



Plucked Strings

Serving the needs of mandolin ensemble players, promoting mandolin ensemble music to the world, stimulating new compositions to enhance the repertoire.

A Quarterly Newsletter

May 2012

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Web Address: <http://www.fame.asn.au>

Editor: Danny Silver (dannysilvergp@gmail.com)

President's Report

This will be Danny Silver's last edition of Plucked Strings as he has chosen to step down from the role of Editor and I thank Danny on your behalf for the 18 issues he has produced since 2007. Well done Danny and thank you! This will also be my last report as President as I have decided (or rather, been told by my wife / health adviser) not to stand for re-election as a Representative for Western Australia.

Here are a series of reminders:

Please pay your membership renewal as soon as possible, as your financial status will affect your eligibility to vote at general meetings.

There will be a Special General Meeting in Perth in July during the FAME Festival at which elections will be held for FAME's Executive Office-Bearers – President, Vice-President, Secretary and Treasurer. Nominees for these positions are limited to the Regional Representatives who will make up the FAME Committee of Management for 2012-13. All will hold office until the next Festival to be held in January 2014 in Melbourne.

Each Region (Queensland, NSW, ACT, Victoria, Western Australia and New Zealand) has either one or two Representatives on FAME's Committee of Management, the number being based upon the number of financial FAME members in the Region (less than 8 members = no representative; 9-20 members = 1 rep; 21 or more members = 2 reps). FAME members in each Region will need to organise their own process to affirm their Representatives for 2012-13. The FAME Constitution does not direct the nature of this process except to put the matter in the hands of the members in each Region – it is not the responsibility of the FAME Committee of Management to organise this. Whether you choose a democratic election, a hereditary succession or a competition by the Marquis of Queensbury rules, please select your Regional Representatives in plenty of time to be able to

inform the FAME Secretary by the beginning of June of their nominations, and also of their nominations for the Executive positions. The Executive election is by vote of all financial FAME members and takes place at the Festival in July and it is important that all FAME members know well in advance of the nominees.

Planning for the FAME Festival in Perth in July is progressing well, and FAME's financial contribution will be in the order of \$8000 – made up of a refundable seeding loan, a grant towards the costs of the conductors, and a Youth Subsidy to offset the attendance costs of possibly as many as ten young attendees. A financially successful festival would see the return of the \$2000 loan and hopefully a half share of a profit. Looking ahead, your Committee of Management is considering the requests from the committee of the next FAME Festival in Melbourne 2014. Again with the possibility of funding in the same ballpark is being considered.

It does not take a financial wizard to see that with membership income of less than \$2000 a year, FAME is not going to be able to continue to support Festivals at this rate indefinitely unless there is a strong wish by a Festival Committee to bolster FAME's income stream with a profitable outcome. I am concerned by the notion that FAME is seen merely as an open wallet. Through motions passed in General Meetings the Membership has directed that FAME commission a new music work every year, the current cost of which is in the order of \$2000 a work. For several years now this has been executed by the FAME Committee of Management making funding available to FAME Festivals for a music commission, rather than itself carrying out a system of commissioning. This way music gets written for a specific purpose and with a confirmed performance in mind. This is of course not the only option, and can be discussed at a future General Meeting if anyone has an alternative suggestion.

I would really dislike seeing the dismantling of the Youth Subsidy for attendance at FAME Festivals. While this has been an initiative of the Committee of Management rather than a directive from a General Meeting, it is currently the most practical way that the Committee can promote the aim of encouraging young people to get involved with the Mandolin Orchestra movement. Each Festival attendee who is a FAME member under the age of 26 and is resident in Australian or New Zealand has their participation fees reduced by \$200. This sum is then forwarded from FAME to the Festival account to balance the books. Following its introduction by the 2006 Festival Committee in Canberra, where the subsidy came not from FAME but directly from the Festival budget, the scheme was adopted by the FAME Committee and has been successfully applied in the last four Festivals since. Perth has attracted (I think) eight applicants, so the numbers slowly increase. Currently the FAME Committee have been budgeting for up to 12 applicants.

So, I bow out as your President.

There are a number of ideas I have put up over my term which have not met with any success at all, but I leave the Committee having at least overseen a period in which FAME has financially supported four successful Festivals and in return received a good income from their profits. I thank all those Regional Representatives who have served on the Committee of Management with me and those Festival Organisers with whom we have worked. Last but not least by any means, my thanks go to the several close friends who have served as Vice-Presidents, Treasurer and Secretary during my terms of office. A number of us are stepping down this year, and I wish all the best to those who take up the reins.

Robert Kay
FAME President



Auckland Mandolinata Orchestra

Hello from Auckland. It seems my last contribution to the newsletter is still out there in cyberspace, so here is the updated version.

