

Strings Attached



Lyris Hung, Orchestrals Strings Product Manager, at the D'Addario Strings factory in Farmingdale, NY.



Beatrice Francais, ACMP Board Member, admiring the 600° string-coating bath.

Have you ever wondered what kind of strings to buy for your instrument? Gotten confused by the choices? Low, medium or high tension? Synthetic core, stranded core, or steel core? Aluminum wound, round wire surface, flat wire surface? Wondered about price level? What kind you should buy for your instrument? What is the best value?

Lyris Hung, Orchestrals Strings Product Manager for D'Addario Strings, can answer all these questions, and did, when ACMP Board Member, Beatrice Francais (Vn, New York, NY) and your editor toured the factory with her and observed the string making process from beginning to end.

Some of the variables for orchestral strings include the core materials and type, the number of windings around the core, the materials (silver vs. nickel) and the diameter and shape (round or flat) of the winding. All these, of course, influence the final price of the string. The complexities of how physics affects the sound of bowed strings are beyond us here, but look up the Helmholtz Motion if you want a tantalizing peek at the underlying science.

All strings start out with a filament of brass-plated high carbon steel. Special computerized machines stretch the steel to the desired thickness (picture bubble gum or salt-water taffy), passing it through rigidly controlled dies to prevent lumps or imperfections. When the steel has been stretched to the desired thinness (the higher the finished pitch of the string, the thinner the filament), it is processed in a sealed bath containing 1000 pounds of tin at 600 degrees, followed by a plunge into a trough of cool water to properly finish and coat the string.

There are three considerations for the core material: solid steel, stranded steel or a synthetic mad-made material. Solid steel cores are used for plucked strings (guitar, banjo, mandolin). Stranded steel cores have several strands wound together, which makes for greater elasticity and flexibility of response. A synthetic core (historically gut) produces the warmer sound that many violinists still prefer. But after Rostropovitch created a preference for brilliance of sound, stranded steel cores became the most commonly used for the lower range of instruments. After the core is selected, the string is wound with metal, most commonly aluminum. A ball or loop is added to the end, and the top and bottom of the string are wound with colored-coded silk to help protect it from abrasion and identify the pitch of the string.

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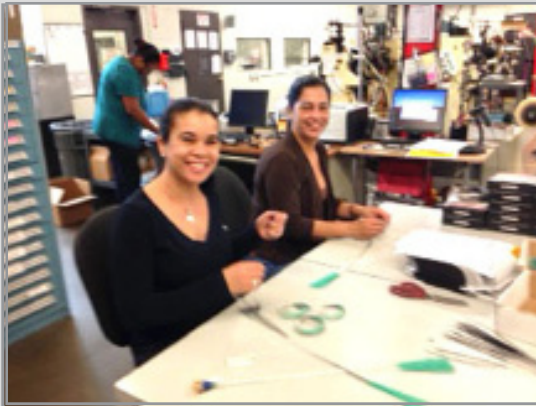
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Bulletin Board





"Silking" the string with a delicate strand of colored thread to protect it from abrasion and help identify pitch. In a highly skilled step, the operator applies a small amount of glue (visible on her index finger at lower right) to hold the strand in place during winding.



Strings are still coiled and placed in envelopes by hand.

(continued from previous page)

The 21st century computer sophistication ends at the final step. Coiling the string and placing it into its protective storage envelope is done by hand, as it has been for generations.

And how can you tell what strings you prefer? In a fascinating experiment, Beatrice brought her violin, and compared several of the strings, sold under different brand names, that D'Addario produces. Surprisingly, the difference was clearly detectable. Beatrice preferred the warmer tone of the synthetic core aluminum wound string, but Lyris, a talented violinist herself, pointed out that different strings will sound different on different instruments, and that the choice is a very personal one.

Lyris also pointed out that strings should be changed every six months or so (strings can stretch out, and the core be damaged by perspiration from a player's fingers) producing a slightly guilty blush when Beatrice admitted that she wasn't totally sure what kind of strings were currently on her violin, or when they had last been changed! This editor had to admit to the same thing. What about you?

D'Addario strings, with three factories located in Farmingdale, NY, is into its ninth generation as a family-owned business. It produces over 1,000,000 strings per day, and also manufactures reeds and drum heads. It is a vertically integrated company, meaning that not only are all steps of the the string's manufacturing process executed right there under direct supervision, but the advanced computer-controlled machines that process and inspect all components of the string manufacture are also designed and tooled there, so that each step is entirely overseen from beginning to end, insuring a perfect string.

