

UPPER MIDWEST STRING CAMP 1979–2022

by Faith Farr with assistance from

Mark Kausch, Paul Kosower, Mark Gitch, Nick Gaudette, Hannah Schendel and others

Early Years at Mankato State University 1979–1988

In July 1979, Mankato State University hosted the first Upper Midwest Summer String and Chamber Music Conference—a week of lectures, clinics, recitals, chamber music playing and recreation—with both undergraduate and graduate credits available—under the direction of camp founder and visionary Norman Selness. Marilyn Bos (Mankato State) and Mark Bjork (MacPhail Center) taught violin techniques, Charles Hott (Hurley College, Shreveport LA) taught viola techniques, and Camilla Heller (Macalester and Gustavus Colleges) taught cello techniques.

In July 1980, the second annual conference featured internationally known lecturer Dr. Samuel Applebaum, as well as Marilyn Bos (violin, Mankato State), Abigail Riley (viola, Bemidji State), Patrick Riley (cello, Bemidji State) and James Clute (bass, Minnesota Orchestra). In addition to technique sessions and a seminar *Organizing and Developing Orchestra Programs in the Public Schools* for teachers, there was a 3-day youth orchestra session conducted by James Berg and a chamber music seminar with Dr. Applebaum for school chamber groups.

Organized chamber music was introduced in 1982, and throughout the 1980s Shirley Thompson Santoro was the chamber music coordinator. Cellist Paul Kosower taught at the camp for at least 15 years from the early 1980s and performed a cello recital each time he taught there.

In 1986, Dr. Donald Portnoy (violin, West Virginia University) was the principal lecturer for the teacher training sessions, and the Minnesota String Task Force conducted a panel discussion on *The Ethics in Music Education*. By this time, the student component had expanded significantly to include two levels of orchestra that had sectionals as well as full rehearsals.

In 1988, Dr. Harry Dunscombe became cello professor and director of orchestras at Mankato State. For Upper Midwest's tenth anniversary that summer, Harry presented a series of lectures on basic cello techniques, conducted the adult orchestra, and provided conducting experience for adult participants. Dr. Gerald Fischbach was the guest clinician. Ed Schlueter conducted the two youth orchestras and Shirley Thomson Santoro again served as coordinator and principal coach for student chamber music.

Additional faculty acting as section leaders and coaches during the 1980s included Michael Crary, Dean Dainsberg, Jon Cooper and John Pickart. In 1993, Norman Selness received the MN ASTA Community Service Award for founding the Upper Midwest String and Chamber Music Conference.

Harry Dunscombe at Mankato State 1988–2006

Harry Dunscombe's duties at Mankato State included directing Upper Midwest and under his leadership until his retirement in 2006, the camp grew and thrived.

In 1993 Géza and Csaba Szilvay presented their *Colourstrings Method* to the

teacher attendees. Faculty for the student portion of Upper Midwest included Phil Burkhart and Mark Gitch, youth orchestras; Mary Horozaniecki and Sue Radloff, violins; Stella Anderson, viola; Paul Kosower, cello, and Karyn Quinn, bass. Faith Farr was added to the faculty to make the chamber music offerings more systematic for all student attendees; all students were placed in a chamber group and all groups performed at the final recital. A few years later, Mark Kausch, bass, made an additional chamber music enhancement with the launch of a bass ensemble which allowed student bassists, as well as interns with bass skills, to perform chamber music arranged for between three and eight basses.



Mark Kausch leads students, interns and counselors in *Bydlo* 2012

Through the mid-1990s, the teacher training component of Upper Midwest evolved from a teacher conference to an intern/mentor program under the direction of Mary Horozaniecki and Sarah Hersh. Instead of lectures and seminars for teachers, around eight college interns each year received a stipend to assist in the student technique classes and sectionals, and coach student chamber ensembles. By 2000, Upper Midwest had in place the curriculum that it sustained for decades.