We started 2012 in style with an open air concert at a water garden just out of town. It was a beautiful day – we had a sheltered stage and we enjoyed playing our old favourites to a very appreciative audience. Recently our committee arranged for a luthier, Phil Whitehead, to talk to us about care and maintenance of our instruments. Phil has worked on several of our instruments and is a mandolin player himself. He demonstrated changing strings and while doing so he explained the importance of keeping the instruments functioning well, and how to avoid the problems that can arise especially with older mandolins. There were plenty of questions and Phil proved to be both informative and entertaining.

We are now starting to prepare for our "Winter Series". We have a great little venue at the Irish Club at "Rocky Nook", with a regular audience of faithful followers including past members. The concerts are held each month June to September in the late afternoon. We all bring a plate and our good friends help out in the kitchen providing cups of tea. We have a "guest" each time, with an orchestra connection. Johannes comes along to do duos with Bryan, Patrick's Irish friends get involved, and for our final concert we feature 'Almond Icing' (you might remember us from the Fame camp).

Last year a highlight of Rocky Nook was having the opportunity to play a Calace Lyre Mandolin. It was made in 1900 and in very good condition. It's very comfortable to hold – well balanced and has a good sound. I really enjoyed playing it.



It is owned by Janeann, who has kindly offered to let me play it whenever I wish and who relates the following: "regarding the history of my mandolin - it has on the label- "Fratres Calace Neapoli 1900" and signed by the same name. My father bought it between the 1st and 2nd world wars in a second hand shop. (We think a soldier may have bought it back from the 1st world war- but that is

Orchestra Reports

only hearsay.) It has been in the family ever since...and we love it but can't play it."

Last year three of our new members joined us in our concerts. Kerry, Andrea and Gianni are all making fantastic progress with a lot of help from Diana. They're all very keen and already valued members of the orchestra.

I'm very sorry to tell you that our dear friend and orchestra member Bonnie Malpas passed away on 12th December 2011.

Bonnie played with us well into her eighties, travelling from Waiheke Island to attend rehearsals and concerts. She attended several FAME camps, and it was while in Perth she bought her mandola from Zenith Music. Bonnie's family have donated the mandola to the orchestra.

Some of us had been making music with Bonnie for over 30 years! Indeed we will miss her.

See you in Perth.

LynneSue Flaming

Canberra Mandolin Orchestra

The CMO got off to flying start this year with a most unusual engagement at new (reasonably) new National Portrait Gallery. Periodically the gallery organises a Sunday afternoon event in which members of the general public are invited to come in and draw or paint a featured music group or solo musician. The gallery provides easels and all drawing and painting materials.

We formed two quintets (two firsts, a second, mandola and mandocello) to share the two-hour performance of this 'life drawing' event (we were fully clothed, but the instruments and our musical ability were there for all to see..).

This was a wonderful opportunity for CMO members to meet the challenge of small ensemble performance, particularly as we lacked the solid rhythm backing of bass and guitar.



Members of the Canberra Mandolin Orchestras provide the "life" and the music at the National Portrait Gallery's recent 'draw-in'.

It was also a revelation as to which pieces worked with this combination of instruments.

An interesting performance in early March was at Goulburn, an hour from Canberra and one of Australia's first inland towns. We played at the beautiful 'Old Catholic Cathedral' which dates back to the Goulburn's Roses and Heritage Festival.

And mid-March saw us performing our now-traditional concert at Government House for the VIP Breakfast launching the Smith Family's fundraising Open Day. All in all, a great start to the year with a number of other interesting projects in the pipeline!

Sam Leone

Concordia

With our first concert coming up on Sunday March 25th, Concordia rehearsals are well underway for 2012. This charity concert at the Cumberland View Retirement complex, will allow Concordia some welcome practise in a public performance before undertaking a major concert at St. John's Southgate on 20th May. With four other possible concerts planned for later in the year, 2012 is shaping up to be a busy and enjoyable one for Concordia.

Sue Martin

COZMO

(No report received unfortunately)

Mandolins D'Amour

(No report received unfortunately)

Melbourne Mandolin Orchestra

The MMO has had a busy start to 2012 starting with a short "cameo" outdoor performance at the Mediterranean Festival in Keilor which included mostly Italian and Greek music and involved a performance with a lovely soprano, Elisabeth Denk. Apparently our performance was so well appreciated that we've been asked by the organizers to do a much longer performance, but indoors, in mid June!



Orchestra Reports (continued)

We've just performed our 4th annual concert in Castlemaine, a lovely old gold-mining town about 90 minutes drive north of Melbourne in central Victoria. One of the highlights of this concert was orchestra leader Darryl Barron's great performance as soloist in the Braun Mandola Concertino in B.



Our performance in Castlemaine was once again a great success and afterwards the orchestra had a great party the lovely bush home of one of our players who lives only a few kilometres north west of Castlemaine.