D'Addario also has a charitable arm, The D'Addario Foundation, Inc., a non-for-profit corporation committed to inspiring and assisting the growth and appreciation of music throughout the world by partnering with passionate music educators.

To take your own virtual factory tour, visit <http://www.themusiczoo.com/blog/2010/factory-tour-daddario-strings/> or <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EVmHez5ehuU>.

To learn more about strings, enter [bowed string quiz 101](#) into your browser.

D'Addario brands for orchestral strings are Kaplan, Ami, and Vivo, ProArte is the brand name for student strings



Letter from the Chair

Autumn is my favorite time of year, when regular group rehearsals recommence, and everyone is invigorated from summer workshops, full of new musical ideas and having made new musical friends to add to the ACMP network.

ACMP was established for the purpose of promoting the education and enjoyment of members through the reading and performance of classical and contemporary music. Our mission is to stimulate and expand the playing of chamber music for pleasure among musicians of all ages and skill levels, worldwide, by connecting people and supporting chamber music activities for individuals, groups and institutions.

When the ACMP Board met in September, we focused our time on the two main thrusts of our mission – connecting people and supporting chamber music activities.

We are hard at work connecting people in many ways. We have just published our new Member Directory – be sure to check online for members in your area. Why not call someone new and invite them to play with you? Do you have a story to share about how the Directory has helped you connect or reconnect with someone? We'd love to hear from you. Planning has started for Worldwide Play-In Weekend on March 7-8, 2015. Have you thought about what you'll do that weekend? Is there a suitable venue near you for a larger gathering, or will you invite a few members to play with you in your home that weekend? We'd love to have as many ACMP members as possible – present and future – participate. Work is progressing well on ACMP's new website, which will provide you with exciting new ways to interact with other ACMP members online, and we anticipate a launch in the New Year.

The Board desires to increase ACMP's support for chamber music activities through grant-making. In addition to our current grant programs — Home coaching, Workshops and Community Music – we want to broaden our grant program to have more impact and increase access to chamber music to those who would not otherwise have the opportunity. Are you aware of programs in underserved areas that merit ACMP's support? Please let us know and encourage them to send us a grant application! As ACMP grows, we appreciate the importance of staying true to our roots and honoring our founders and early members, and one way we will be doing this is naming our grants for individuals with outstanding service to ACMP. We are delighted to be recognizing former Board Member, Newsletter Editor and Advisory Council Member Sue Lloyd in this way, as you'll read later in this newsletter.

Would you like to get more involved in ACMP as a volunteer? We have many volunteer opportunities including calling new or expired members, taking ACMP brochures to your local orchestra and music club meetings, and encouraging your local community music programs to apply to ACMP for grants. I look forward to hearing from you!

Janet White

Board Chair
Associated Chamber Music Players

2015 ACMP Worldwide Play-In Weekend

March 7-8, 2015

Join the Fun!!!!

Help Make Chamber Music
Circle The Globe.



What is a Play-In?

How do I find one?

How do I create one?

Pick a Place

Any place will do

Including your own home.

Invite Players.

Use the Directory.

Ask friends for ideas.

Play!

Even a duet will do!

For more information visit our website,
www.acmp.net

or write us

Play-In@acmp.net

Home Coaching

Home coaching, one of the great member benefits of ACMP, is open to all dues-paying members at all levels. Form your own group, choose your own repertory, your own schedule, your own coach, and your own location at your own convenience. The ACMP Grants Program subsidizes half of the cost.

To take advantage of this program, all you have to do is complete your application and submit it to the office after downloading it from our web site, <www.acmp.net>, or telephoning the office, (212) 645-7424 to receive one in the mail.

Be sure to Include

1. the names of all the members of your group,
2. the work you will study,
3. the prospective coach,
4. the dates of your coaching sessions, and
5. the amount that the coach will charge.

After the application is approved and the sessions begin, you pay your half directly to the coach, who then submits a bill for the remainder to ACMP.

Members may apply for one course of home coaching each year, and all members of the group must be members of ACMP.

From the Mailbox

Home Coaching

Sandy Sylvester (Vn, Sacramento, CA) writes: This was one of the most enjoyable experiences I have ever had. We all had different levels of skill, so our coach, Betsy Collins, spent extra time with the musicians who needed the most help. But we were all very patient with each other and enjoyed playing together.