Upper Midwest always accepted all students who applied. On Sunday afternoon, everyone played a placement audition consisting of a scale, a piece of their choice and some sight-reading for a faculty member. By Sunday dinner time, faculty had consulted to place



Dr. David Arnott leads Chamber Orchestra rehearsal 2009.

students into one of two orchestras, and the orchestra conductors were combing the music they had brought to select suitable pieces. By Sunday bedtime, faculty had placed all students into chamber groups—as many standard quartets as could be accommodated, and then other ensembles such as trios, quintets, cello choir or bass choir, according to the enrollment—and music had been chosen.

Monday morning was especially busy for the Chamber Music Coordinator: music was copied; folders were prepared. And a schedule was drawn up for rooms and coaches for the chamber music sessions that took place 2:00–4:00 each day.

On Monday morning, students began the usual morning routine: the first orchestra rehearsed 8:00–9:30 while the second orchestra had a 30-minute technique class and a 60-minute orchestra sectional. From 9:30–11:00 the second orchestra rehearsed while the first orchestra had technique class and sectional coaching. Interns observed and assisted at the technique classes and sectionals.

11:00 on Monday and Tuesday were special classes that varied each year. 11:00 on Wednesday, Thursday and Friday were chamber music master classes, coached by faculty.

The afternoon schedule for students was 1:00 orchestra rehearsal, and chamber music 2:00–4:00. For many years, the 1:00 hour for interns was shared pedagogy, where faculty presented short conference-style sessions. Later, individual mentoring took place.

During the chamber music period, each student group was coached half the time by a faculty coach, and half the time by an intern. Faculty and interns had two chamber groups each. 4:00 was recreation time for the students, and mentoring time for faculty and interns to discuss together the chamber groups they shared.

Over the years, interns reported that coaching chamber music was a particularly valuable training opportunity. For some interns, it was their first experience with school-age students who were still

developing a sense of steady pulse and rhythm, refining concepts of pitch and learning for the first time to watch, listen, signal and match strokes as chamber musicians.

Upper Midwest always included a number of performances. Monday was a student solo recital by students who had brought a fully prepared piece. Tuesday was often a faculty recital or performance by outside artists. Thursday became memorable as a Talent Show showcasing “alternative” skills of students, interns, dorm counselors and sometimes faculty. (One student played her violin while riding a unicycle on stage!) The week culminated in all students playing in a chamber music concert and an orchestra concert for family and friends.



Chamber music master class with Sarah Hersh 2016.

Additional faculty who taught at Upper Midwest during the Mankato years, included Katherine Wolfe violin and viola, Karen Moon chamber music, and Jennifer Arco Bellefeuille and Gerard Jones orchestra.

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David Arnott at the College of St. Benedict 2007–2022

In 2006, Harry Dunscombe retired from Mankato State, and the University decided to stop hosting Upper Midwest. A search for a new location came up trumps when David Arnott took over as Upper Midwest Director at the College of St. Benedict.

Under David’s leadership, the basic curriculum of the camp was maintained, with orchestra and chamber music for students, and mentored coaching for interns. With David’s interest in Celtic music, a traditional component was introduced, with students learning a fiddle tune by ear. With the move to the College of St. Benedict, and at the urging of several string camp interns, beginning viola da gamba sessions were added to the range of intern learning opportunities—an addition that quickly led to the formation of a consort of viols at CSB/SJU. When bassist, improviser, composer, conductor Nick Gaudette was added to the faculty the