Our next performance will be in about a month's time in a winery, Stones of the Yarra Valley, in Coldstream. This will be a 60 minute performance in the chapel and will immediately precede the serving of Sunday lunch. Mmmm....good music, good food and good wine in a beautiful setting...what could be better? We're planning to perform Keith Harris' new work "Three Miniatures for Mandolin Orchestra" as commissioned by Geoff Barber's Australian Mandolin Music Association. Thank you Geoff! We have invited Concordia players to join the MMO to prepare and perform this concert and in turn our players have been invited to rehearse and perform with Concordia in a concert at Barwon Heads towards the end of the year.

A number of MMO players are coming to Perth in July and we're looking forward to yet another wonderful FAME Festival.

In late September we're planning to hold a concert in the Tivoli German Club of Melbourne which is now the new rehearsal venue for the MMO. We will share the concert billing with the German Club choir, both groups performing some of their own repertoire and then we'll get together to do some combined pieces.

Danny Silver

Queensland Mandolin Orchestra & Brisbane Mandolins

(No report received unfortunately)

Sydney Mandolin Orchestra

Sydney's most important icons are turning 80 this year!!

The Sydney Harbour Bridge – now climbable by all (willing to part with a not insubstantial sum of money), and crossed over by many on a daily basis, the enduring link between north and south of the Harbour.

The Sydney Symphony Orchestra – who, last Sunday, played on the arch of the bridge to commemorate the actual birthday the next day (19th).

(Also, **The Australian Broadcasting Corporation (ABC)** is 80 this year.)

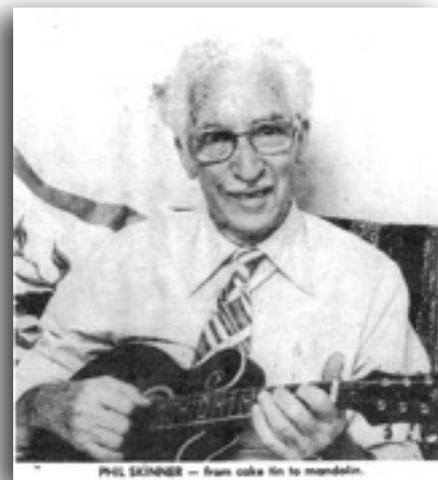
And, of course - **The Sydney Mandolin Orchestra!!**

The orchestra was formed, by Phil Skinner, in 1932, (although it was not known by this name until the late seventies). It consisted of his music students who gathered



together in his home every Friday night, to have practice with ensemble playing. This group was originally known as the "Blue and Gold Banjo, Mandolin and Guitar Club". The group performed locally and could also be found playing on the Lane Cove ferries on their way home from city gigs. A couple of years later, after the acquisition of mandolas, mandocellos and a player with a string bass viol, the group became known as "Phil Skinner's Neapolitan Orchestra" – more like what we know today as a mandolin orchestra.

According to a history of Phil Skinner and the Orchestra (written by a group of members in the 1980's), (Harry) Phillip Skinner was first taught to finger the banjo, by an uncle who played by ear. His dad then made him an 'instrument', using a large round cake tin for the body, with a hand-made fret board (from an old piece of wood) and a belt buckle for the tailpiece!! Only the strings and machine heads were bought. Many of Sydney's (now) well-known mandolinists began their playing careers with Phil Skinner and his orchestra



PHIL SKINNER – from cake tin to mandolin.

– Adrian and Paul Hooper (also Adrian's wife, Barbara who played guitar), Stephen Lalor, Keith Harris, Coralie Tosswill as well as our Fiona Orenstein and Trish Polley (who were also students of Phil's).

Also – Yours truly began her mandolin career (!!!) with Phil Skinner! Not in his orchestra, but with friends (one mandolinist, two guitars) at Ryde Evening College. I spent a term learning from Phil in that small group, before travelling around Europe in a camper van for 12 months...when I returned to Sydney (and work!) I started individual lessons with Coralie.

Our own Hilda Thorburn played in Phil Skinner's Orchestra, and continued with the orchestra since then, which I think probably makes her one of the longest (continuous) members of any Australian Mandolin Orchestra. Sadly, at the moment, Hilda is in hospital. Three weeks ago, she attended our AGM, with her treasurer's report, and agreed to continue in the role of Treasurer. However, the next evening, she was taken to hospital. We all send her our love and best wishes.

Last year The Mosman Daily ran an article on the oldest and youngest players in SMO – Hilda Thorburn and Jacques Emery.

SMO has a number of Music Club gigs lined up for this year as well as our regular appearances at a couple of Aged Care Homes.

We have a good contingent heading West in July, and we look forward to catching up with friends there.

Peter Canavan



Orchestra Reports (continued)

PERTH INTERNATIONAL MANDOLIN FESTIVAL

JULY 8-15, 2012

As the time for the Perth Mandolin Festival approaches we can now provide more detail for the event and hopefully encourage you to make your registrations as soon as possible if you have not already done so. We will kick start the Festival with an opening concert by the host orchestra WAMO on Sunday evening (8th) at 8 PM. This short concert, which will feature our WA Youth Mandolin Orchestra, will be an opportunity for us to welcome everyone to the Festival and introduce the important people you will be working with during the week.

