



Plucked Strings

FAME members

Fame.asn.au

June, 2022

President's Report



Welcome to 2022! This is the best I can do; it would seem a bit silly to say 'Happy New Year' when it is nearly the middle of the year! Still, it is looking like a year with promise! With the likelihood of things getting back to 'normal', the new 'covid normal' at least!! We are now allowed to fly internationally and, perhaps more importantly, to everywhere in Australia, without restriction! Things are really looking up!

I've even heard about some live concerts being scheduled! FAME's AGM was again held by Zoom, in March. But this time, thankfully, we had a quorum. We have one change to the

Committee of Management – Marie Schulz is replacing Ana Milas as one of WA's representatives. Welcome back, Marie, and 'Thank you' to Ana for her work on the committee – not always easy, with the time difference and young twins at home! The Executive Committee remains the same: Danny Silver as Secretary, Trevor Smallwood as Treasurer and myself as President.

It was great to hear from Robert Schulz at the AGM, to tell us about how WAMO's plans for the festival were progressing. He was able to confirm that the Perth FAME Mandolin and Guitar Festival will indeed be held 8 - 15 January 2023. You will have all received the initial information and Registration Form, which also appears later in this Newsletter. I hope many of you have already sent your completed form to WAMO – they need to be able to confirm numbers with the various venues for accommodation / rehearsal / performance. If not, please do it soon!!

Sadly, in March, we learned of Murray Green's passing. Many of you will remember him, particularly, as the 'man in charge' of taking FAME to Adelaide, for 2 wonderful FAME Festivals. I'm sure you all join with me in sending our sincerest condolences to Willi and all her family. He will certainly be missed by all who knew him.

I have just recently been informed that Bruce Morey has passed away. As well as being Stephen

Morey's father, he was also, I believe, the first President of FAME after it was formed in 1979. I wonder whether he thought the organisation he was the first President of, would still be going strong, with over 100 members across nearly all states and territories and from New Zealand and the Pacific region! Our condolences to Stephen and all his family.

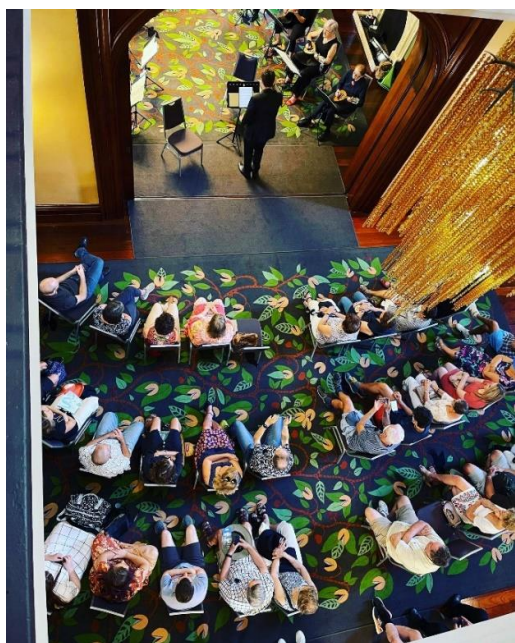
I hope to see many of you in Perth, next January. But, in the meantime, we are able to keep up with what's happening in the mandolin world around Australia, New Zealand and the Pacific, by reading the wonderful articles, reports and musings contained within this Newsletter!

Best wishes, stay safe and keep well,

Cath

From Aaron Copland – 'To stop the flow of music would be like the stopping of time itself, incredible and inconceivable.'

Mandolins In Brisbane



MIB started 2022 with an Italian concert on the 3rd of April at Old Government House. We entertained the audience with pieces such as *O Sole Mio*, *Tarantella Napoli* by Edouardo Mezzacapo and *Una Sera a Napoli* which is a medley of popular Italian songs. This piece features in one of our earlier CD recordings and you can listen to it on YouTube or Spotify where it has over 1 million streams.

We performed well as an ensemble, especially following a disrupted rehearsal schedule due to COVID and the floods in Brisbane. Personally, I really enjoyed the repertoire as it included some of the first pieces I learnt when I first joined MIB around seven years ago.

