



MENTOR'S DESK

Group Mentoring—Special Projects!

by Jane Linde Capistran

For the past four years, my college string students and I have coordinated a project that we call YORRS—Young Orchestra Repertoire Reading Session. The students were inspired by an event that the wind players were doing in the department (thanks to Concordia College Band Director Scott Jones). Thus, a wonderful mentoring project bloomed, and this past fall we even expanded it.

First about YORRS: this event has opportunities on several different levels. It first allows a string education major (designated as the chairperson) to determine and select elementary string repertoire for the first and second year player. We have had the support of the library on campus to purchase three titles each year, building our own library for this event. (The first year, we borrowed repertoire from the area string programs.) As advisor to this event, I can assist the student coordinator, but want them to do the research, as if they are finding rep for their own string program.

The chairperson then calls for student conductors, and assigns two works for each conductor to present and prepare for the rehearsal. I ask the conductors to give brief comments about their works when they are on the podium.

Finally, the chairperson must put the reading orchestra personnel together! It has become a great opportunity for the string methods students to play, or other beginning level students who aren't in an ensemble to join with us. It also allows the string education majors to play another instrument other than their major instrument. Of course the event is always followed up by treats and discussion!

Now to the expanded event! This past September, we thought a reading orchestra, including area string educators and other college string players would also be a great way to learn about rep and work with guest conductors. Foster Beyers, new Director of Orchestras at Concordia College and Mary Weisser, recently retired Fargo Ben Franklin Middle School Orchestra Director worked the orchestra through 20 different charts, courtesy of Popplers Music of Grand Forks. What was really neat was that we had college players, brand new first year teachers, current string teachers and retired teachers playing side by side in the orchestra! We also dedicated this event to the String Program in Minot, North Dakota. Several of the schools in Minot lost all their music and instruments due to the summer flood. We were able to raise over \$100 in contributions and fund two new pieces of music for them.

In both of these special projects, I am grateful for the mentoring going on. Not only do we mentor about music, but we mentor about life too.

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