Pedagogy Topics Presented at the “Conference Style” Sessions

- “Big Bach” or “Baroque Bach”? Adapting the modern instrument to Baroque style
- Renaissance instruments—the viol
- Our Inspirational Heritage—Artists from the Past (videos and discussion of master classes presented by Gingold, Casals and others)
- Rhythmic-ship and Muscle-ship for Musicianship (from the Baroque to Jazz)
- All about Beginners—basic set-up for violin, viola, cello and bass. Common principles and differences; coaching instruments you don’t play
- Tuning—how to do it on instruments you don’t play; how to teach it
- Classroom Management Techniques
- Preparing to teach all the elements of a studio lesson: warm-ups, scales, etudes, repertoire
- Wiggles and Pings (vibrato)
- Developing core bow strokes into musical motions
- Sequenced steps towards artistry with the instrument
- Matching repertoire to student knowledge, skills and interests
- Accessories: choosing and fitting a chin rest and shoulder pad
- Pedagogy resources: texts, magazines, conferences, associations
- The French and German bow hold
- How to coach chamber music
- Inspiration—how to find it
- Etude books—overview and suggested order
- Shifting
- Finger patterns and finger angles
- strategies to overcome performance anxiety
- String duos as a teaching tool—overview and analysis

eclectic component expanded. The 2016 concert inaugurated a new tradition: all (89) campers on stage performing compositions by their two conductors!

Additional faculty who taught at Upper Midwest, CSB, included violinists Jane Capistran, Elizabeth York and Stephanie Shogren, violists Jim Bartsch, Justin Knoepfel and Chuck Krenner, cellists Lucia Magny and Daniel Ericksen, bassists Mike White



Chamber music masterclass with Daniel Ericksen, 2015

and Josh Schwalbach, and orchestra directors Mary Sorlie and Lucas Shogren. In addition to the long tenure of camp directors Harry Dunscombe and David Arnott, faculty members Mary Horozaniecki, Sarah Hersh, Faith Farr, Mark Kausch and Karen Moon each taught 20 years or more at Upper Midwest's two locations. Their consistency contributed to the program's success.

Covid canceled Camp in 2020 and 2021 but July 2022 saw a successful reboot of this extraordinary curriculum, with slightly smaller enrollment as everyone was re-emerging after the pandemic isolation. David Arnott retired from the College of St. Benedict in August 2022 and a search was again underway for a new host.

Sunset 2023

Alas, the world is different post-pandemic. A college campus is the



DAVID ARNOTT CONDUCTS THE CHAMBER ORCHESTRA, 2012

ideal location to provide rehearsal spaces, dorms and cafeteria food, but most institutions are now more cautious and restrictive about having guests on campus. MNSOTA's biggest stumbling block came when ASTA decided that the liability insurance umbrella they provide to state chapters would no longer cover over-night events.

The curriculum is a wonderful template that we hope someone will someday use again, but for now we regret that Upper Midwest has sunset. The memories of many remarkable successes remain. We are proud of over a thousand students and over a hundred intern who have developed into fine performers, teachers and music lovers, partly due to their experience at Upper Midwest String Camp.

References:

- MN ASTA *Strings 'n' Stuff* 1979 #2; 1980 #1; 1986 #1; 1988 #2; February 1993; February 1994; Fall 1996; Fall 1997
- MNSOTA *String Notes*, Fall issues 2000 through 2017
- MNSOTA *Handbook* 2000–2001 through 2022–2023

Personal recollections by Faith Farr and others. Apologies go to the faculty who contributed to the success of Upper Midwest over the years but were not mentioned in this article. †

Final Concert of 2014 !!! DO NOT BE ALARMED !!!

Due to construction in the main concert hall at the College of St. Benedict, the 2014 final orchestra concert was scheduled in a different building. Students were assembled on stage; parents were waiting in the audience. Not everything was set as expected and Dr. Arnott was on the phone.

A cellist motioned to me and said, "The light for the fire alarm on the wall is blinking. At my school that means we need to get out." I said I'd check. Arnott said he was working on it. The orchestra waited; the audience waited.

Then the alarm started to beep at a nice steady ♩=120, loud but not deafening; beep, beep, beep, rest; beep, beep, beep, rest. Obviously a false alarm. Mary Sorlie called to the orchestra players, "B natural" and a few at a time students joined in playing B natural on their instrument. Then a bassist realized that a nice

G-D-G-D bass line would be a great harmonic support for that B-B-B rest. Gradually a walking bass-line emerged. The audience clapped the off-beats. Other audience members made a conga line. The *Fire Alarm Jam* drowned out the alarm itself and was highly entertaining.