By way of personnel the following have accepted the positions of section leaders. The Festival orchestra (now numbering a little over 70) will be led by Darryl Barron from the MMO. Second Mandolins will be lead by Col Bernau from Canberra. The Mandolas will be lead by Jan Gillingham from Port Hedland, the guitars by Beverley Davis from America and the basses by Ann Palumbo from Sydney.

The orchestra will also feature an oboist, two percussionists and a timpanist all

students from the music department from the University of Western Australia. Featured too will be a multi-voiced choir being formed by Rob Kay.

Attached to this newsletter is the week's program so you may see what times are taken and what is free. Details of the rehearsal-free afternoon on Wednesday and the Friday evening activities are still being ironed out.

The Concert Finale will be held at the John Curtin College of the Arts Auditorium in Fremantle, with a seating capacity of 450. At this stage we are very hopeful we will be able to present the concert as a free to the public event, which will ensure there will be a full house. (We await a government grant application outcome due by end of March).

The music program (music to be sent out to applicants mid March) consist of Homeward Bound, a version sent to us by Mark Davies (one of our guest conductors) to open the program. This will be followed by "Bagatelle" by G. Luft, a piece being offered by Marco Ludmann from Holland (our second guest conductor) who will then conduct Schulz' "Symphony of Seasons" to conclude the first half.

The second half opens with some performances by our two guest conductors.

Mark Davis will then conduct Keith Harris' "Three Miniatures" a work recently commissioned by Geoff Barber's AMMA. This will be followed by "Poems from the Fridge" for choir and orchestra by Rob Kay. We will conclude with a short encore with Marco Ludmann at the helm called "Family Squabble". At the conclusion of the concert we bus it back to the College for a nice supper.

[NB. As the FAME Newsletter has been substantially delayed by a fortnight, the deadline for applications has also been set back. Late applications will still be accepted up until the Festival begins.]

Trinity College part of the University of Western Australia complex is nicely situated for you to make excursions out and about both to Fremantle and Perth. There will be a variety of tours and other information available to you in your welcome packs upon arrival.

Participants needing accommodation before or after the Festival at the College, please contact the Festival committee direct.

Robert Schulz

Week Roster for Perth Mandolin Festival 2012 – February 2012 Draft

JULY 2012	SUN DAY 8 th	MONDAY 9 th	TUESDAY 10 th	WEDNESDAY 11 th	THURSDAY 12 th	FRIDAY 13 th	SATURDAY 14 th
7 – 9	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast	Breakfast
9 – 10.30		Festival Orchestra Rehearsal Mark Davis	F.O.R. M.L.	F.O.R. M.L.	F.O.R. M.D.	F.O.R. M.L.	F.O.R. M.D. M.L.
10.30		Morning Tea	Morning Tea	Morning Tea	Morning Tea	Morning Tea	Morning Tea
10.45 - 12		F.O.R Marco Ludmann	F.O.R M.D.	F.O.R M.D.	F.O.R M.L.	F.O.R M.D.	
12.30	Arrival and registration	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch - Then social outing	Lunch	Lunch	Lunch
2		Section rehearsal	Private Practice		Private Practice	F.O.R. M.L.	
3.30		Afternoon tea	Afternoon tea		Afternoon tea	Afternoon tea	Concert venue rehearsal
4		Private Practice	Workshop		Workshop	F.O.R. M.D.	↓
5		Free time (Festival Shop)	In-house rehearsal		In-house rehearsal	Free time (Festival Shop)	↓
6	Dinner	Dinner	Dinner		Dinner	Dinner	Dinner
7.30	Opening Concert and welcome By WAMO	A.G.M. 7.30 PM	F.O.R. With Choir M.D.		F.O.R. With Choir M.D.		Concert Venue - John Curtin College of the Arts
8.30			In House Concert	Games Night – Quiz's etc!!	In-House Concert		
9			↓		↓		
10							After show Party
11							

Which One to Use

A series about making choices on the mandolin.

Instalment 7

So far in this series, we have looked at details of ways to do particular things – with or without a specific context. I thought it might be fun in this instalment to try a short but complete piece – which however certainly requires enough technical know-how to be interesting. We also think a little bit about what it means, when we say that something “suits” an instrument.

A bit of background:

I was born shortly after WW2, and grew up in a society still very much shaped by it. Part of the legacy was being able to hum tunes from the *Warsaw Concerto*, written by the British composer Richard Adinsell for the 1941 movie *Dangerous Moonlight*. I’m sure I shared this ability with almost everybody in the western culture around the time.

As a young adult in England, I recall being asked at a party to play this piece (a deliberately emotionally-charged work, employing huge orchestral resources, in the style of Rachmaninoff) on my instrument, the mandolin. There was no way for me to convince the person (whether he was stupid, drunk or just plain nasty, I don’t recall - probably all three) that the request itself was utterly ridiculous; *I* was the one to feel inferior because I couldn’t fulfil his wish.