We dedicated this concert to

our dear friend Murray Green who sadly passed away in March. Murray was a great friend to many and made significant contributions to MIB for over 20 years and to FAME festivals. His contributions will leave a lasting impact on the mandolin community, and he will be greatly missed by us all.

We were also saddened by the passing of Dr



Duncan Gardiner in February. Duncan conducted, played with MIB and arranged pieces for us whilst researching historical guitar activities in Queensland for his Doctor of Musical Arts degree. We will miss him and his enthusiasm which was an inspiration to his friends, other musicians and audiences.

MIB has a number of concerts lined up for the rest of the year. We are currently rehearsing *The Adventures of Duyfken* by Richard Charlton in preparation for our concert in July: *The Adventures of the Duyfken - Journey to New Holland: Music from Netherlands and Australia*.

MIB's CD featuring *Una Sera a Napoli*

Youtube: <https://youtu.be/NIKyYyta8I>

Spotify: <https://open.spotify.com/artist/1ccdfocjn7dt9qFfk48L9k?si=AljtqfNbR-uid2PI0jcyMQ>

From Zyreen Fernando

Sydney Mandolin Orchestra

Greetings from sunny Sydney, where it seems to be raining one day and pouring the next!

The Sydney Mandolin Orchestra like the ABC & the Sydney Harbour Bridge is turning 90 this year. Founded by Phil Skinner in 1932 as the "Blue & Gold Banjo, Mandolin & Guitar Club" it has been active ever since.

Needless to say, the pandemic has interrupted planning & scheduling for what is a significant milestone. We have though, been working hard over the last 2 years to record music for a CD which we hope will be released in the 2nd half of 2022. This music was recorded over 3 sessions in between lockdowns, heart attacks, a new rehearsal venue and even a change of recording studio for sessions 2 & 3. Oliver Rathje (leader of SMO), David Ackerman (sound engineer) and myself have spent many hours editing and mixing. I'm looking forward to the final result as I'm sure it will be something to be proud of!

Sadly, our last performance in public was in February 2020! Despite the cancellation and/or postponement of a couple of planned gigs I'm happy to announce we will return to the stage in a few weeks on June 18. This concert will be held in Putty, a small village in the Singleton Shire Hunter Valley. It will be fantastic to once again play in front of an audience and I know all of SMO's players are practicing hard to make this a special event. At the time of writing, we are yet to finalise details for the 90th Anniversary concert however planning is well in hand.

At our recent AGM we had a significant change in the committee of management. The makeup of our new line up is:

Fiona Horbach - President
Patrick Fazzino - Vice President
Bernard Hickey - Secretary
Koji Katsumata - Treasurer
Anna Peers-Hooper - Committee members
Teresa Recapito
Mark Berlage

A huge thank you to the outgoing members Cath Kench, Martha Babineau & Lynne Hughes for the many years of service & dedication to the Sydney Mandolin Orchestra.

One positive over the last 2 years is that we have seen a steady influx of new members. It's heartening to know there are people around who are either taking up the mandolin or coming back to it. Recently we welcomed a new player originally from Port Macquarie on the NSW Central Coast. George auditioned for the NSW Conservatorium in Sydney and will be the first Bachelor of Music student with a mandolin major. He has begun his tuition under Stephen Lalor's watchful eye. Our other new members of recent times are: Renata, Wayne, Andrew, Jeff, Jo, Marshall, Teresa, Natalie & Astrid. We could still do with a few more guitarists but I'm sure that will improve in the next 12 months or so.

Werner Ruecker (Conductor Sydney Mandolin Orchestra)

On a personal note: I was saddened by the news that Bruce Morey had passed away. Bruce was a significant influence in the Australian mandolin movement. He was Secretary of the MMO for a number of years & founding President of FAME. More than that though, he was a vibrant, innovative thinker and genuine personality, who despite his lack of involvement in the mandolin world since the late 80's has left a lasting legacy on us all. Without Bruce's vision in developing the MMO's summer music camps into more structured events we may not have the FAME mandolin festivals of today.