Meanwhile Dr. Arnott had rallied the interns to prepare chairs and stands at the outdoor amphitheater. Eight minutes after the decision to move, the downbeat in the amphitheater happened.

Comments from Facebook:

So, you know you're an orchadork when the fire alarm goes off and everyone starts to play the note, a cha cha line forms and everyone starts to clap!!



Upper Midwest Mankato 2003

- Top: Mary Horozaniecki; Quartet Rehearsal.
- Middle: Katherine Wolfe, Sarah Hersh, Susan Crawford;
Harry Dunscombe; intern Noah Rogoff;
Faith Farr.
- Bottom: Jerry Jones; Jen Arco Bellefeuille; Mark Kausch.

Faculty Stories

by Mark Gitch

From many recollections, I have two strong memories. Having been a student of Mary Horozaniecki, I of course had her on a certain pedestal in my mind. The first morning of the first day I began my time as a camp conductor, I emerged from my dorm room to head to the shower and there was Mary, coming down the hallway, toiletry-caddy in hand, fuzzy pink slippers on her feet, wild bed hair—looking not at all like the teacher I had come to revere! This crossing of paths in the hallway became a daily ritual across many summers. Aside from the time Mary put me in a broom closet at the old MacPhail building to practice my scales, she and her pink slippers are my favorite way to remember her.

Memory #2: One afternoon I was walking by the auditorium and heard amazing violin sounds coming from the stage. I assumed it was one of the faculty members, so I poked my head in to say hello. Instead, it was Peter McGuire, a Mankato native and eventually a violinist with the Minnesota Orchestra, who was then a camper at Upper Midwest. This was in the mid-90s, I think. I stood silently just out of view for a few minutes and simply listened to Peter play. I think he was the first student of that caliber that I had really heard, and to catch him in this moment and remember the awe that I felt still brings a smile to my face.

Finally, I was still somewhat inexperienced when I joined the conducting faculty. Showing promise, perhaps, but far from accomplished. To be trusted to teach alongside the remarkable team of people I looked up to—people who became lifelong friends and colleagues—was a remarkable experience. While I may have been on faculty, my Midwest years were more about what I learned.

Mark Gitch teaches at Wayzata High School

by Jane Capistran

I was so honored to be asked by my former teacher, Mary Budd Horozaniecki, to be part of the faculty. It was very special to have several of my college students serve as interns, and now they have gone on to be successful string teachers in the state and Midwest.

Jane Capistran is Fargo Moorhead Symphony Orchestra: Associate Conductor/Principal Second Violin, and Assistant Professor Emerita at Concordia College, Moorhead

by Nick Gaudette

My formative youthful orchestra experiences happened at

Upper Midwest Music Camp, which ignited my love of teaching. The exceptional faculty, many now cherished colleagues, profoundly shaped who I am today.

In my early years, Mark Gitch and Phil Burkhart led the orchestra groups. Their artful directing and adventurous programming showed me the director's immense influence. I recall Mark Gitch impressing us all by tossing his keys in the air behind his body, and then snapping his fingers at the exact moment they hit the ground. All of us kids were amazed at his musical magic! I remember my first experience playing the Barber *Adagio* was with Phil Burkhart who programmed the piece after the death of camp founder Norm Selness. I don't know if we played it totally in tune, but I remember falling in love with performance each time we rehearsed, even with a very minimal bass part. I also remember being the lone bass player in the advanced group and playing Tchaik *Serenade*, Vivaldi's *Four Seasons* (played by Johnathan Magness, now of the MN Orch), and then being in a chamber group with my siblings who played the *Eine Kleine Nachtmusik*. Our group name was the "Messed Up Mozarts!"

In 2006, while back from college during the summer, Harry Dunscombe hired me as the activities director. At this particular camp year, I met violinist Zack Kline (attended as an intern), who I instantly clicked with musically. Our impromptu fiddle duet at the faculty concert planted the creative spark for our ensemble, the Orange Mighty Trio. 15 years later, we still perform and record together. This was also Harry's last year at camp and I was assisting him while clearing out his office. He graciously bequeathed his extensive mini score library to me, a priceless gift which I currently store in my music office to this day.

