

## **MMEA: Fiddlers Philharmonic Teaching Fiddling in the String Orchestra**

presented by Andrew Dabczynski; reported by Janis Nash

Fiddling has been around for hundreds of years. Why have it in the string curriculum? Because fiddling will accomplish skills applicable to other string playing. It is a vital part of historical or cultural heritage; its thousands of tunes are easily accessible. Fiddling is a vehicle for fulfilling the national standard in improvisation. And fiddling as folk music making is highly social – the reason why kids are in music.

*Fiddlers Philharmonic* and *Fiddlers Philharmonic Encore* are co-authored by Andrew Dabczynski and Bob Phillips. Student books are available in violin, viola, and cello/bass. There is a score for teachers,

and CD and cassette recordings. The *Encore* book is not a Book II; rather it includes pieces that are more of the same type as Book I. The CD includes a slow practice version of the pieces and an accompaniment version.

Each book contains three lines — the main melody, an idea for “written out improvisation,” and an accompaniment line. The cello/bass books contain a bass line. The violin and violas books provide an off-beat rhythm. The two bottom lines together seen in the teachers’ manual provides the piano score. Teacher’s manual also includes objectives, information about style as well

as other topics.

Conference attendees had the option of playing instruments which were available from All Strings Attached and Eckroth Music. Tunes were taught to the teachers by rote, and then presenter sang the words, and discussed what the words meant to the culture. The group was then taught to improvise given basic parameters.

*Janis J. Nash has just completed her B.M. degree in Music Education at the University of Minnesota. †*