In fact, his error in thinking is widespread: not considering that there has to be a fitting relationship between any given task and the material available to accomplish that task. But whereas it’s obviously silly to expect an elephant to balance on an overhead cable or a canary to carry a heavy log in its beak, it’s not quite as obvious that music written with a certain instrument in mind may not work as well on a different instrument. Of course it’s fun to play violin or flute music on the mandolin – or even perhaps tunes from the *Warsaw Concerto* –, but there are differing opinions about whether it’s a good idea to do it on stage – and also about *why* it may or may not be a good idea.

Composers usually have an idea about how their music is to be performed. If the music is well-suited to a particular instrument, the word *idiomatic* is often used. The first of the star virtuoso performers –Paganini, Chopin, Liszt and so on – wrote a lot of the music they played themselves. The music is often awfully hard, and one has to be a real musical acrobat to play it, but it is nonetheless *idiomatic*, because it is tailor-made for the instruments these legendary performers played. Rachmaninoff himself was in this tradition.

Various generations of mandolin virtuosi have also included performer/composers. Two hundred years ago there were people like Leone, Denis and Barbella, and then, at the beginning of the 20th century, Munier, Stauffer and Ranieri. In our own time, Yasuo Kuwahara, Neil Gladd or Stephen Lalor have performed music they wrote themselves.

Even music that may *look* simple can be impossible to play on the mandolin if it isn’t

tailored to the instrument, and that’s only one of several reasons to be careful with *transcriptions*.

Here’s a very modest little piece, “Slipping and Sliding”, which I wrote for particular students to illustrate various possibilities of the instrument. There’s a lot of room for an individual approach to many aspects, and I hope you feel free to try out different possibilities, and see if some suit you (or the tune) better than others. My descriptive notes point out certain technical things or often simply explain what I mean by some of the signs.

a) Pluck the notes marked with “x” with a spare finger of the stopping hand (if you are right-handed, the left one...)

- Mandolin players are often not used to reading music written in several parts. Please be careful: the first four bars are notated in two parts, so the dotted minim is sustained for three beats, while the crotchet rest and the two single crotchets are played at the same time.
- The technique of plucking with the left hand has, as one might expect, a number of descriptions and signs. Frequent is left hand pizzicato or *mano sinistra* (m.s.).
- You can pluck with any finger apart from the one busy stopping the high g”, but probably 2 for the g” and 4 for the two pizz. notes are expedient.

b) Try playing this note – f’ on the count of 2 – with the slide technique.

Slipping and Sliding

Composed and edited by:
Keith David Harris

M.M. ♩ = 88-120

Tune “Slipping and Sliding” and text Copyright © 2011 Keith David Harris

- In this little piece this is indicated by the slur sign.
- This means: do not strike the note with the plectrum. Instead, strike the previous note, then move the stopping finger (1st finger in this case), vigorously and exactly on the count of 2, up one fret from e' to f'.
- Important: keep the pressure constant – don't loosen the finger! If you carry out the procedure successfully, you produce a rather soft but very clear f'.
- Tip: Ideally, the slide here involves not a finger movement but rather a hand movement. The pinkie-side edge of the hand leads, pulling the 1st finger along the fingerboard.

c) A slide in the other direction, which sometimes seems a little more difficult at first.

- How to do it: no stroke; this time, it's the thumb-side edge of the hand that leads. The finger maintains a constant and even pressure on the fingerboard.
- Tip: think about throwing a ball. It's useful to "wind up", to gain momentum. In this case by you rotate the hand slightly in the direction opposite to where it's about to move, and then use the built-up energy to throw the leading edge in the direction you want.
- Another useful comparison is perhaps with casting a fishing line, where a lead sinker is thrown, and pulls the fishing line attached to it.

d) The pinkie-side edge of the hand drags the 1st finger smoothly and elegantly along the string, and you consciously produce a drawn-out sliding sound (glissando).

- How to do it: strike the note e' and then start sliding the finger immediately. (A very common mistake is to hold the starting note so long that the string stops making any sound at all.)
- Once the finger starts sliding, however, take your time! The finger should move slowly and evenly. If it reaches the 14th fret (the pitch of the next note, the open e'') on the count of 3, fine. Even if it doesn't get that far though or even goes further, the effect is still fun to hear.
- Whatever happens, it is very important to strike the open e'' string exactly at the right time, on the 3rd count. When you become proficient, you can decide yourself exactly what effect you want to produce; the glissando starting on the lower e' fills the two counts of the half-note, until the right moment (the count of 3) for the higher e''.
- Important: the stopping pressure remains constant. The correct pressure is the amount needed to produce clear sounds. If there is not enough pressure squeezing the string against the fingerboard, there will be just no sound, or at least no good sound. If you apply more pressure than needed, you may not notice it in terms of sound (a lot of people don't...), but you are nonetheless certainly wasting energy, which could be put to better use somewhere else.
- Note: On the count of 3, the right hand plays the 1st string while the left hand is still busy on a different string. This may well feel peculiar!

e) Much the same instructions as for (d), but the gliss. is shorter.