Returning as faculty under the direction of Arnott, I relished reuniting with beloved former teachers and mentors like the late Mrs. H., Mark Kausch, Faith Farr, Dr. Hersh and Karen Moon, whom I now address as colleagues. The cyclical nature of passing knowledge between generations at Upper Midwest fills me with gratitude. Without those formative summer weeks as a camper, as a counselor activities director, and as a faculty member, I doubt I'd be the devoted educator I am today. When I lead young players, I channel the humanity, passion and care of my own mentors who so enriched my journey.

Nick Gaudette teaches at Edina High School, and performs on bass with The Orange Mighty Trio and other ensembles.



"Waiting for the Tooth Fairy" — All 86 campers on stage 2018

Interns

Each year, 6–8 students in college or at the beginning of their teaching career assisted at Upper Midwest; their current career position is listed where known. (Our apologies to those we inadvertently omitted.) It is a testament to the strength of the program that almost half of the interns returned for multiple years.

At Mankato State University 1994–2006

Carolyn Anderson
Britta Blodgett, private studio
Nathan Cohen, Rockport MA Public Schools
Natalie Dimberg
Joseph Dolson
Mary Dougherty
Kate Ecklein
Nicholas Gaudette, Edina Public Schools
Krista Halvorson, Aurora IL schools
Adam Hanson
Cassandra Herold, Stillwater Area Schools
Callie Hutchison, Cochise County Youth Orchestra, Tucson, AZ
Ericka Jackson
Zachary Kline, violinist, composer, Minneapolis
Stephanie Kobbe
Karen Krueger Kozak, FiddleintheMiddle, St. Paul
Miya Kunin, private studio Minneapolis
Di Li
Andrew Marine
Nora Martin
Brianna Massey
Laura Monfrooe
Nina Mukherji
Kathleen Murphy, Robbinsdale Area Schools
Wes Myers, Marshall Public Schools
Rachel Peale
John Roberts
Noah Rogoff, Professor Music, University of Nebraska, Kearney
Yuka Roth, private studio, Eagan
Kate Saylor
Gene Schott, Austin Public Schools
Tyler Sieh, Louisiana Philharmonic, New Orleans
David Strassberg, private studio, Concord Mills NC
Katherine Thornburg
Lauren Trolley, Iowa City Community School District, IA
Ryan Walker
Kate Wolf
Stephanie Young
Miriam Zien

At the College of St. Benedict 2007–2022

Tim Apolloni
Collin Arneson
Maria Claudia Benaros, private studio, Minneapolis
Lauren Benish, Stillwater Area Public Schools
Joe Berns, Aberdeen School District, SD
Alex Bischoff
JoAnna Cochenet, conductor, Nevada Chamber Opera
Levi Comstock, Anoka-Hennepin School District
Jacob Crosby, Austin Public Schools
Natalie Dimberg
Katie Douglass

