branch of the musical art.<sup>48</sup>

Heated debate regarding the merits of violin classes raged in British music periodicals. Some musicians apparently felt such classes threatened their livelihood as the following 1896 article indicates:

Local music teachers view with concern the gradual development of the teaching functions of the musical section of the Midland Institute, which has this season expanded into a regular academy of music, at nominal fees for students, with which no private teacher can pretend to compete...The nomination of Mr. Stockley as honorary principal of the school is a guarantee for the soundness of the scheme and the quality of the instruction, but it need scarcely be pointed out how seriously the success of the undertaking must affect the position and earnings of unattached members of the musical profession here.<sup>49</sup>

A similar view was expressed by a violin teacher who stated that he could not compete with the low terms of group violin classes:

I was some five or six years ago, for a short time in a town where there was a musical school, and I was obliged to leave it. In the east End when pupils come to me and ask my terms they say: ‘Oh, I can go to the People’s Palace and learn much cheaper.’ It is ruining the profession. I do not say it is wrong, but I think we are bound to hear both sides. The profession in London is done for, in fact, by these schools being opened here.<sup>50</sup>

Some violin teachers expressed favor for group violin instruction:

I have had 35 years experience in teaching the violin, both privately and in classes, and think this total condemnation of the class system quite uncalled for. All teachers will certainly agree that lessons received in a class will not be as good as those received privately. But given a good teacher, there is no reason why the violin may not be taught satisfactorily in classes. As sufficient proof of this, 15 of my pupils, all taught in classes, passed the college of Violinists' examination for different grades last June. There are thousands of violin students throughout the country who are quite unable to pay anything but a small fee for lessons, and but for this system would be unable to get lessons at all. It is not everyone who can afford to take lessons from 'the best professor in town.' No doubt there are many fourth class teachers...who spoil every pupil they get, whether they have them as private pupils, or in classes.<sup>51</sup>

Many violin classes appear to have used traditional violin literature in teaching students, as indicated by the following description of the instructional material used in Birkbeck Institute adult violin classes in 1896:

Beginners. In this class the method of holding the violin and drawing the bow correctly, and the rudiments of violin playing generally, are explained in the most simple manner suitable for those having no previous knowledge either of music or the instrument. Elementary and Advanced. Study of fantasias, concertos, duets, trios, and exercises by the best masters, including Kayser, Mazas, De Beriot, Alard, Krommer, Kalliwoda, Papini, Rameau, Wieniawski, Hauser, Spohr, Dancla, Viotti, Vieuxtemps, Pleyel, Mendelssohn, Beethoven, etc.<sup>52</sup>

Although the immense popularity of sight-singing classes resulted in the 1872 incorporation of sight-singing classes into British schools, instructional material used in adult violin classes was purportedly too difficult for children. T. Mee Pattison, musical advisor of the London-based J. G. Murdoch & Co. music publishing house and instrument manufacturer, enlisted the support of his company to promote violin class instruction for schoolchildren by providing all of the supplies needed: violins, teaching materials, and teachers, for one inclusive, inexpensive price. Students were allowed to pay for their violins outfits in installments---generally, one shilling per week. This method was named in honor of the first group violin class to experiment with this approach: the All Saints' National School in

Maidstone, England, and is sometimes known as the Maidstone Movement.<sup>53</sup> In 1897, the Murdoch Company formed the Maidstone School Orchestra Association (MSOA) to promote this method. At the height of the MSOA's popularity, 400,000 British schoolchildren, one in ten of the state school population, participated in Maidstone School Orchestra classes.<sup>54</sup>

Charles H. Farnsworth, a prominent American music educator expressed his amazement at the results achieved by Maidstone violin classes.