Bruce is survived by his wife Rosemary, son Stephen, daughter Joanne and extended family. He will be missed by many of us who knew him. Vale Bruce Morey R.I.P.

Werner

Editor's Note: A tribute to Bruce Morey written by Stephen Morey is included at pages 14-15 below.

Western Australian Mandolin Orchestra



THE PERTH FAME MANDOLIN AND GUITAR FESTIVAL [2021] [2022] 2023

Following from all years previously, the Perth Festival has striven for some variation to the programming. In this regard we are mindful of the gradual ageing of the FAME members and have positioned our main Festival Orchestra rehearsals during the daytime. These will be in 1hour blocks. The evening time-slots will be given over to smaller activities including the usual in-house concert and some guest performances for your entertainment.

St Catherine's College, newly refurbished, will be a very comfortable venue and during the course of our planning this event, they have been very understanding and have not imposed increased costings for our activities. Meals will be in a shared dining room and although it will be holiday time, there may be some other Uni students present.

One important detail for your consideration. At the moment of writing, we have in mind two possible rehearsal venues depending on our numbers. The reply date of **31st July** is vital in allowing us to determine which of the two venues to sign off on. One is on campus (the smaller venue) and the other is off campus. So please do us the favour and book early.

The prepared music program has not been altered over the past two years. One larger work, with full timpani, percussion and flute, an arrangement of a South American suite by Pujol, a Baroque Sonata, a work by Kuwahara, and a new work from Werner Ruecker. If all goes well (as it will) a small encore. The proposed concert venue will be at the newly built Melville Senior High School auditorium, a comfortable 300 seat venue, so a nice short bus trip with the concert programmed for the Saturday afternoon. Returning then to the College for final night of social interaction (or an early night to bed for those deplete of energy!!).

As in previous years, we invite all participants to bring along pre-prepared works for you to perform. There will be enough space for in-house rehearsals and some free time also. The mid-week break on the Wednesday will also be a chance to see a bit of Perth as the College is on the bus route to the city only a few minutes away.

Anyone wishing to sell products is welcome to bring them along. CD's, scores, instruments, mother's-in-law etc. We will provide further information as the year passes us by.

Trusting everyone keeps well and we look forward to seeing you all here in the West.

Robert Schulz.

For the FAME Festival Committee.

Plektra

Plektra's first 2022 concert for the Mosman Concert Series on 5 April was postponed due to Covid. The group spent all Election Day in the studio, recording pieces by director Stephen Lalor ('Orbit', 'Autumn Song', 'The Dancing Man of Kew', 'Reflection' & 'Flying') plus his *Variations on 'Hrihorii' (Ukrainian trad.)* and his arrangement for mandolin orchestra of Piccone's 'Sinfonia'.

The following day (Sunday 22 May) the Plektra Quintet played a program of Cacciello, Piccone, Vivaldi & Lalor ('Atherton Tableland Waltz' & 'East-West') in the magnificent acoustic of St Francis Paddington. Program excerpt & photos attached.

In related news, the Sydney Symphony Orchestra has just released a Lalor piece (known to many mandolinists from the Mandolin Orchestra version in the 'World Music Suite') - 'Kolo Kolo' for String Quartet, filmed at City Recital Hall, Angel Place last year:

<https://www.sydneyphilharmonic.com.au/backstage-news/stephen-lalors-kolo-kolo>

And filmed the same day: 'Flying' www.sydneyphilharmonic.com.au/backstage-news/stephen-lalor-flying

Next Plektra concert: the re-scheduled Mosman Concert Series concert on 31 July. See the Plektra Facebook page for updates: www.facebook.com/PlektraMandolin



PLEKTRA
PLEKTRA is a Sydney based ensemble & guitar ensemble that performs classical, contemporary and world music for three instruments, ranging from Vivaldi, Beethoven & Bach to Piazzolla and original music by its chief mandolinist and musical director Dr Stephen Lalor. Stephen combines composition & academic work with an international career as a principal mandolinist, performing & touring with the major Australian orchestras and gaining wide overseas recognition. His compositions are published, performed & recorded by various groups across the world.