Anthony Eddleston, Moorhead Area Public Schools
Sadie Ellingson Eddleston, West Fargo Public Schools, ND
Mattie Ernst
David Espinoza
Makayla Ferraro
Hannah Field
Heather Frank
Spencer Frie, Joseph Sears School, Kenilworth, IL
Mary Goedtke
Martin Granick
Megumi Hine
AJ Mandy Isaacson-Zvidzwa, composer/historian
Ilan Klages-Mundt, 9 Mile Brewing Co, (craft beers),
Bloomington
Byron Klimek, University of Wisconsin Superior Conservatory
Stephanie Knapper, private studio, St. Paul
Stephanie Kobbe
Kaela Kopp
Stacey Kurtz
Bethany Landby
Michal Lang, Davies High School, Fargo ND
Allysa Larson Hurley, Dawson-Boyd School District
Christopher Laue
Jeff Maneval
Andrew Mueller
Kathleen Murphy, Robbinsdale Area Schools
Emily Nieves
Heather Olivier, Northfield School District
Amanda Olsen
Allysa Olson
Anna Olson
Rachel Osterhouse, Indianapolis Suzuki Academy, IN
Michael Peiffer
Kari Peterson Slominsky, private studio, Hudson, WI
Xin Piao
Becky Plachy, White Bear Lake Area Schools
Caleb Polashek
Jamie Reynolds
Mara Rogers
Colleen Schaeffle Cook, Northeast College Prep, Minneapolis
Hannah Schendel, conductor Wayzata Symphony Orchestra
Jocelyn Schendel, Anchorage Symphony Orchestra, AK
Kara Schillerstrom Mather, Johnson School District, Des
Moines IA
Kim Schmitt
Rachel Steenson Menzel
Carlin Stiles, St. Cloud Area School District
Eric Uzelac
Anastasia Verdoljak, Robbinsdale Area Schools
Cara Weggler
Anna Wigtil
Paul Wolfram

Intern Stories

by Carlin Stiles

My first year at UMSC was 2008 and I was a HS “gopher” and did anything that anyone needed. Over the years I was a violin, viola, cello and bass intern as well as activities director. I transitioned to completing many of the pre-camp administrative tasks including advertisement, communication with students, families, and staff. During the week of camp, I was in charge of the day-to-day tasks and activities. I was involved with UMSC for over a decade.

Carlin Stiles teaches in the St. Cloud Area School District

Kara Mather

Kara (Schillerstrom) Mather was a founder/director of the Monticello Community Strings Orchestra from 2001–2022, for which she was a co-recipient of the 2020 MNSOTA Community Service Award. In 2009 she had just started teaching orchestra in the public schools (Tech High School in St. Cloud) and David Arnott asked if she would be interested in helping out with the camp.

Kara writes, “Being an intern was a great way for me to meet more string teachers from across the state and learn more about the camp. Although I am currently teaching choir in the Johnston School District in the Des Moines, Iowa area ... my heart is in string orchestras. Part of my passion for that was solidified every time I helped with the Upper Midwest Camp, attended one of their concerts, sent students to it, or heard stories from Arnott about all the fun that was had!”

Kara Mather teaches in Des Moines IA

by Hannah Schendel

After hearing about the great experience my cello playing sister, Jocelyn, had as an intern at the Upper Midwest Music Camp, I decided to apply as an intern in 2013 and 2014. I wasn't really sure what to expect other than that I was warned that David Arnott would probably play fiddle tunes in a kilt and would make us all learn fiddle tunes. The experience turned out to be a fantastic opportunity to not only develop my own skills, but also to apply the skills and teach some of the students who attended, and to develop a rapport with the faculty members, many of whom were my own teachers and are now my colleagues.

I remember observing how Mary Budd Horozaniecki could coach a string quartet with such love and patience yet was able to demand very high standards; skills that I continue to use today. I learned many neat teaching tricks in all of the technique classes, and loved hearing how much progress the students were able to make in such a short period of time. Interns were able to take a couple of classes with faculty members, and I enjoyed cello technique lessons from Faith Farr, and took bass lessons with Mark Kausch. I was so excited about bass lessons that by the end of the camp, I volunteered myself to play the *Twinkle Variations* at the talent show. In our free time, we interns sang Christmas carols in July, organized epic games of freeze tag for the students, and worked really hard to perfect our own “cover” of *Let It Go* for the talent show—I was even elected to conduct it! I'm grateful to have had such wonderful experiences and to have met so many wonderful mentors.

Hannah Schendel is Music Director of the Wayzata Symphony Orchestra, and Visiting Orchestra Director at Carleton College



Intern Kate Wolf helps student with bow hold 2001.



Chamber music coaching with intern Jacob Crosby, 2015



Nick Gaudette teaching bass lines for a Scottish fiddle tune 2016



Orchestra rehearsal with Nick Gaudette, 2015