I heard a concert given by the school orchestras in and about London, in Alexandra Palace, where 1450 youthful instrumentalists took part. It is astonishing to see what can be done under these conditions. The idea of teaching the violin in classes strikes one at first as almost impossible, but here is a movement where just this thing is done, not in school time, but outside, yet under the direction of school authorities....It is estimated that in London alone there are over 300 of these violin classes with an average membership of twenty-five and that there is scarcely a town in England where there are not one or more of these classes.<sup>55</sup>

Significant events in the developmental path of the Maidstone Movement include the formation of the National Union of School Orchestras (NUSO) in 1905. One of the primary objectives of the NUSO was: "To promote the study and practice of instrumental music among the school children and young people of the Kingdom, by encouraging the formation of school orchestras, and so to elevate the musical taste of the nation as a whole." (NUSO Objective 1). It is interesting to note that this objective is supportive of all orchestral instruments, not the violin exclusively, and a violoncello part to the Maidstone Violin Tutor was published in 1909.<sup>56</sup> Although cellos were occasionally mentioned in reviews of concert performances of MSOA classes, the cello never appears to have achieved the popularity of the violin in MSOA classes. The MSOA also advertised that they would assist schools in the formation of classes for violin, cello, mandolin, brass bands, military bands, drum and fife bands and bugle bands,<sup>57</sup> but there are no indications that any of these instrumental classes achieved notable success. Activities sponsored by the NUSO included: combined group

concerts on local and regional levels, and annual music festivals which were held 1905-1938 at such locations such as London's Crystal Palace and Royal Albert Hall. The number of students involved in annual music festivals ranged from 700 in 1905 to 6,650 in 1914 ( *e.g.* the NUSO's 1914 Annual Music Festival at the Crystal Palace featured 3,650 intermediate students performing en masse in an afternoon concert, and 3,000 advanced pupils in an evening concert.<sup>58</sup>

The NUSO also provided opportunities for teachers to share teaching methods; established a system of supervision (inspectors periodically visited each class); sponsored scholarships and awards, and made efforts to encourage students to continue their participation in music once they left day school (a British term comparable to elementary school in the United States). One of the NUSO's objectives states: "To keep in touch with young people after leaving the Day School by means of Evening Classes and Orchestral Societies." (NUSO Objective Seven) NUSO Evening Violin Classes were established in 1906 in various locations such as the Croyland Old Scholars' Orchestral Society in Edmonton to help alleviate problems former MSOA violin students encountered after they graduated such as: "the pupils were not sufficiently advanced to join an adult orchestra" and "home practice was often inconvenient and sometimes monotonous."<sup>59</sup>

An article in the school orchestra periodical published by the NUSO, *The Young Musician*, describes the philosophy underlying MSOA classes: music is for all children, not just the talented few.

Music should occupy a place in the education of all children, whether they possess what is commonly called an "ear for music" or not. Such children, even though they may never achieve technical skill, will be familiarised [sic] with harmony and rhythm. This will unconsciously tend to better-offered minds, greater gracefulness of movement, and more harmonious lives generally.<sup>60</sup>

Features that appear to have contributed to the popularity of the Maidstone violin classes include: convenient packaging of method books, music and instructional materials; the availability of inexpensive; machine-made violins in a variety of sizes (such as small violins for young students); performance opportunities for students to play in large group concerts; and the aforementioned philosophy that music is for all children, not just the talented few. It is interesting to note that many of these features are shared with another violin methodology: the Suzuki Method. Pre-packaged commercial features appear to have contributed to the success of both methods, and as a side-note, it is plausible that Shinichi Suzuki may have heard of the MSOA violin classes through the travels of his father, Masakichi. Masakichi Suzuki founded the Suzuki Violin Factory in Nagoya, Japan in 1900, and by 1910, Masakichi's factory was producing 65,800 violins per year, a number that one author claimed made the Suzuki factory one of the largest violin factories in the world.<sup>61</sup> In 1910, Masakichi went to England for five months (he also visited other European countries).<sup>62</sup> Although it is not clear whether or not Masakichi's trip to England was for research, pleasure or business, his trip to England in 1910 coincided with a time when over 400,000 British pupils participated in Maidstone Movement classes. It is also interesting to note that Masakichi exported violins from his factory, thus he may have explored the possibility of selling to British and European sources, or, he may have been investigated violin manufacturing processes in England and Europe). There also is the possibility that Shinichi heard of MSOA classes during the eight years when Shinichi Suzuki studied the violin in Germany (1920-1928), because MSOA classes and large concerts were still being held in the United Kingdom during this time. There is, however, no conclusive proof that the MSOA provided any impetus or ideas to Masakichi or Shinichi Suzuki. A 1995 query to Shinichi

Suzuki regarding this subject resulted in a reply from his wife, Waltraud, that her husband was too advanced in years to recall details regarding a topic so long ago (personal correspondence).

