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NEWSLETTER

ACMP

Winter 2019

CT SCANS and VIOLINS

By Anthony Vine, MD

In the current climate of old and rare stringed instrument evaluation, there is a premium on ascertaining condition to a fine degree. Until recently, the expertise of luthiers, woods lamps, dental mirrors and various magnification devices have been the standard ways to recognize repairs, cracks, patches, and worm damage. In the last decade, though, computerized tomographic (CT) scanning, similar to that used for patient care, has gained more status. The limitations of cost and non-universal access to this technology have not yet allowed this modality to be an initial examination tool.

From a 1997 article in *JAMA* (the Journal of the American Medical Association), we know that the first CT scans of old instruments took place in 1988. After scanning a trauma victim, Stephen Sirr, MD, an on-call radiologist at the University of Minnesota, wondered what his violin would look like in the CT machine. Motivated by that initial study, he began to collaborate with local luthiers and scanned multiple Stradivari and other old Italian violins.

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CT Scans and Violins

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Now we're seeing more and more articles lauding the detail that CT scans may provide, whether they are in music journals or the radiography literature. There are distinct differences between scanners used for this purpose, resulting in variations of imaging quality, or "resolution."

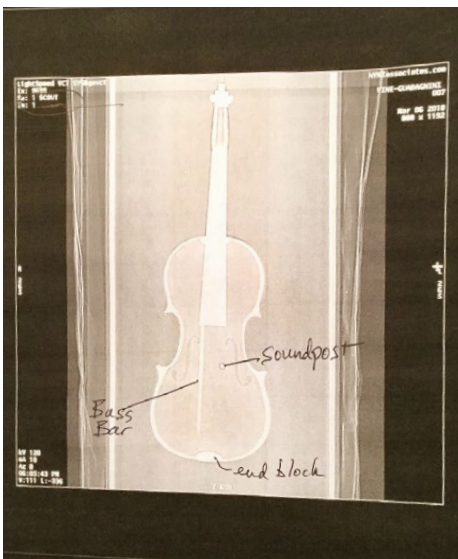
While the resolution of medical scanners—geared toward the diagnosis of disease in the human body—is good, the newer "microCT" machines have exponentially finer resolution and image reconstruction quality. A medical scanner can evaluate

a patient or a violin in a few minutes, but a microCT may take up to 11 hours. Image resolution is expressed not in term of two-dimensional pixels, but rather three-dimensional voxels: the former maximum being 0.45mm x 0.45mm x 2mm, and the latter 0.1mm x 0.1mm x 0.1mm.

"A medical scanner can evaluate a patient or a violin in a few minutes, but a microCT may take up to 11 hours."

the finer images, which appear like magnified, vivid photographs—almost as if we were gazing inside and out of the very instrument in our hands.

The technology may even help us understand the physics and acoustics of the violin. Dr. Sirr, the very same radiologist who began this quest, has recently progressed, in collaboration with a luthier, toward attempts to reconstruct contemporary violins based on the CT results of multi focal analysis of Golden Period Strads—with some encouraging success.



A "Scout" – a two-dimensional preview prior to actual CT run.

Both techniques will allow 3D and color reconstruction and both modalities will reveal repair cleats, cracks, wood filler, and damage by *Anobium domesticum* (wood worm), but microCT produces

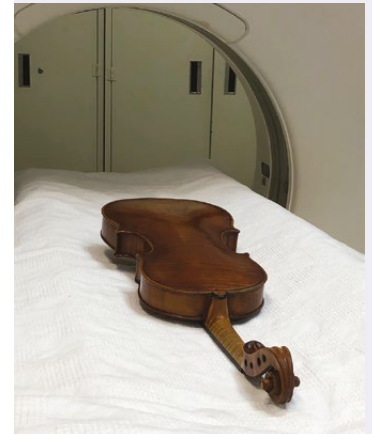
the finer images, which appear like magnified, vivid photographs—almost as if we were gazing inside and out of the very instrument in our hands.