1. CACCIELLO (1740-1790)	Viv. / Alleg. / Largo / Adagio
2. PICCONE (1885-1941)	Solenne / Alleg. / Largo / Moder. / Largo
3. LALOR, Stephen G. (1952)	Atherton Tableland Waltz
4. LALOR, Stephen G. (1952)	East-West
5. VIVALDI, Antonio (1678-1741)	Mandolin Concerto in G / Alleg. / Largo / Viv. / Moder. / Adagio

Melbourne Mandolin Orchestra

The MMO will perform its first concert for 2022 on Sunday 12th of June at Chapel Off Chapel in Prahran. This concert will feature a talented cello soloist, Kiya van der Linden-Kian who will perform the solo cello part in Robert Schulz' "A Celebration". Kiya will also perform a solo cello piece, the beautiful "Prelude" from JS Bach's second Suite for Unaccompanied Cello. Other pieces we'll be performing include "Adagio for Strings" by Samuel Barber - an arrangement by Takashi Kubota, "Mandolin Project" by David Laheurte, "Orbit" by Stephen Lalor, "Enter las Sombras" by Ricardo Sandoval, and "Second Door On The Left" by Elena Kats-Chernin - an arrangement by Danny Silver



Kiya van der Linden-Kian

Concerts planned for later this year include a concert at St George's Centre in mid-September, a concert in Castlemaine (a central Victorian town 135km from Melbourne) in October and a joint concert with Concordia and Mandolins D'Amour in Ewing Memorial Church in early December.

The MMO mourns the recent passing of George Mitchell, long-standing and much-loved member of the orchestra and the recent passing of Bruce Morey, one of the early members of the MMO whose dedication to the orchestra in its very early days resulted in his purchase of a large building in Sandringham which became the "home" of the MMO for both weekly rehearsals and many concerts over many years. Bruce was also very important in the founding of FAME and was FAME's first President.

Following is a tribute to George presented at a concert dedicated in his honour:

"The Melbourne Mandolin Orchestra recently lost a much valued, and much-loved player, George Mitchell, who died in April after a struggle with cancer.

George played with the us for a good 20 years and played his last concert with us in December last year at the age of 87.

He was a very talented and enthusiastic musician playing violin long before he took up the mandolin to play not only with the Melbourne Mandolin Orchestra, but also with Concordia and with Mandolins D'Amour.

He was kind, and extremely generous, always willing to help other players whenever he had the opportunity.

We will miss his mischievous ways, and his wonderful humour!



COZMO

COZMO is continuing to rehearse weekly, preparing to recommence performing later this year. We have been working on pieces new to us by composers such as Angel Volloldo, Carlo Cecere, Ignaze Pleyel, Gerardo Metallo, Michel Corrette and Juventino Rosas. The range of styles and eras represented by these pieces give us the fun of moving from tango, waltzes and marches to more classical and baroque pieces. Some have been quite challenging, but all are fun to work on and master, and all are melodious and audience-friendly!

The COZYMO learning group has continued to progress in its weekly sessions, improving their reading and ensemble skills as they head towards becoming members of the COZMO ensemble. They regularly stay on for a short time at the start of COZMO rehearsals, to practise sight-reading of pieces we're confident they can manage, but at a slower tempo. This inclusion is a great way to progress their musical abilities and ensemble playing experience.

I've contributed an article from *The Strad*, a violin magazine, which discusses string recycling and the program put in place by D'Addario, the American string maker.

Cheers and stay well!

Col Bernau
MD, COZMO

Editor's note: Col's article from *The Strad* is reprinted at the end of this edition.

Canberra Mandolin Orchestra

The Canberra Mandolin Orchestra (CMO) celebrated international dance music at its Dancing Feet concert on 23 April 2022 at the Folk Dance Hall in Hackett, North Canberra. The music program included a wide variety of dance music from across the world including waltzes, mazurkas, tangos, varsoviennas, polkas and folk dances. Supplementing the dance program CMO performed favourite pieces from the 20th century arranged for mandolin.

