



VIOLA

What can the Minnesota Viola Society do for You?

by J. David Arnott

This is not the column I intended to write for this issue; instead it is a plea for support of a pet project. This column is now a wake-up call to determine what, if anything, members of the Minnesota Viola Society can do to help violists in string programs across our state (<http://www.minnesotaviolasociety.org/>). Admittedly our web site is pretty much a disaster. It's out of date, we haven't done much recently in the way of activities, and the regularly written nifty postings and articles stopped showing up around 2007. Granted, there have also been issues with the American Viola Society at the national level (<http://www.americanviolasociety.org/>), but those issues seem to have been resolved and they even managed to host a national viola festival at Oberlin this past June. There are already plans for a grand event in June of 2018 at The Colburn School in Los Angeles. Viola Society events are always exciting on many different levels, especially the ones that coincide with the Primrose Competition. But that's the bigger picture of the viola world. The focus today is on what we can accomplish here in Minnesota in promoting the viola.

Our Minnesota Viola Society web site clearly states:

- “The mission of the Minnesota Viola Society is to promote, study, and further the research and performance of the viola and its repertoire.

 **Minnesota**
Viola Society

- “We welcome members of all ages and abilities.
- “We are looking forward to sharing with you the many wonderful and varied aspects of the viola.”

The most-recently sponsored event by the Minnesota Viola Society was a masterclass by world-renowned violist, Roberto Diaz, an event geared towards budding professionals. We are able to present events such as this due to friendships and professional relationships of our members, Korey Konkol for example. Getting your kids to attend high-end viola events is a worthy challenge, but how do we get your middle school and high school students to attend a suburban viola workshop focused on something like playing viola not like a violin? The question is: What can the Minnesota Viola Society do for you?

In the past we have hosted workshops for budding violists, even offering sessions for violinists interested in approaching the viola. Is this something you would like to have at your school?

Would you like to have someone come and talk about how to buy a properly fitting viola and what to seek in terms of the sound of an instrument? Would your students be interested in attending a viola event geared towards their exact level of experience and ability? Would you like someone to come to your school and do a short viola performance? Would your viola section benefit from a coaching session from one of our members? Please let me know... I'm easy to find. darnott@csbsju.edu

Membership in the MVS is still only \$4 a year for students.

J. David Arnott is an Associate Professor of Music at The College of St. Benedict/St. John's University where he directs the symphony orchestra, teaches viola, violin and fiddle. He holds degrees in viola from The Philadelphia College of Performing Arts, The Curtis Institute of Music and The University of Southern Mississippi. Dr. Arnott is the Artistic Director of the Chamber Music Society of St. Cloud, violist with Trio Pastiche, a violist in the Duluth-Superior Symphony Orchestra, and a member of the Stillwater-based chamber ensemble, Music Saint Croix. He is the director of MNSOTA's Upper Midwest String and Chamber Music Conference and has coached the Minnesota All-State viola section for many years. †