



VIOLIN

Building the Violinists' Memorized Repertoire with Folk Songs

by Ann Anderson

Oftentimes, musicians are asked to play just simple, every-day tunes on special occasions. I think it is very important that our musicians are trained to play the basic songs people sing, e.g. *Happy Birthday*. Violinists study the repertoire of Bach, Handel and Beethoven, but too often are at a loss to lead a group in singing party songs. A well-rounded repertoire of folk music gives the violinist a chance to sit down and play the familiar songs that most people know. I think it lends a great joy to the listeners and musician as well.

Any songbook can be used to interject American folk music into the student's lessons. The pieces can be used as good warm-ups and don't necessarily need an accompaniment. A piano back-up or even better, a guitar at a campsite would be ideal.

A request came in to the string teachers here in Duluth for a violinist to play at a wedding in the Rose Garden. How perfect it would be, if a violinist could just take his/her violin to the wedding without a stand and music and play a short procession, special piece (e.g. *One Hand, One Heart*) and a short recession. Outdoor weddings are very popular in the summer months and the requests for one violinist are also quite frequent.

Building a repertoire can begin within the first year of studies. Pieces such as *Twinkle* in the Suzuki book can develop to party songs: *Old MacDonald*, *Row, Row, Row Your Boat*, *Frère Jacques*, *Three Blind Mice*, *Yankee Doodle*, *Pop! Goes the Weasel*, etc.

Preparing for an outdoor wedding could include Handel's *Hornpipe from the*

Water Music Suite and Purcell's *Trumpet Voluntary*. The special music of the violinist's choosing could include just a portion of the *Meditation from Thais* of Massenet.

Developing memorizing skills is very important to the ultimate goal of playing concert pieces and concerti. Adding familiar folk songs to a violinist's repertoire should be considered an important development in the musician's background.

Professor Ann Anderson teaches at the University of Minnesota Duluth and plays in the Duluth Superior Symphony Orchestra as the Associate Concertmaster Emeritus. She received the Distinguished Service Award, Clinic Presenter, Master Teacher Award, and Orchestra Educator of the Year from MMEA. †