Several of the pieces presented were arranged by the CMO conductor Michael Hardy and Tony Stuart. Tony Stuart has transcribed over 150 recordings from the National Library of Australia collection of field recordings. One of these is The Three Varsoviennas is from the playing of Joe Yates (1895-1987) as collected by John Meredith. Ali's Quickstep and Teatree Waltz from the playing of Darwin mandolinist Val McGuinness (1910-1988) were also included in the program. The dance demonstrations were performed by Dance Delights, a local social dance group that specialises in historic dance and modern folk-dance styles led by dance caller Katherine Tamaro. The CMO has recently recruited a new Mandocellist and bass players that have now joined us on our last two concerts. The Orchestra continues to grow and supplemented through the progression from the two weekly training classes.

The next CMO concert is in early July as the ACT returns gradually to pre-pandemic activities. Finally, in 2023, the CMO will be celebrating its first twenty years and anticipating many more performances.



Auckland Mandolinata

News from New Zealand:

After a reasonably long time of disruption, the AMO is finally getting back to normal with concerts

starting to be booked again. We were able to perform a few times last year but a late lockdown in August threw us off track again. Things are generally opening up now in NZ and people are trying to get back to normal, with public gatherings and events becoming regular again.

We performed the first of our regular Winter Series concerts at the end of May and have quite a few gigs coming up through the rest of the year. Look out for our Facebook live performance coming up on the 10th of July, 2pm NZ time. This started as a lockdown special but we have decided to continue with the format as we try to get our music out to new audiences.

We have been working on a few new tunes to add to our repertoire, crowd pleasers such as Colonel Bogey march by Kenneth Alford, Just Another Polka by Frankie Yankovich, and Plucked Boogie Woogie by Vittorio Naldi - a fun mandolin composition. Also for a bit more of a rhythmic 5/8 and 7/8 challenge - Ipomoni by Stavros Xarhakos.

We are very proud of our Mando Jam learners we wrote about for the last addition, who are now joining the orchestra for concerts. Our sound is filling out as we continue to grow and we certainly appreciate the hard work put in by all members of the orchestra with the commitment to stick with it through lockdowns, putting in the effort to learn and improve, and supporting the orchestra in other ways like organising logistics of performances, finding new gigs and generally being there to help and rehearse.

Gianni Flego

Picture: Getting ready to play for our Winter Series concert 1, 22nd May 2022 at Rocky Nook.



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darryl.barron@carey.com.au or mobile: 0413 0444 03.

Vale Bruce Morey

In memory of Bruce Morey (1935-2022)

Written by Stephen Morey
moreystephen@hotmail.com

On 9th May 2022, Bruce Morey passed away, 2 days short of his 87th birthday.

Bruce was the first President of FAME and a member of the Melbourne Mandolin Orchestra in the 1970s and through the 1980s. He was closely involved in organizing the Australian Mandolin Orchestra (AMO) tour to Germany in 1980 and also the music camps (now known as FAME festivals) in Bendigo in 1977 through to 1979.

Bruce had been a very accomplished pianist in his youth, and several recordings survive from his school days including a stunning performance of Bach's Fantasia in C Minor, when he was 15, which was played at his funeral. In the 1960s he studied advanced Music Theory.

In the early 1970s, Bruce and his wife Rosemary were looking for something new to do, and Rosemary's doctor recommended a friend, Dr Peter Evans, who ran the Melbourne Mandolin Orchestra. Peter invited Rosemary and then Bruce to come and join in 1973 and quickly the orchestra rehearsals on Fridays, conducted by Josef Ruecker and later Werner Ruecker, became the highlight of their week. Bruce joined the MMO committee working alongside people like Dick van Welzenis, Sally Lum, Frank Bishop, Bob Hutchison, Doug Langley-Bates and Betty Sells.

And it wasn't just serious MMO music, it was also the orchestra parties, where Bruce would play mandolin or sing some wonderful ballads like 'Rickety Ticky Tin' ... *About a maid I'll sing a song* These parties were also known for their wonderful costumes as some readers will remember. And there were the fancy dress parties at music camps at Pax Montis in Mansfield, at the Bendigo Teachers College, in Goulburn and the Morongo Girls School in Geelong.

