

New Music Reading Clinic 1999

by Marg Schmidt

Thirty-six orchestra teachers from Albert Lea to Moorhead, from Duluth to Brandon South Dakota, met at Valley View Middle School in Edina on August 23 to evaluate over 100 string orchestra pieces. The folders were supplied by the National Office of ASTA WITH NSOA.

We read through part or all of each piece, beginning at 9:00 A.M. and continuing till 4:00 P.M., under the baton of various volunteers from the group. During the day, many orchestra members switched instruments for variety—often the most useful (and sometimes humorous) view of a new piece is from the perspective of a student who is not an expert on a particular instrument. We were well-fed during breaks by snacks and lunch from Edina's best caterers, thanks to host Barb Flooding.

If you missed this year's reading session, be sure to plan to attend next year! It's a great way to preview lots of new music, to get your brain in gear for the school year, and to visit with lots of other string teachers.

We informally rated each piece as to its quality. The standard disclaimer: our ratings were necessarily colored by the fact that we each were evaluating each piece based on its appropriateness for the students we teach. Recognizing this bias, our top picks of the music we read included pieces that (a) sound good, (b) have interesting parts for all instruments, and (c) teach important concepts. There is something here for your group!

Grade 1 (first year)

The Dory Anne, by Robert Frost,

pub. Kendor Music, \$35. *Fanfare and Processional*, by Frank Rogers, pub. MSB Publishing Co., \$40. *Pluck and Stomp*, by James Christensen, pub. Kendor Music, \$35. *Rounds for Strings*, by Elliot Del Borgo, pub. Kendor Music, \$40.

Grade 2-3 (2nd-3rd year)

These grades are combined because of discrepancies in rating levels among publishers. *Andover Holiday*, by Elliot Del Borgo, pub. Kendor Music, \$35. *Jogging in the Park*, by Edmund Siennicki, pub. Highland/Etling/Alfred, \$40. *John Henry*, arr. Carrie L. Gruselle, pub. Highland/Etling/Alfred, \$40. *Minuet from the Royal Fireworks*, Handel, arr. Caponegro, pub. Kendor Music, \$35. *Monte Vista Overture*, by Lennie Niehaus, pub. Kendor Music, \$40. *Sarabande and Bouree*, Handel, arr. Goldsmith, pub. Highland/Etling/Alfred, \$40. *St. Dennis Variations*, arr. John Lloyd, pub. Neil A. Kjos, \$35.

Grade 4-6 (advanced junior high or high school)

Akerwis, by Shirl Jae Atwell, pub. Neil A. Kjos, \$35. *Arioso from Kantate 156, Bach*, arr. T. Fry, pub. Southern Music Co., \$40. *Dorian Dance*, by Joseph Phillips, pub. Southern Music Co., \$40. *Prelude and Fugue*, by Kevin Jagoe, pub. Edel Music Publications, \$36.

Holiday Music

The Dreidel, Del Borgo, pub. Kendor Music, \$35, grade 1. *French Christmas Classics*, (Angels We Have Heard, Pat-a-pan, Bring a Torch Jeanette Isabella, The First Nowell) arr. Christensen, pub. Kendor

Music, \$47, grade 2. *Three English Carols*, (Here We Come A' Wassailing, Coventry Carol, We Wish You a Merry Christmas) arr. Gruselle, pub. Highland/Etling/Alfred, \$50, grade 3. *Joyous Suite of Carols*, (O Sanctissima, God Rest Ye Merry Gentlemen, The First Nowell), arr. Del Borgo, pub. Kendor Music, \$45, grade 2.

Pop tunes

Music from "The Parent Trap", Silvestri, arr. Sayre, pub. Kjos, \$45, grade 3. *Time of Your Life (from "A Bug's Life")*, Newman, arr. Moore, pub. Hal Leonard, \$40, grade 2. *Baby Elephant Walk*, Mancini, arr. Moore, pub. Hal Leonard, \$40, grade 3. *Fiddle Finger Frenzy*, M. Williams, pub. Highland/Etling/Alfred, \$38, grade 2.

We also read through a number of very interesting string orchestra arrangements by Carolyn Carver, teacher in Duluth, including a wide range of styles and ability levels. For more information about Carolyn's exciting arrangements, call her at 218-525-4031, or write her at Stellar Strings, 3820 London Road, Apt. 313, Duluth, MN 55804.

Marg Schmidt teaches courses in music education at St. Cloud State University and directs Spiritoso, a regional string orchestra for 6th-8th graders. Previously, she taught public school strings in Austin, MN, Albuquerque, NM, and Naperville, IL. She serves on the MNSOTA board as College Education Specialist. †