Although MSOA classes and NUSO Annual Festivals and activities continued in the United Kingdom through the year 1939, circumstances relating to World War II led to the ultimate dissolution of the MSOA. Classes were discontinued during the war due to factors such as the war-time evacuation of children from major cities such as London and the conscription of teachers into military service. The war also contributed to the financial difficulties of the Murdoch Company, and the company dissolved in 1943 for financial reasons. Following World War II, the British government assumed responsibility for school instrumental instruction, and the string methodology that was eventually adopted in the British school system was the Rural Music School Association. It is interesting to note that the most significant and lasting impact of the MSOA appears to have been upon instrumental music in the United States, a topic that will be explored later.<sup>63</sup>

### **Amateur Musicians in America**

The popularity of amateur instrumental music was not limited to Europe. Compton chronicled the musical activities of amateur instrumentalists in America in his dissertation, *Amateur Instrumental Music in America 1765 to 1810*. He noted that amateur musicians flourished during this time period and played a large role in shaping the musical culture in America. Compton grouped amateur players into four categories:

1. Informally trained players with music serving recreational needs.
2. Wealthy young ladies (and gentlemen) for whom music was primarily a social accomplishment.



3. Bandsmen and members of instrumental clubs who joined together for performances, group instruction and social reasons.
4. Serious amateurs who found intellectual and aesthetic satisfaction through music.

Compton observed:

American amateurs formed a diverse and active group. Music was of more importance to some than to others, but for all it was a valued part of life, a pleasure well worth its cost in time, effort, and money. The activities of the amateurs were supported by, and in turn supported, a sizable group of teachers, music stores, importers, and publishers.<sup>64</sup>

Eddy, author of the article “American Violin Method-Books and European Teachers, Geminiani to Spohr,” also examined the role amateur violinists played in the development of American culture in early America. Eddy noted that amateur violinists included: wealthy plantation owners, Moravian settlers, poor Southern families and prominent political leaders such as Thomas Jefferson. Eddy described the likely use of the violin by such amateurs:

In addition to providing music for their own families, some of these players would have been members of social orchestras, playing quicksteps, waltzes, polkas, quadrilles, galops, marches, and contradances for special social occasions. Others would have learned simply in order to play hymns, opera tunes, and other well-known melodies purely for their own enjoyment.<sup>65</sup>

Eddy stated that American publishers capitalized on the interest of amateur violinists: “From 1769 on, numerous method books were published in the United states for amateurs desiring to learn to play the violin. . . and, if numbers mean anything, the violin was popular indeed.”<sup>66</sup> Eddy provided an example of how popular these amateur violin publications were by citing the number of violin tutors sold by Elias Howe: “His influence in the area of amateur violin playing was immense: his many tutors for the violin sold more then 500,000 copies.”<sup>67</sup>

## Early Instrumental Teachers in United States

Some of the earliest instrumental classes in the United States followed a pattern similar to British adult violin classes: singing school teachers adapted their singing methodology for strings. Sollinger described violin instruction in early America:

During the nineteenth century and into the twentieth, instrumental class teaching was perpetuated by the students of two kinds of teachers: 1) the singing school teachers who taught primarily popular and dance music, and 2) the conservatory professors, usually trained in Europe, who taught European art music.<sup>68</sup>

The enterprising efforts of singing school teachers included individuals such as James L. and Joseph Howell, “music men” in Arkansas 1849-61. They held singing school classes, sold instruments and music, and taught instrumental classes based on singing class methodologies. Their method book, *New Class Book*, 1859; was designed so students could sing and play their instrument at the same time.<sup>69</sup>