- Remember: this a glissando, where we actually want to hear all the sliding sounds. You could strike both notes or only the first of the two. With the technique called a slide, the movement itself is instantaneous – unlike the glissando – and it produces the second note without a plectrum stroke. Remember that the wavy glissando line indicates an audible sliding sound between the notes.

f) It's not far to this note with the pinkie, so take care not to stretch too much.

- The anatomically correct finger for most people still is the pinkie however, rather than the 3rd finger (which violin players would invariably use), which often means turning the hand outwards away from the neck of the instrument. This moves the pinkie away from the fingerboard, and the general instability of the hand makes it harder to finger accurately. The same is true also for the c' in bar 8 of course.

I also indicate some other things of a general musical nature:

- dynamics (loud and soft – *f*, *p* etc., or *crecendo* and *diminuendo* – get louder or softer, as indicated by the so-called *hairpins*), and tone color or timbre – *met.* – play *metallically*, near the bridge, or *nat.*urally, over the sound hole or *f-holes*. *Met.* often sounds particularly good if you strike only one string of the pair.

I hope you enjoy sliding around the mandolin.

Keith Harris, Marburg(Germany)

Keith Harris has been teaching the mandolin on-line with Skype for a year now. Here are a few reactions from students:

Hans (professional violinist from Vienna, Austria):

"Thanks for last year. The best decision I ever made about learning the mandolin was to take up your offer of two free introductory lessons, even after I had attended various courses with very interesting teachers.

The title of your book is *The Mandolin Game*. For me though, especially the first ten lessons were more like a *mandolin adventure*.

Interestingly, your teaching has not only had an impact on my mandolin playing: it has also had a noticeable effect on my many other musical activities – in my string quartet, the Concert House Orchestra, chamber music, the plucked string ensemble. I hope we can keep talking about music for a long time to come."

Eddie (mandolin teacher in Glasgow, Scotland):

(About tuition with Keith Harris)

"I often talk to classes about things that I learned from Keith Harris in the many lessons I have had from him over the years. It amounts

to a lot of what I use for technique and other aspects of playing the mandolin."

About Skype teaching:

"It's just like being face to face with him, and his ability to analyse and solve technical problems is undiminished. I would recommend this to any player and/or teacher who wishes to improve on the mandolin."

Robert (lawyer from Brisbane, Australia):

"Thanks for the technical suggestions ... Looking forward to tomorrow... You have given me a wakeup call about my approach to playing, particularly in relation to some basic elements...in music the world is our oyster... Thanks once again for the new material and the excitement of music... I really appreciate what you are doing for me... Thanks very much for an excellent session last night... I played the up and down strokes correctly... Thanks very much for your persistence with me on this issue... Thanks for a wonderful session last night – I learnt a lot from what we canvassed... it all moves me into a new phase... I tried it out as you suggest and I feel quite comfortable about using the 4th finger on G

and 2nd on E... The fact that I have become quite used to using the 4th helps..."

Robyn (Robert's wife):

"Robert is really enjoying all the support and challenges you have given him over many months! It is a rare privilege to learn so much from you. Without your support and interest, I doubt if he would be at the stage of skill and ability to play... I have seen his skill develop and his ability to address the challenge you give him with enthusiasm..."

He still offers two obligation-free introductory lessons. If (and only if) you then like the idea, regular one-hour lessons would cost:

Continental Europe:	€35.00
United Kingdom:	£30.00
Australia:	\$ Aus 60.00
USA:	\$ US 60.00

Other countries by arrangement.

Payment by PayPal.

If you are interested and would like more information, contact him at:

Email: <keithharris@gmx.de> or Tel.: +49-6421-952344.

Obituary - Hilda Thorburn - 1917 - 2012

In 1927, as a 10 year-old, Hilda received a scholarship to a private school for girls, having early lessons in English and French and other subjects for 6 years, till in the middle of 1933 when Hitler ordered the cancellation of scholarships for foreigners - as Czechs never had German citizenship.

With 2 more years at that school, she could have applied for study at a University - her dream! Instead Hilda went to work as an apprentice in clerical work with a local Textile Factory.

In September 1938 Hilda quickly secured a job with another Textile Complex. This firm produced high-quality linen goods for export so a new correspondent with 4 languages was welcome. All this business ended after Hitler took over Bohemia and Moravia in March 1940. Later, this firm had to change to produce articles for the German military.

In late January 1941, Hilda contracted blood-poisoning through a small cut in her right forefinger from archival dust and stayed in hospital for 3 months. It was touch and go for a possible amputation of her whole right arm - since then her right hand was scarred, but luckily she could use it for all activities.