We took time to analyze both problem areas and interesting ensemble areas, then we repeated these sections until we felt confident playing them, then repeated them again until they felt enjoyable. A final concert was a culmination of our work together and went really well.

A New Member Plans the Perfect Vacation Thanks to The Directory

Last summer a new member, **Jocelyn Crist (Fl, Atlanta, GA)**, was planning a trip over the 4th of July weekend, and used the Directory to combine her love of chamber music with her desire to see family and friends, botanical gardens, Pittsburgh, PA, Virginia Beach, and the Amish Country of Ohio.

She looked up members in those areas, sent the following Email (targeted for Ohio in this instance), and found herself with lovely invitations in all three places.

Hi,

My name is Jocelyn Crist. I am a 5th grade math/science teacher from the Atlanta area. I play the flute.

I found your contact information in the ACMP directory.

I am heading your way this week with plans to visit the Kingwood Center and Amish country.

I will be there on Thursday, June 26. I will probably stay in the area on Friday, June 27, too.

I would like to combine my time visiting the area sites with meeting new people and playing music.

I hope to stay at the KOA in Butler, Ohio.

Are you available to get together to play some duets or with a larger group of musicians?

I look forward to hearing from you!

Jocelyn

She describes her experiences as "Cool," and says people went out of their way to arrange music sessions for her. Unfortunately, a family emergency cancelled the Virginia portion of her trip. "A disappointment," Jocelyn says, "My hostess had actually arranged for a harpsichord, and how cool is that? Flute and harpsichord!"

There were some lovely moments along the way: Among the music that Carol Bernhardt (Ob, Mansfield, OH) had was a duet attributed to W. A. Mozart, *Der Spiegel*, aka "The Mirror," a duet for violins, meant to be played simultaneously for each player reading the music from top to bottom, but one player having reversed the music so that the top became the bottom. Jerry Agin (Vn, Pittsburgh, PA) had arranged flute quartets and borrowed music from a local library for the group to play. Jerry also has a website <http://intonia.com> that features a computer program to help string players play in tune.

Jocelyn comments, "What better way to travel? Combining friends, family, interests and music!" She definitely plans to schedule another "Directory Tour" and looks forward to enjoying her membership in ACMP.

ACMP Foundation News

New Award to be Established

In honor of her many years of devoted service
The ACMP Foundation is establishing the

Susan McIntosh Lloyd Award

to be given annually in recognition and support of an organization
which most reflects Sue Lloyd's lifelong commitment to
chamber music education for young people.

Sue Lloyd has been a mainstay of ACMP since its inception in 1947. Over the course of time, Sue has played numerous roles: serving not only terms as Chair, and Secretary, (a favorite quote from a set of Sue's Minutes, "It was moved, seconded, and carried unanimously to pass the chocolates brought from California.") In addition to serving as Newsletter Editor for 21 years, Sue also served as Board Member-at-large, and hostess of the annual Board Meetings that were traditionally held at her childhood home in Tyringham, MA, from the very beginning of ACMP until 1999

Sue is the kind of person who, in the interest of good manners, would, and once did, eat six major dinners in one day. This happened in a remote province of China on an international exchange semester from her regular teaching position



Sue Lloyd

at the Phillips Academy in Andover, MA. At each stop she was served an "honored guest" dinner and managed to eat each one rather than hurt the feelings of her hosts.

Executive Director, Dan Nimetz, remembers visiting Sue for his final job interview. The interview proceeded along these lines; "Oh, good," she said, "You've brought your horn! What would you like to play?"

Sue's caring and generosity of spirit are particularly evident in chamber music sessions, always encouraging participation and ready to switch off with whoever was waiting a for a turn." Music, chamber music and singing, have always played a large part in Sue's life. Her brother, Carey McIntosh, says "You always knew when Sue was in the house because she was always whistling, usually Bach."

Sue herself says, of coaxing her children into chamber music, "Our own children didn't cotton onto music much until Helen Rice decided she was going to make something of us, and coached us as a family for two summers." She adds, "Practicing is so lonely. Young people, especially those who are shy, need the social relationships and confidence that grow in chamber music groups and can't be won in other ways. Kids have no idea how much music they have absorbed until actually doing it, and then the realization is thrilling."