To date, with the kind assistance and expertise of the doctors and techs at New York Medical Imaging (NYMI) Associates (along with techs Danny Rosen, pictured above, and Tina Opong), radiologists Dr. Burt Cohen and Dr. Joe Maklansky and I have examined two Strads, two Guadagninis, a Balestrieri, and a Lupot. On one Strad, we detected a 5mm soundpost crack on the back that had been so expertly repaired, it was invisible to several experts using traditional inspection techniques. One of the Guadagninis had a few noticeable small areas of worm damage/repair, but we were able to confirm that the extent of this issue was indeed minimal and confined to two tiny areas.

But no matter the progress of technological advancement in the 21st century, the mystique of the old Italian instruments remains sublime. Luthiers still employ tools and methods barely different from those that Stradivari or Guarneri del Gesù had in their shops: wood planes, files, calipers, hide (protein) glue. Contemporary instruments, whether "antiqued" or not, are beautiful to the eye and wonderful



CT tech gingerly positioning the "patient," a ca. 1775 GB Guadagnini—strings, bridge, tailpiece/fine tuner and pegs removed.



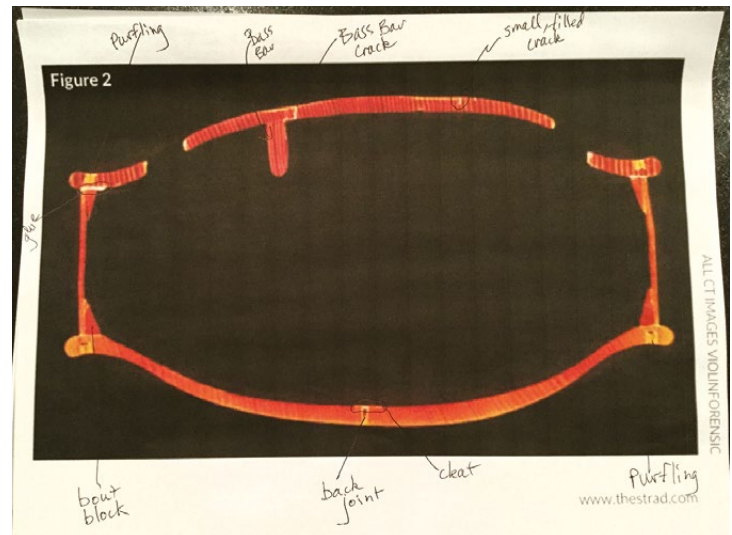
Violin now turned ventral side down for repeat scan (radiologists often reposition patients prone to revisualize intra-abdominal structures).

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to play—just as Stradivari’s “modern” violins were during his lifetime. Except for a few minor structural improvements and modifications, the violin, which almost suddenly appeared on the scene around 1524 thanks to Andrea Amati, has barely changed in shape or form. Who knows what fancy imaging technology will be in use 200 years from now, but barring destruction of the planet, we can be sure that these seemingly frail instruments will be thriving and will outlive all of us.

Anthony Vine MD is a laparoscopic general surgeon in New York City and a member of the American College of Surgeons Board of Governors. He specializes in esophageal, intestinal and hernia surgery. As an avid violinist, and Vice Chair of the ACMP Foundation Board of Directors, he continues to maintain his passion for chamber music.



Cross-sectional (axial) microCT image of a Jacob Stainer instrument (noticeable are the lighter-density areas of purfling, crack near bass bar with filler/glue (top R), back joint with thin cleat/patch (bottom center). Image courtesy of The Strad magazine, January 2018).

Letter from the Executive Director

A Workshop Guide, a Livestream Masterclass, a Play-In Weekend and a New Idea!

On a snowy November afternoon in New York, ACMP’s new Membership & Administration Associate Joseph Brock and I took a break from the winter gloom to marvel at the many wonderful chamber music workshops and destinations featured in the **2019 Workshop Guide**. The print copy – and access to the online PDF Guide – should have reached you by now. We hope you will be inspired to make your reservation and head to one of the more than 230 workshop destinations featured.