After the war, Hilda had more jobs in the new Czechoslovak Republic - esp. in Prague - where the centre of the Textile Industry was located. But Hilda wanted to leave for another country, as it was swallowed up by the Communists directed from Moscow.



By 'hook and crook', she managed to get a visa for Switzerland with the help of an owner of a Basel trucking company, where she worked for 6 months. Then the Swiss bureaucrats only let her stay as a domestic. By then Hilda was stateless, as her Czech pass became invalid. Early in 1950 she left for England, trying to be a student nurse.

In the end she was accepted and sent to Newcastle-on-Tyne - the hospital was an asylum for boys and juveniles - in other words - a madhouse. Hilda started intensive training involving 3 months of lectures before being put into the wards - extremely hard work physically and emotionally.

In July 1951 she & her sister's family decided to emigrate. During the last medical check the Australian mission established that Hilda's left eye was not 12 but 6: to which this particular person said to her: "You will be a burden on the

pocket of the Australian taxpayers - sorry, we cannot accept you".

Next door was the mission for New Zealand - her application was immediately accepted: single, young, healthy, and English-speaking with nursing experience - Welcome!

In NZ, Hilda's interest in languages saw her join the Esperanto Club where she met Jim from Scotland. They later moved to Sydney where they married & daughter, Rosemary, was born.

Shortly afterwards they established the Pocket Bookshop. Hilda was a busy working mother doing the books for a number of rag-trade businesses as well as those of the bookshops.

In 1972, her love for NZ drew her back & she did a stint of two years as a teacher of German & Maths.

Her musical skills began when she was seven learning the mandolin & Hilda has been playing with the Sydney Mandolin Orchestra since 1968. Her family & friends were honoured that most current members of the Orchestra played at the funeral. She had also managed the books as their Treasurer for many decades.

Hilda was also very talented in knitting & tatting, for which she won a number of awards at Sydney's Royal Easter Show, as well as compiling a monthly crossword for a pensioners' newspaper, *The Voice*, for ten years.

After such a full life, she will be missed by many.

by Rosemary Thorburn

CD Review

by Stephen Lalor March 2010

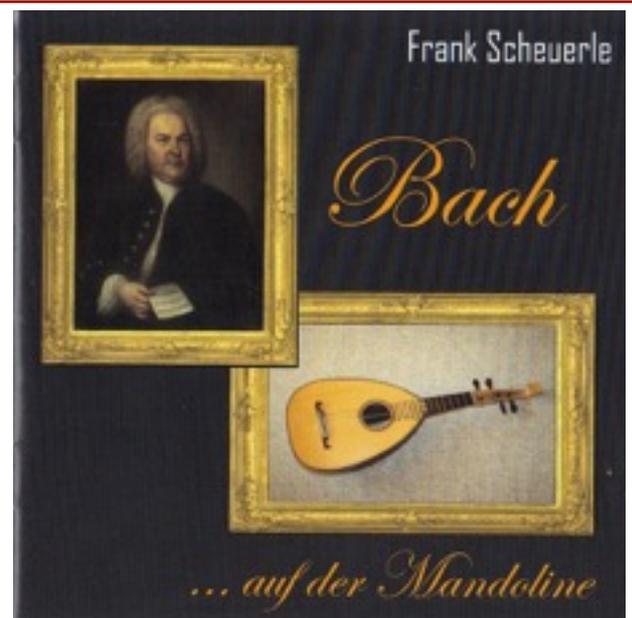
Frank Scheuerle - *Bach On the Mandolin*

German mandolinist Frank Scheuerle has put out a range of interesting CD's over a number of years, for mandolin, mandolin with recorder, contemporary music for mandolin, guitar and flute (Trio Magique's *Triptych*) and now a CD of Bach solo transcriptions.

This CD features 3 Suites by Bach and a "bonus track" by Silvius L Weiss, an almost exact contemporary of Bach and a renowned lutenist and composer of his time. The Bach Suites BWV 1011 & 1001 (for violin) are played here on a modern copy of a Cremonese mandolin - standard tuning (5ths) but single (originally gut) strings. What is perhaps lost in the expressiveness of the violin is replaced by the clarity of Scheuerle's playing in a sympathetic Chapel acoustic. This is likewise a hallmark of his mandola rendition of the cello Suite BWV 1007, which features some of the best-known of the Bach solo pieces - the Prelude and the Courante.

While the Bach pieces are enjoyable listening, it is the Weiss Chaconne (played on the 12-string arciliuto forte) that is probably the most engaging of the tracks. The clarity of the playing reinforces the strength of the underlying ostinato in an effective performance of a piece by a lesser-known Baroque master.

Frank Scheuerle has, with this CD, continued his admirable contribution to the recorded mandolin oeuvre.