Another example of entrepreneurial music teachers include Lewis A. Benjamin and his son, Lewis Benjamin Jr. Beginning in 1847, for over fifty years, members of the Benjamin family sold instruments and taught vocal and instrumental music to thousands of students in academies and free violin schools in New York, Brooklyn, Philadelphia, Camden and Pittsburgh.<sup>70</sup> To illustrate the popularity of their efforts, their concert in May 1891, the Benjamin’s Children’s Carnival held in Philadelphia, featured an orchestra of five hundred and a chorus of two thousand.<sup>71</sup>

## School Instrumental Music in the United States

Public interest in instrumental music was heightened through touring European orchestras, and the aforementioned conservatory classes, commercial violin schools and traveling itinerant music teachers. School music teachers began to form school orchestras in communities such as Wichita, Kansas (1896); Richmond, Indiana (1889), Hartford,

Connecticut (1899) and Los Angeles (1904). Edward Birge, the author of *History of Public School Music in the United States* described these early orchestras:

These early organizations were all extraneous activities, with no settled place in the school program, and were forced to hold their rehearsals after school hours. Their membership was made up of pupils of private teachers. Instrumentation at best was limited to that of the ordinary theatre orchestra, namely, first and second violins, an occasional bass and cello, cornets, trombones, clarinets, flutes, drums and piano. . . .The purpose of the supervisors who organized these first orchestras did not include teaching instrumental technique, nor even less of starting an orchestra of beginners. They chose boys and girls who already possessed creditable playing ability, and welded them into as perfect an ensemble as the varying capacities of the players permitted.<sup>72</sup>

Albert Wassell, music educator and author of a series of articles on the history of class string instruction in America, noted that music students in these early public school orchestras generally had private instruction. Wassell stated:

It must here be emphasized that instruction in these instrumental beginnings was almost entirely private, even though some of it came from the school music director himself. Some instrumental instruction was offered by part time teachers; this gradually paved the way for the full time teacher. It is this background of the early days of vocal and instrumental music that led to what may be called in a mild sense-mass production-or as it was called, class instrumental instruction. Class instrumental instruction was to be the method for the development of successful orchestras and bands of larger proportions.<sup>73</sup>

Numerous music education historians regard the British Maidstone Movement as a significant event in the history of school instrumental music in the United States.<sup>74</sup> American music educators were made aware of the Maidstone Movement and MSOA classes through the conference reports of individuals who had observed MSOA classes in person such as Charles Farnsworth (1908), Albert G. Mitchell (1920), Paul Stoeving (1914) and Percy Scholes (1914). One individual in particular was influential in disseminating the MSOA concept of group string classes: Albert G. Mitchell, one of the pioneers in American public school instrumental classes. Mitchell spent a year in England studying the methodology used by MSOA classes, and upon his return, patterned his 1911 Boston public school violin classes

directly after MSOA classes. Mitchell's violin classes were soon included in the regular school curriculum, and by 1920, Mitchell expanded the music program to include group instructional classes for the cornet, trombone, clarinet, drum and flute.<sup>75</sup>

**Music Appendix 4: *All Through the Night*, a Welsh folksong used in violin classes<sup>76</sup>**

Wassell described the status of class instrumental instruction in the United States prior to Mitchell's efforts:

School orchestras and bands had been in existence in scattered communities before this time, but no formal classes in the teaching of instruments in groups seem to have existed. Dr. Albert Mitchell's violin classes . . . appear to be the beginnings of class instrumental teaching. His classes attracted wide attention and gave impetus to similar classes in many parts of the country. Before long there were classes on other instruments as well.<sup>77</sup>

Wassell described how other American music teachers became aware of Mitchell's efforts:

Dr. Mitchell's classes in Boston were visited by many interested teachers from all over the country. After retirement from the Boston schools he took a position at the New York University School of Education during the summers of the 20s teaching his class methods. . . . Because he made the first serious study of class instrumental teaching, because he taught such classes successfully here with children and adults alike, because he wrote a successful method book for the American child and finally because of his inventions to improve the child's studying—because of all of these, he should today be acknowledged as the “Father of Class Instrumental Teaching in America.”<sup>78</sup>