After retiring from her teaching position at Andover, Sue and her husband moved to Vermont in the Rutland area. Lucky Vermont! A local chamber music group there was ready to expand, and Sue says modestly, I was able to help them join up with the Rutland Youth Orchestra. Starting out with just a few players, its ranks are now burgeoning.

As another early mainstay of ACMP, Cecilia Saltonstall, once said, "Sue shows herself to be a teacher and a friend, a US historian, an author, the mother of 3 boys, a devoted wife, a cook, an artist and a fine string player. ACMP will never be able to repay her for all she has done for us."

Co-founder and guiding light, Helen Rice, initiated the first Newsletter, and asked Sue, then still a teen-ager, to draw cartoons for it, a practice that continued until 2002.

Sue says many of the cartoons were drawn from personal experience.

The cartoon below first appeared in 1992.

IS YOUR CHILD DEVELOPING
AT A NORMAL RATE?



at four weeks



at 7 months



at 9 months



at 8 years



at 16 years

CHECK HIS OR HER PROGRESS WITH
THIS CHART
WHICH IS BASED ON AN
EXHAUSTIVE STUDY MADE BY EXPERTS
IN THE FIELD

International News

Musique en Vacances, Loches, France

Nancy Rude (Pf, Walnut Creek, CA), and her friend, Ellen Moerman (Vc, France), write: One of the better kept secrets in the world of amateur music making has been the annual summer course for chamber musicians in the Royal City of Loches, right in the middle of the famous Loire Valley in France. The sheer unlimited enthusiasm and dedication of the teaching staff are enough to make one believe that despite the hard work one is supposed to put in, this is still a HOLIDAY!

This ten-day course (from the last Tuesday in July to the first Friday in August) is open to all chamber music enthusiasts, regardless of age and/or performance skills. Repertory and fellow musicians can be requested or assigned by the organizers as you prefer. Either way, there is plenty of time to practice your parts well in advance.

Each participant is assigned two works, and a full hour's coaching is scheduled every day, either from 9 to 12 am, or from 3 to 5 pm. Your coach is almost always a teacher for at least one of the instruments in the group. A series of workshops on the theory and history of music are held parallel to the coaching sessions.

The working language is French, but fortunately "forte" is "forte" in most languages, and if "fa dièse" is too much to cope with, there is always someone who can tell you that this is "F sharp."

The daily schedule includes orchestra for the instrumentalists, and choir for the vocalists after lunch. The orchestra is great fun, and a bit of a miracle. The conductor, Yves Simard, manages to weld a disparate bunch of instrumentalists into a well-drilled ensemble. The repertoire ranges from Baroque to Twenty-First Century.

Following dinner, there is time to practice, or relax, or explore the old city. At 9 pm, there is a lecture on a variety of subjects. Sunday is a day off for everyone and Sunday night is "Off" night (French for Fringe Festival) where performers choose silly or serious repertoire. Silly this year included a string quartet augmented by two kazoo's performing *The Village Musicians* by Mozart.

Performances, presented by both students and faculty, are a big part of the program. They are held either at the college itself, or in the lovely St. Antoine Church in the medieval city and are free to the public. The faculty performances are an absolute delight — imaginative and extremely well-presented, reminding us what chamber music could and should be about. The last night is "knees-up time" (a UK term for dance or party on the last evening), when creative groups of instruments perform an unusual selection; 12 clarinetists might perform their bit of Klezmer, the 19 cellists will sadly sing the demise of yet another almost dead swan, and the horns and pianists usually provide the comedy.

There is a painting and clay modeling course for spouses, partners or children of the music participants. An exhibition shows off their finished products at the end of the course.

There are also many activities to do with family and friends in the surrounding areas of Loches and the Loire Valley. Loches has a 1000+ year old dungeon to explore, as well as all the gorgeous Chateaux: Chinon, Chambord, L'Abbaye Fontevraud to name a few. Tuition covers meals (French style in the Cantina), coaching and accommodations, which include the more expensive Luccotel or the less expensive Dormitory located across from the Georges Besse college. The college houses the cantina, plus all the musical activities, except for the performances .

One can gain so much from this workshop, musical ideas and long lasting friendships, that many participants have returned year after year.