This CD can be ordered from Rüdiger Grambow (order@infocenter-zupfmusik) or contact Frank Scheuerle at www.frank-scheuele.de

Cost of the CD including postage is €17.50



PERTH



Federation of
Australasian
Mandolin
Ensembles

INTERNATIONAL MANDOLIN FESTIVAL

8-15 JULY 2012 Perth, Western Australia

A festival for lovers of the Mandolin and associated instruments. Join us, along with Conductors Marco Ludemann (Holland) and Mark Davis (America), for an exciting week of fine Mandolin Orchestral playing. Mini concerts, Grand Finale Concert, Workshops, Festival Shop and socializing with players from Australia, New Zealand, Japan, America, Scotland, France are just a selection of the week ahead.

More information and Registration Forms can be found at
www.wamo.com.au or www.fame.asn.au



Get Ready for the Perth International FAME Festival July 2012!



Dear Fame Members,

The West Australian Mandolin Orchestra (WAMO) is proud to host the next Fame Festival in Perth next year from the 8-15th July. The Festival will be based at Trinity College, which is well situated with the scenic Matilda Bay being a short walk down the road, and a 5min bus trip to the city. Trinity College, a residential college for the University of Western Australia, is also very close to the botanic gardens of Western Australia, Kings Park, and a bus or train trip in the opposite direction leads to the historic port city of Fremantle, which is located at the mouth of the Swan River.

Musically, the 2012 Perth Festival will showcase two significant pieces of music; Robert Schulz's *A Symphony of Seasons*, and Robert Kay's *Poems from the Fridge*, which will be played for the first time during the festival. Additionally there will be other smaller pieces to provide an interesting and entertaining program. The Festival will run under the direction of two international conductors; Mark Davis from the USA and Marco Ludemann from the Netherlands, both having a wealth of experience conducting mandolin orchestras. As usual the Festival will culminate in a final concert, which will be performed at the Curtin Theatre, John Curtin College of the Arts.

The week-long festival will also feature mini concerts with performances ranging from solo pieces to orchestral works. WAMO's youth orchestra, consisting of mandolin and guitar students, will also be performing. If any groups or orchestras would like to perform at one of these concerts, we encourage you to email [Robert Schulz](mailto:Robert.Schulz@wamo.org.au) and we'll put you on the list. We have also set aside sufficient free time to allow all participants a bit of time to socialize and explore Perth and the surrounding region. For those who are considering an extended stay in Perth, highlights of Western Australia include the Margaret River wine region, with over 138 wineries, Rottnest Island, a 40min ferry ride from Fremantle, and the Pinnacles, 2 hours' drive north of Perth.

There are various accommodation types available ranging from student rooms to double motel rooms. This will cater to both players and non-players who we also welcome along. The last Festival held in Perth was in 1997, and attracted orchestras from Japan, Germany and New Zealand. We hope to have another great turnout at this Festival, so please head to our [website](http://www.perthfamefestival.com.au), or [email](mailto:info@perthfamefestival.com.au) us, fill out a Registration and Deposits Form, and we'll see you in July!

INDEMNITY: *I acknowledge and agree that the organizers of the Perth International Mandolin Festival 2012 and associated volunteers will not be liable for the loss or damage to any person or property arising from any act or omission by the organizers of the said festival and associated volunteers or any other person whether arising under the law of contract tort or otherwise, and indemnify the organizers of Perth International Mandolin Festival 2012 in relation to any such loss or damage.*

PERMISSION FOR AUDIO AND VISUAL RECORDINGS: *I give consent for all audio and video recordings and photographs that may be taken of the concert, rehearsals and the normal social activity of the camp.*

SIGNED: _____

PRINTED NAME: _____

GENERAL INFO FOR FESTIVAL

CONCERT ATTIRE: All players and conductors to wear black shirts/tops and trousers/skirts and shoes. To add some colour and express your personality we would like you to wear a **little touch of RED**. This could be a red tie, red hat, red ribbon in your hair, red necklace, red socks, red shoes, red handkerchief in your pocket, red flower or red scarf.

AIRPORT PICK-UP: If you would like to be picked up at Perth Airport and taken to Trinity College would you please email your Flight arrival details (as soon as you have them), to Mrs Shirley Suckling - suckling35@optusnet.com.au Please include the type of your instrument so we can organize an appropriate vehicle i.e. double bass is not going to fit in a Mini.

OPTIONAL OUTINGS: There will be times in the week's program allocated to free time where you may like to do an outing to Perth or our port city Fremantle. Information and costs for these will be in your Festival Welcome Kit for you to peruse when you arrive.

New Editor for Plucked Strings

- Marie Schulz!

I knew that somebody would eventually step forwards to take over the job of editing Plucked Strings in order to keep this journal running. Thank goodness Marie Schulz in WA has agreed to take over this role. I'm sure she'll do a great job and take PS to greater heights!

I've had a great time over the past few years editing Plucked Strings and I've very much appreciated the generous feedback I've received from readers from time to time.

I encourage readers to contribute articles, photos, review, gossip and classified ads to Marie in the future as this contributes to interesting reading for all!