In 1975 our lives were transformed by the visit of the Keio Mandolin Orchestra, their exciting playing and having two members, Masa and Kaz billeted with us. Two years later the Deutsche Zupforchester (DZO) visited us, and by chance Bruce and Rosemary's guests this time were Fred Witt and his son Christian. In addition to the concerts and the social events in the evenings, there were discussions between Bruce and Fred that led to Fred being invited to conduct the January 1978 Music Camp, bringing a new enthusiasm, new music and new ideas to the mandolin movement in Australia. The music camps in 1977-9 were the time that key people in the mandolin movement got to know each other – Phil Skinner, Keith Harris and Adrian Hooper from Sydney, Robert Schulz and Ian Ross from Perth, Ann Roubos and Ena Postuma from Geelong.

1978 also saw the formation of the Mandolin & Guitar Consort, a group of 8-10 players that rehearsed at Bruce and Rosemary's house and made trips to the country to do concerts, including one at Apollo Bay, on the way home from which we had a bus accident that led to Rosemary and

also Sally Lum being hospitalized.

But despite challenges, Bruce's imagination and vision continued to work. Fred Witt returned to conduct the 1979 music camp. In 1980 Bruce and Rosemary made a 6-month trip to Europe as their 'long service leave', joining the AMO tour of Germany in May and attending the mandolin festival in Germany in June.

The trip to Europe gave Bruce and Rosemary an idea. Everywhere in Europe there were coffee shops, and music and the arts. Why couldn't we have an arts centre in Sandringham? Why couldn't we arrange concerts, art exhibitions, and a coffee shop with music in Sandringham? Over time, with many battles and setbacks but with Bruce's vision undiminished, the Sandy Beach Centre in Sandringham was created, now 40 years old and providing courses and access to the arts for the community.

The MMO rehearsed at Sandy Beach and gave many concerts there in the 1990s and into the 2000s, up to the last MMO concert that Bruce attended in April 2019. Bruce's love of music continued until his last days, and in hospital he requested that the MMO perform Ambrosius Chaconne in D (Feierlicher Reigen) at his funeral. Bruce died from the complications of aspiration pneumonia just after midnight on 9th May 2022.

His funeral was recorded and live-streamed through Vimeo <https://vimeo.com/708938191>.

Nikolai Marezki

An obituary by Natalia Korsak

Nikolai Marezki (born 12.4.1953), Belarusian domra and mandolin player, artist of the Belarusian State Philharmonic Orchestra and from 1979 to 2018 lecturer at the Belarusian State Academy of Music Minsk passed away unexpectedly on 9 September 2021. He was a laureate of numerous international competitions:

- Second Prize at the Union Inter-Union Artists' Competition in duo with Valery Zhivaleuski, in Moscow (Russia), 1983;
- First prize at the International Competition of Performers on Folk Instruments "Nord Pokal" in Cherepovets (Russia), 1992;
- Third Prize at the International Competition in Castelfidardo (Italy), 1995;
- First prize at the International Competition Klingenthal in duo with I. Otradnov, in Klingenthal (Germany), 1996;
- First prize at the International Chamber Music Competition in Schweinfurt (Germany), 2001.

Marezki brought about the renaissance of the mandolin in Belarus.

Nikolai Marezki was not only an important artist in his home country, but he also did a lot for the

mandolin world as a whole. After all, it was thanks to him that the mandolin, after it had been banned as too "bourgeois" for political reasons in 1950, was once again heard in Belarus together with the accordion and saxophone. More precisely, it was in 1982 when Antonio Vivaldi's "Concertos in C Major and G Major for Two Mandolins" were performed on the stage of the Belarusian State Philharmonic by Nikolau Marezki, accompanied by the Belarus Chamber Orchestra.

