



# MENTOR'S DESK

## Mentoring Can Happen in so Many Ways!

by Jane Linde Capistran

I am fortunate to live in a community where there is a wonderful group of musical experts in many fields—strings, winds, brass, conducting, composition, jazz, classical, fiddling, chamber music, string repair, arts administration, performance, education—and the list goes on and on. In this issue I will highlight some ways you may use your area experts in mentoring your students and yourself.

### String Mentors

Feedback from your own string colleagues is perhaps the first place that many of us will go to when seeking advice or help on a teaching idea or technique. The MNSOTA Mentorship Program, as well as the MMEA Program has also been successful in pairing beginning teachers and mentors together. For those of you who live in university/college towns, the string faculties are a great resource for you and your students. Many of you may have students who study privately with these folks, but these artists may also be available for sectionals, master classes or give guest recitals at your school. What a great way for students to hear and learn from them.

### Orchestral Mentors

As conductor of the Fargo-Moorhead Area High School Youth Symphony, I am all about using experts when it comes to winds, brass and percussion! Members of the Fargo-Moorhead Symphony, the three area colleges (MSUM, Concordia and NDSU) and the public school's band and orchestra directors have been most helpful and willing to lend their time and talents to the orchestra in sectionals. It also creates a wonderful connection for the students when they attend area concerts, to know many of the artists on stage. The FM Symphony professionals have also assisted in side-by-side concerts with the youth symphony. This

may be an idea for the high school orchestra to mentor your middle school, or the middle school to mentor your elementary orchestra. I also have used college students as mentors in my youth symphony—playing in a position that is vacant, yet assisting the other members in the section.

### Chamber Music

The Allegro Chamber Players are students in the youth symphony who have auditioned to be part of a chamber ensemble. This year we expanded outside the strings, including piano, oboe and harp in three of the ensembles. I was thrilled to have several of the college/community/symphony members express their interest in coaching and volunteering their time. If you have chamber groups in your school program, perhaps a guest coach can be brought in from time to time.

### Music Businesses And Organizations

The local string shop here has been very willing to present a crash-course in string repair to the college ASTA group. The students who plan to go out and teach are very interested in this, as they may be the “emergency” string repairperson in their own teaching positions. Music stores have been very willing to sponsor string orchestra reading clinics, providing folders of new repertoire. This was helpful in our first Elementary Reading Orchestra Session at Concordia—music education majors preparing and conducting a work, with other majors playing in the orchestra. Campus cultural arts organizations and local performing groups (symphony, chamber orchestras, chorales, etc.) are often in need of interns. This can be a great spot for a student interested in arts administration.

### Conducting

A program I initiated several years ago with

my college orchestra is the Symphonia Student Conducting Internship. Students conduct a live audition with the orchestra and are selected to work with the ensemble for a semester. I select the repertoire they conduct and then have the opportunity to coach them in their rehearsal and conducting technique. They conduct their work on the formal concert, so have the opportunity to pace a work during the semester. A student conductor in a high school setting may be a mentoring opportunity as well.

### Guest Artists

Recently, the Turtle Island String Quartet visited Concordia and a high school string day was held in conjunction with their performance. Although the Turtle Island Quartet doesn't live in our community, we were able to work together with the Cultural Arts Series on our campus and offer this experience to local and regional students and directors. Check with your local art series and see what mentoring collaborations can be arranged. For those of you in the Twin Cities, mentoring possibilities with the Minnesota Orchestra and St. Paul Chamber Orchestra are a real gift.

### Funding

Of course, all these mentoring opportunities may not be without cost. Grant writing, school funds and sponsors may be ways to subsidize the honorariums involved. Best wishes in seeking out your local mentors!

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