Although the Maidstone Movement may have served as a catalyst for the widespread emergence of group instrumental classes in public schools in the United States, it is impossible to definitively ascertain the extent of this influence. Many music educators experimented with a variety of instructional methods to meet the needs of their students. For example, a group discussion at the 1917 MSNC convention illustrated both the wide variety of instructional methods used by music teachers present from Nebraska, Michigan, Illinois, New York, Indiana, and California, as well as indicated their eagerness to pool their experiences in order to create their own individualized group instrumental instructional programs.<sup>79</sup> Many esteemed instrumental class programs emerged during this time period,

and one researcher documented the publication of approximately 63 string class methods between 1912-1929.<sup>80</sup>

The concept of string classes as a successful introduction to school instrumental music became immensely popular, and by 1923, Will Earhart, another early proponent of instrumental class teaching, said violin classes had spread so rapidly that participation outran statistical inquiry. Earhart reported that towns with a population of ten to twenty thousand people frequently had 100-200 pupils receiving violin class instruction, and that larger communities had even more such as one community with 3,100 students enrolled in violin classes.<sup>81</sup> Wassell commented on the impact instrumental classes had upon the development of school orchestras:

The immediate success of class instruction was due to its low cost to the pupil. ...Some 35,000 orchestras were reported in existence in the public schools in 1930, largely the result of instrumental classes.<sup>82</sup>

The varied and innovative ways music educators conducted their instrumental classes ranged from the single instrument class approach, illustrated by such methods Mitchell's *The Class Method for the Violin* (Mitchell later published different versions of this class method book for other instruments such as the cello, clarinet, trumpet etc.); homogeneous instrumental classes where groups of similar instruments were taught in one class and the heterogeneous class approach where several instruments were taught in one class. An example of the heterogeneous approach was Joseph E. Maddy and Thadeus P. Giddings's 1922 *Universal Teacher*. All instruments were treated with equal importance in this method, and instruments which normally played only simple accompaniment parts such as the cello or bass, were enabled to share prominent melodic lines with the violins. Maddy described the philosophy behind this method: "It was revolutionary in that it was based on the singing

approach, used only familiar tunes, and used all positions at once, also transposition.”<sup>83</sup>

In 1932, Maddy continued his innovative approaches towards string classes when he taught thousands of string students by radio. Unfortunately, the American Federation of Musicians put a stop to these radio lessons. In 1948, Maddy resumed radio violin instruction on FM educational radio. He called his program “Symphonic String Course,” and directed his violin lessons towards students who lived in rural areas and didn’t have access to string instruction. Maddy supplemented his radio classes with long playing phonograph records, including a string quartet accompaniment for home practice. Maddy described his radio string classes:

I again went on the air with string lessons (14 lessons) in which the children (in 8 rural schools) learned 30 tunes in five positions and were able to play in an orchestra broadcast the final lesson. This experiment was carried out with the county schools and receivers were furnished by the university. One hundred and eighty students started the lessons and 195 finished. Not one dropped out. Ages ranged from 6 to 14. Those who had long playing players (attachments) at home learned much faster than the others, though each school had a record and machine for playing back. . . .The weakness of radio string instruction is that that the teacher cannot show the pupils how to hold their instruments—so I do it with pictures, numbered 1 to 6, each picture illustrating a certain item of position. Strangely enough this works better than showing them, as they must do it themselves. The private teacher places the pupils fingers but the pupil does not remember and goes home and does it wrong—always. So the picture method works especially if the parent or other person is sufficiently interested to check the pupils—which was the case with my radio lessons for I furnished a violin for every teacher so she would learn with the children and help them with their position. . . . The records are the greatest help possible, for the pupils love to practice when playing with a good string ensemble—and more important—the parents like to hear them practice that way.<sup>84</sup>

In recent years, traditional string class methods have been supplemented with non-traditional approaches. Although classical music is still very much a part of string education, new trends include:

- Improvisational styles such as jazz, gypsy and New Age music
- Fiddle and bluegrass music
- Strolling strings

- Multi-cultural music such as mariachi music (some recently published string class method books include multicultural songs and improvisatory exercises)
- Early Music (including historically correct performances of Renaissance and Early Baroque music)
- The use of technology to teach strings

Sociological trends include more programs that reach at-risk children (*e.g.* efforts to provide programs for inner-city children or “latch-key” children) and string instruction for adult learners. The following selected chronological lists of string class method books, music and articles illustrate changes and trends in string instruction.