From that moment on, the Belarusian renaissance of the mandolin began. For Belarus, it was unusual until then for the mandolin to play together with other instruments. Marezki, for example, combined the mandolin and button accordion, had two mandolins play together, as well as mandolin, domra and button accordion or a mandolin with guitar or piano. Something special was therefore the participation of a mandolin quartet led by Nikolai Marezki (consisting of N. Marezki, J. Volasiuk, O. Kaljadka and A. Sokalovskaya) in the performance of the ballet "Romeo and Juliet" by Sergei Prokofiev. This was a performance with the National Opera and Ballet Theatre of Lithuania under the baton of the great Russian musician Mstislav Rostropovich.

Marezki's commitment to the creation of playing material.

The newly discovered possibilities of playing the mandolin together with other instruments prompted Marezki to adapt pieces of music for his instrument and they demanded new pieces of music. He therefore collaborated with a number of composers to create new works. The Belarusian composer Vladimir Korolchuk, for example, wrote a "Suite pro et contra in D" for mandolin and button accordion, which he later adapted for mandolin and piano or for mandolin and string quartet. It was also integrated into the suite "In Baroque Style" and published by the music publisher "Vogt & Fritz" (Germany).

Other composers have also written pieces for Marezki, including: Vladimir Kurian with "Two fives" and "At the crossroads", Vladimir Yankovich with "Lemonade Joe" and Evgenij Gridiushko with "Sauka d Gryshka" for two mandolins and guitar.

Nikolai Marezki also transcribed many pieces himself to make them playable for mandolin, for example by D. Scarlatti, N. Paganini, F. Couperin, A. Shpenev, E. Glebov and many others. His concert activity was extensive: in addition to frequent performances in the cities of Belarus and abroad, he gave annual solo concerts in the Belarusian State Philharmonic Orchestra Minsk. Numerous concert tours have taken him to Germany, Greece, Syria, Egypt, Italy, Poland, Russia and Ukraine.

Marezki's commitment to national and international networking.

The list of organisations and musical events in which he has been involved as a mandolinist and as a founder and organiser is long: as early as 1992, the "Belarusian Association of Domra and Mandolin Players" was founded. Nikolai Marezki was one of its organisers and idea givers, also its vice-president and later its president. The association was a member of the European Guitar and Mandolin Association (EGMA), which resulted in valuable musical contacts for Belarusian

musicians. Marezki himself, for example, took part as an artist in each of the "Eurofestivals Zupfmusik" in Friedrichshafen in 2002, in Bamberg in 2006, in Bruchsal in 2010 and in 2014. In 1998 Nikolai Marezki organised the festival "Slawischer Kranz" and from 2007 to 2018 the festival "Mandolinissimo", which regularly took place on the stage of the Belarusian State Philharmonic in Minsk and was attended by internationally renowned mandolinists and guitarists, including: Ricardo Sandoval, Steffen Trekel, Vincent Beer-Demander, Sabine Marzé, Christian Laier, Katsia Prakopchyk, Michael Tröster, Jan Skryhan, Matthias Collet, Ako Ito, Masanobu Nisigaki and Karoline Laier. As if that were not enough, Marezki founded and conducted the "Expression Plucked String Orchestra", which participated annually in the "Mandolinissimo" festival. The orchestra recorded a CD with music by Gerhard Baumann in 2016 and the CD "Morija" with music by Elke Tober-Vogt in 2017. In 2004, together with the ensemble "Chamber Soloist of Minsk" conducted by Dmitri Zubov, he recorded a CD with all of Antonio Vivaldi's concertos for mandolin. Nikolai Marezki also played for many years in the duo and trio Capriccio together with Natalia Korsak, one of his music students.

In France, Marezki worked as an honorary co-organiser and co-founder of the "Festival International de Mandoline de Castellar". Under his leadership, a concert was held in 2005 at the Minsk Philharmonic Hall dedicated to the Japanese mandolinist and composer Yasuo Kuwahara (1946-2003). Natalia Korsak and Ilya Dragunov performed his six solo pieces for mandolin, as well as duets and orchestral works by the composer. In March 2006, the Belarusian premiere of Arnold Schoenberg's "Serenade for Strings opus 24" took place in Minsk, with Nikolai Marezki playing the mandolin part, of course. As part of the 2009 "Mandolinissimo" festival, a concert was given dedicated to the Italian mandolin virtuoso, composer and instrument maker Raffaele Calace (1863-1934).