The Royal City of Loches



A wind ensemble performing in St. Antoine Church

A Proposal to the French Government

Floryse Bel Bennett, (Vn, Tolochenaz, Switzerland, Chair IAC) has sent us the English version of a letter sent to the Ministry of Culture in Paris by Michel Mayoud, France (Vn, Valence, FR, FFAMA and ACMP-IAC member), requesting funding for the Worldwide Play-In Weekend.

Joint Project FFAMA-ACMP National Chamber Music Days

1. Partners

The Amateur Music Association in France (FFAMA) organizes four national music meetings during the school holidays. The association is represented by one of its members on the Associated Chamber Music Players (ACMP) International Advisory Council.

The ACMP organizes a "ACMP Worldwide Play-in" during the first weekend of March, to encourage amateur players to meet and make music in private or in public and report the event to the representatives of the association for the purposes of promotion of Chamber Music worldwide.

2. Joint Project

The FFAMA would like to associate itself with this initiative. ACMP would be very happy to see a French association participate in this project at a national level. On the other hand, because of its international aspect, this initiative would give a certain value to the practice of chamber music in France.

3. Official National Support required

The FFAMA would like to request the Ministry of Culture to support the project officially and to promote this event in France, endorsing the publicity through the media services at their disposal.

The extension of this event to music schools and conservatories can be further considered.

Contact persons :

Michel Mayoud

Christiane Coiffard, FFAMA president



Floryse Bel Bennett who translated Michel Mayoud's proposal to the French Government, is shown holding the violin that once belonged to our Founder, Helen Rice.

Floryse writes: "Risotto" is the name given by Josie Stein (Vn/Va, Herne Hill, London), who received the violin as a bequest, is play on the meaning of Ms Rice's name.

I recently had the honor and great pleasure to play it with Josie and some of her friends.

It was a joyous and very moving experience.

Cadences

We are saddened to learn of the deaths of the following members:

Balint, Sandor (Vn /Mandolin): Bronxville, NY.

Barliant, Diana (Vn): San Diego, CA.

Brunner, Paul (Vc): Darien, CT.

Ives, Lori (Va): Claremont, CA.

Somach, Fredric, (Vn): Nokomis, FL, November, 2013, at the age of 83.

His son, Steve Somach writes: My father was passionate about chamber music, and that passion was his gift to his children and grandchildren. My brother and I, and my two children are all string players. My father indoctrinated my brother and me during high school with regular chamber music reading at home, and had the joy of doing the same with his grandchildren. A highlight of his chamber music experiences was being coached by the Guarneri Quartet with my brother and me, and our close friend and chamber music mentor, Mischa Koskoff.

Fred Somach's legacy will live on in the music my family continues to make.

Bequests

Your generous bequests and contributions will help us to continue to support the playing of chamber music for pleasure, and as well to nurture the next generation of chamber music players.

In these difficult financial times we are especially grateful to those who wish to honor the memory of their musical friends with a bequest or contribution in any amount.



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ACMP Bulletin Board

WANTED

Sheet Music for String Quartet/trio, etc.

I am looking for used (but good condition) copies of piano trios (Schubert, Beethoven, and others) as well as string quartet music by Dvorak, Barber, Ravel, Debussy)- or late Beethoven. If you have any please send me an offer... Contact: Gail Greenspan. Email: drqail-cares@yahoo.com

AVAILABLE

Chamber Music for Double Bass and Other Strings, Trombone, & Piano

For Sale: Numerous items (chamber music, solos with piano accompaniment, and method books) from my personal collection of sheet music, mostly for or including double bass. Chamber music include pieces for double bass, cello, viola, violin, flute, and piano. Solos are mostly for double bass and a few each for cello, trombone, and piano. Also for sale are dozens of jazz method books, play-alongs, theory & history books. Purchase individual items or all of them! See the complete up-to-date listing at <http://www.talkbass.com/forum/f145/sheet-music-instructional-cds-dvds-985905/> You can also contact Gregory Stevenson at gds185@yahoo.com or 203-297-1360 to obtain the list of items and ask any questions about it.

Romantic Trios for Strings

This collection consists of 29 arrangements of works composed in the romantic period (1815 -1910). The handy Program Notes at the end of this collection should provide you with interesting tidbits about all the composers and their works.

Tico, Tico; Golliwogg's Cake Walk; The Elephant from Carnival of the Animals; Sousa's The Liberty Bell; Trepak from Nutcracker Suite, etc.
To order "Romantic Trios for Strings", click on the following link: http://www.greenblattandseay.com/book_trios_romantic.shtml

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