There are many ways you can participate in ACMP activities without leaving home. This winter, you can join in ACMP’s second annual free **Livestream Masterclass**. On February 16, 2019, award-winning Catalyst Quartet coaches two student quartets from NYC-based music programs in a classical and a contemporary work for string quartet. An ensemble from the Chamber Music Center of NYC, winner of the 2018 ACMP Susan McIntosh Lloyd award, explores Debussy, *Quartet, Movement 1* and a quartet from the Face the Music program at the Elaine Kaufman Center works on a contemporary piece: *Nepomuk’s Dances I – Arrival*, by Brazilian-American composer Marcelo Zarvos. A multi-

camera crew delivers every detail of the workshop online so you can participate wherever you are on a computer or mobile device. Check our website for scores and parts and a step-by-step guide on how to tune in. After February 16 you can watch the stream on our website or on Facebook.

Later in this newsletter you’ll find details of our seventh annual **Worldwide Play-in Weekend** on March 2 & 3, 2019. This is a chance to gather with friends, make new ones, and play great music. Be sure to send us your photos and reports. You can also find details of our newest adventure, **Going Places!**, which will help you find more people to play with when traveling in Europe and Japan through ACMP-affiliated local organizations.

Thank you for being part of a community of people who love to play chamber music and for spreading the joy.

Jennifer Clarke

Jennifer Clarke, Executive Director



Exploring the Online News in Brief Blog

ACMP's News in Brief Blog on our website offers posts on an array of topics of interest to chamber music players. Here are some recent favorites. Read more at www.acmp.net/news.

Reading Recommendations by ACMP Members

ACMP's bookworms submitted a collection of music-themed summer reads. Fiction, nonfiction, memoirs and guides populate this internationally-assembled collection. These titles are just as good for a cozy evening by the fire during winter months, too.

Even Classical Music Is Getting Faster These Days

A study into multiple recordings of the Bach *Double Violin Concerto* found that modern recordings of the work have shaved off one-third of the length of recordings from 50 years ago, quickening by about a minute per decade. That performance trend would fall in line with faster tempos in modern music, as audiences' attention spans shrink and streaming particularly pushes artists and songwriters to be more conscious of every second.

A Violist Discovers DragonScales

By Kitty Benton

After being a Vn-adv member of ACMP for many years, I decided to take up the viola. It was wonderful and revealing to read through familiar quartets from a different voice, and to find the sly musical treasures that Mozart hid in his viola parts.

One problem: Although I missed "eye recognition" for scales and arpeggios as I sight-read the viola parts – recognition that is built into my muscles, eyes and hands from intense study of the violin in my younger days – I was daunted by

the books on viola technique, and further challenged by the limited time I had available to practice. I did practice difficult sections of familiar quartets, but keenly felt the lack of eye recognition, especially when faced with those challenging clumps of black notes in faster rhythms.

Then I spotted DragonScales in the *News in Brief Blog* on the ACMP website. **Nick Revel**, founding violist of the **PUBLIQuartet**, www.publiquartet.com, has compiled 12 packages of scales and arpeggios.

"Then I spotted DragonScales in the News in Brief Blog on the ACMP website."

There is one for each key, with sheet music and matching MP3 files tuned to 441, which can be conveniently downloaded to your smart phone. The name DragonScales is a humorous take on slaying the "technique dragon" by practicing scales.

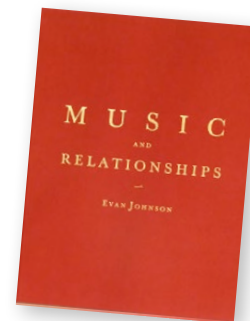
Each scale starts on half note values which gradually increase up to terrifying black clumps of

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Book Review

Music and Relationships – Listening for a Better World

by Evan Johnson / Book review by Janet White



Dipping into Evan Johnson's delightful volume on relating to one another through chamber music was like sitting in a post-quartet glow by the fire, slowly savoring a glass of fine single malt scotch whisky. This book will appeal to the serious amateur string quartet player; each page is richly illustrated with examples from well-loved string quartets. These are accompanied by audio tracks recorded by the author and friends in several sessions over a six-month period, available on the book's website.

This handsome volume is beautifully laid out with illustrations of 18th century Robert Adam ceiling designs to get the reader into a classical frame of mind – or just because. Although I've never met Evan, it's evident from his writing that he's a thoughtful and considerate chamber musician, as he gently offers insights and alternative options for how to approach a passage, without ever being didactic.