#### **Selected Chronological List of String Class Methods, Music and Resource Materials**

1914	Mitchell, Albert G. <i>The Public School Class Method for the Violin</i> . Boston: Oliver Ditson Co.
c1923	Giddings, Thaddeus P. and Maddy, Joseph A. <i>Universal Teacher for Orchestra and Band Instruments</i> . Elkhart, Inc., C. G. Conn, Ltd., c1923.
1928	Giddings, Thaddeus P. and Maddy, Joseph A. <i>Instrumental class teaching; a practical teachers' guide in instrumental music classes</i> . Cincinnati, Ohio: The Willis Music Company.
1933	Herfurth, C. Paul. <i>A Tune A Day</i> . Boston: The Boston Music Co., rev., 1960.
1937	Jones, Edwin, George Dasch, and Max T. Krone. <i>String Class Teaching</i> . New York: Carl Fischer.
1938	Isaac, Merle. <i>Merle Isaac String Class Method</i> . Chicago, Illinois: M. M. Cole.
1939	Gardner, Samuel. <i>School of Violin study Based on Harmonic Thinking</i> . New York: Carl Fischer.
1939	Whistler, Harvey S., and Arthur C. Nord. <i>Beginning Strings</i> . New York: Carl Fischer, Inc., 1939.
1940	Isaac, Merle. <i>String Class Method</i> . Chicago: M.M. Cole Publishing Co.; rev. ed. 1966.
1941	Waller, Gilbert R. <i>Waller String Class Method</i> . Chicago: Neil A. Kjos Music Co., 1941.
1948	Barbakoff, Samuel Y. <i>Fun for Fiddle Fingers</i> . Toronto: Gordon V. Thompson, 1948.
1948	Bornoff, George. <i>Finger Patterns for Violin</i> . New York: Carl Fischer, 1948.

1949	Herman, Helen. <i>Bow and Strings</i> . New York: Belwin Inc., 1949.
1951	Barbakoff, Samuel Y. <i>Fiddling By the Numbers</i> . New York: Carl Fischer, Inc., 1951.
1959	Gordon, Carl. <i>Visual Method for Strings: Class or Private Instruction for Beginners on all String Instruments</i> . Hollywood: Highland Music Co.
1960	Applebaum, Samuel. <i>String Builder</i> . New York: Belwin Mills.
1961	Muller, J. Frederick and Harold W. Rusch. <i>Muller-Rusch String Method</i> . San Diego: Kjos.
1962	Dilmore, Hermon. <i>Breeze-Easy Method for Strings</i> . New York: M. Witmark.
1963	Matesky, Ralph and Rush, Ralph. <i>Playing and Teaching Stringed Instruments</i> . NJ: Prentice Hall.
1966	Green, Elizabeth A. H. <i>Teaching Stringed Instruments in Classes</i> . Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall, 1966 (reprinted by the American String Teachers Association, 1987).
1968	Lazan, Albert. <i>Basic Violin for Adults</i> . Belmont, California: Wadsworth, 1968.
1970	Matesky, Ralph and Womack, Ardelle. <i>Learn to Play a Stringed Instrument! A Method for Class or Individual Instruction</i> , NY : Alfred Music Co.
1971	Rolland, Paul. <i>Prelude to String Playing</i> . New York: Boosey & Hawkes.
1971	Johnson, Sheila, Ed. <i>Young Strings in Action: Paul Rolland's Approach to String Playing</i> . New York: Boosey & Hawkes.
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## Conclusion

This overview of the history of violin pedagogy has highlighted programs and string methodologies that have been used to teach amateur violinists. Aristocrats, factory workers and schoolchildren are just a few of the demographic groups who have played the violin for pleasure throughout history. In our present day, opportunities continue to exist for amateur violinists to learn and make music: amateur chamber groups, community orchestras, private and group instruction are just a few of these ways. Additionally, technological advances make it possible for the development of new and innovative ways to study and play the violin through mediums such as the Internet. Indeed, it is now more possible than ever before for amateur violinists to play the violin—for the love of it.

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