While experienced amateur chamber musicians may instinctively play these pieces in the ways Johnson suggests, it was illuminating to read how the score can provide us with clues about the music's character and which part should lead or imitate, and it was so much fun to read and recognize the excerpts as "old friends." The chapters on ornamentation and tuning were particularly fascinating, and Johnson also provides valuable tips on how a group can master some well-known quartet "train wreck" passages, as well as great suggestions for an easy quartet for those just beginning to get acquainted with chamber music.

For more information or to purchase a copy please visit www.MusicAndRelationships.com

Janet White (Vc, San Diego, CA) is a member of the ACMP Board of Directors and was Chair of ACMP from 2014 to 2017

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64th notes. This is great training for the fingers and eyes and very helpful for eye recognition whensight-reading. Therhythmic variations are inspired by the teaching methods of Ivan Galamian, the legendary Juilliard teaching maestro whose pupils numbered Nick Revel himself, as well as Itzak Perlman and Pinchas Zuckerman, among others.

It's been enormously helpful. I print out the sheet music, work out the fingerings, tune my viola to the MP3, and start in. Sometimes I don't quite match

the speed of the MP3, but the suggested tempi set great goals (one quarter = 60). You will still need a metronome that you can pair with MP3 files and has the capability to adjust the tempo without altering pitch if you want a slower tempo. Practicing scales with DragonScales is very different from practicing with a drone or a tuner. The fact that every note you play on your instrument can be tuned to the same note in the play-alongs at every moment (even through rhythmic progressions) is the thing that makes it unique.



Photo: Ryan Scherb

Nick Revel, violist and creator of DragonScales

Thanks to DragonScales my confidence in sight-reading the more difficult composers has greatly increased.

Kitty Benton plays the violin and viola and is the ACMP News Editor.

Find DragonScales via Revel's website: <http://www.nickrevel.com/dragonscales>

New ACMP Outreach Council Members

New International Ambassadors Council Member

Kaaz Yoshida Vn/Va, Tokyo, Japan



KAAZ YOSHIDA writes: I was an engineer and consultant in project management for international businesses for more than 25 years. My career took me to several countries outside Japan and I lived in the Netherlands from 1994 to 2011.

I started playing the violin at age 6, and now play the violin, viola and sometimes baroque violin. After moving to the Netherlands, I became keen on playing chamber music.

I started attending music workshops regularly in Europe and continued even after I came back to Japan in 2011.

After returning to Japan, I joined APA (Amateur Music Player's Association, Japan). There, I organized several concerts every year for APA members. As Director of International Contacts at APA, I organize the International Chamber Music Festival in March/April, a week-long workshop that 10 to 15 foreign visitors attend every year in addition to local players. More information at www.apa-music.org/english.

New North American Outreach Council Member

Carol Kirsh Va, Toronto, Canada



CAROL KIRSH credits chamber music and ACMP with giving her a new life after her husband died. With two degrees in business and a long career behind her, Carol started playing her viola again seven years ago and hasn't looked back.

Using the ACMP list of members, Carol has found like-minded amateurs to play with wherever she goes on her frequent travels. The new friends she has met in Toronto through ACMP and CAMMAC (Canadian Amateur

Musicians/Musiciens Amateurs du Canada) form the core of her regular string quartet, piano quartet and other small groups in her home.

Using the professional experience she gained as a senior executive in both the private and public sectors, Carol has also been active as a volunteer, particularly in music-related endeavors. She has served on the Board of Directors for CAMMAC Inc., and continues as a Director on the CAMMAC Foundation Board. For the past two years she has been curating and organizing a series of world music concerts for the Michael Garron Hospital in Toronto to reflect the soul of the very diverse community it serves.

Going Places!

ACMP proudly announces Going Places! – a new way to find players on your travels

ACMP's latest program, *Going Places!*, offers our members a new way to connect with amateur players while traveling in Europe and Japan. ACMP has built connections with communities of players in six locations – our *Going Places!* Affiliates. A contact person from each Affiliate group will hook you into their community of players so you can connect and play during your stay. Visit the *Going Places!* page on our website for details. Happy travels!

ACMP *Going Places!* Affiliates

- Berliner Kammermusikliste, Berlin, Germany
- I Cambristi Belgium, Brussels, Belgium
- I Cambristi Milan – Cambristi Roma – the Italian Chamber Music Network
- Cambristi Lemani, Geneva Region, Switzerland
- APA (Amateur Music Player's Association, Japan), Tokyo, Japan
- Benslow Music, London, Cambridge, Oxford and other cities, UK

From the Mail Box

Home Coaching

KIM WILLIAMS (Vn/Va, San Carlos, CA) writes: Many thanks for your help and support of our home coaching grant. Joyce, Liz, and I spent a wonderful afternoon working with David Balakrishnan (founder of the Turtle Island Quartet) yesterday. He not only helped us with his arrangement of Bernstein's "Cool" but also taught us a number of stylistic bowing techniques and some jazz theory (wow!). The grant was wonderful, as not all of us have high-power jobs and our cellist incurred travel expenses for both herself and her cello.



Kim Williams and her group enjoyed home coaching

Making Music in Montenegro

MAJA POPOVIC (Pf, Podgorica, Montenegro) writes: It was a busy and productive summer, as I was preparing and organizing the seventh Montenegro Summer Camp for Chamber Music, which took place at the Lovćen mountain and National Park.

More than 50 musicians of different ages, levels, and nationalities attended. Many were young musicians from Montenegro and countries of the Balkan region and adult players from Russia, Germany, Norway and the US also attended. This year's mentors and coaches shared their enthusiasm and knowledge with our participants – about 24 chamber groups of all kinds and combinations – working and sometimes playing with them. As a finale, they all took part in play-in soirées and final public concerts in the Ministry of Culture in Cetinje (old royal Montenegro capital) and the "Budo Tomović" Cultural Information Center of Podgorica (capital).



A two-horn quintet in Montenegro

Orfeo Duo – 10th Anniversary for the “Comfortable Hands-On Exploration of New Chamber Music” in NYC

VITA WALLACE writes: Ten years ago, with help from the ACMP Foundation, the Orfeo Duo and Lisa Terry held their first workshop for adult amateur musicians to play new music. Every year since then, by hook or by crook, they have held the workshop and commissioned composers to write works especially for the participants. To help players enter into the composers' process and understand their choices, the composers attend the workshop, coach, answer questions and even in some cases play in their own pieces. All voices, instruments and levels of experience are invited. Small groups are assigned to match experience levels. Early instruments are welcome alongside modern, and the instrumentation of the small ensemble pieces has often been unique and memorable. Piano four-hands, bass and accordion?

For more information, please call or text Vita Wallace at 212-666-0928 or email her at orfeoduo@gmail.com.



2014 workshop participants (L to R) Nailah Nombeko (composer), Matthew Hessenger (Db), Faith Rowold (Acc), and Melinda Payne (Vc), with coaches Lisa Terry and Ishmael Wallace (standing right).

New Members

Welcoming Our New Members

51 new members have joined ACMP since the Fall Update. Join us in welcoming them.

Arizona	(1)	Illinois	(3)	Minnesota	(1)	Pennsylvania	(3)
California	(10)	Indiana	(2)	New Jersey	(2)	Vermont	(1)
District of Columbia	(2)	Kentucky	(2)	New York	(10)	Virginia	(2)
Florida	(1)	Maryland	(1)	Ohio	(2)	Washington	(2)
Iowa	(2)	Michigan	(1)	Oregon	(2)	Germany	(1)

Stay connected! We encourage you to use the online Directory to find the most up-to-date member information for reaching out to those in your area or on your travels.



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THE NEWSLETTER OF THE ASSOCIATED CHAMBER MUSIC PLAYERS

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SEVENTH ANNUAL

ACMP WORLDWIDE PLAY-IN WEEKEND

MARCH 2-3, 2019



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ACMP, Associated Chamber Music
Players, is a global organization that
encourages and supports the playing
of chamber music for pleasure among
musicians of all ages and skill levels.

A copy of ACMP's last annual report
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