Marezki was an internationally sought-after expert.

Nikolai Marezki was repeatedly appointed to the jury of national and international mandolin competitions, e.g. the "I. Zhinovich International Competition for Folk Instruments" (Belarus), "International Competition of Performers on Folk Instruments "Nord Pokal" (Russia), International Mandolin Competition of the "European Guitar and Mandolin Association" 2007 in Patras (Greece) and the solo mandolin competition "ARTE - Mandolistica" in Osaka (Japan).

Marezki tirelessly imparted his extensive knowledge of domra and mandolin playing to music students and music teachers. He regularly offered master classes for teachers at music schools and music colleges in Belarus. In 2008 he was a participant in the 4th International Mandolin Symposium in Trossingen. On his initiative, a mandolin class was opened at the Belarusian State Academy of Music in 2005 and a special programme for the main subject mandolin was developed. Many of Nikolai Marezki's students have also played the mandolin in parallel with the domra and have won several prizes at international competitions, for example Natalia Zmitrovitch, Katsia Prakopchyk, Olga Dubowskaja, Elena Ivanova, Natalia Korsak, Marina Slabodskaja, Dimitri Titov and many others.

Résumé

Nikolai Marezki has made a great contribution to the foundation and development of the Domra and Mandolin School in Belarus. He has trained a whole series of music teachers who in turn teach children and young people how to play the domra and mandolin. Many of his former students now teach as music teachers themselves, not only in Belarus, but far beyond the country's borders in Russia, Germany, France, the USA and Israel. Because of what Nikolai Marezki taught us, his students, and because of his love for music, the mandolin and the domra will always remain a part of our lives.

(Translation from the German by Rüdiger Grambow)



Final photo at the EGMA competition "European Mandolin Award" 2007 in Patras (Greece)



Nikolai Marezki



Jury at a competition in Japan (far left: Alexander Tsygankov; far right: Steffen Trekel)



Herbert Baumann with wife, framed by Nikolai Marezki and Natalia Korsak

String Recycling: New Life from Old Strings

[From *The Strad*] 22 April 2022

The structure and shape of strings make them difficult and costly to recycle. But that hasn't stopped some manufacturers from tackling the challenge, and even extracting metal from old strings to use in new ones, writes **Tom Stewart**

Like the infamously difficult-to-recycle disposable coffee cup, strings are composite items, and their wiry, flexible form makes it tricky to process them in traditional machinery. Far removed from their humble origins as single pieces of animal gut, modern strings usually contain one or more different metals, often surrounding a core made of steel, gut, or more frequently a synthetic material. Take, for example, the E string of Thomastik Infeld's Peter Infeld violin strings. Players can choose between a tin-plated carbon steel core and a stainless steel core with either gold or platinum plating.

Or how about D'Addario's Helicore cello strings, which feature a multi-stranded steel core wound, depending on the pitch of the string, in titanium or a combination of tungsten and silver. "All these metals are easily recyclable individually," says D'Addario's Brian Vance. "When you have to smelt them down together, though, it very quickly stops making financial sense to separate them back out again into their component parts. It's good for the environment but it doesn't tend to make you any money."

Another limiting factor, as Alex Payne of US recycling firm TerraCycle explains, is the strings' shape. "They're long, thin and bendy, so they routinely tie up the shredders that are usually employed to process materials for recycling," he says. "To avoid having to build different shredders, we compress the strings before we prepare them for smelting."

Perhaps unsurprisingly, the majority of string makers I contacted suggested that recycling strings was an environmental red herring. Due to the transportation required to move strings between them, the consumer and the factory, these manufacturers say any environmental benefits would be lost. In other words, they do not recycle strings because of their commitment to sustainability.

"Returning the strings to us in Denmark would require scrap metal to be shipped around the world, which isn't something we support," says Ole Wichmann of Larsen Strings. "When customers ask us about this, we recommend they use whatever recycling solutions are available to them locally." For-Tune Strings, based in Beijing, has also considered the merits of recycling used strings, but decided against it on environmental and technological grounds. "From our point of view, the benefits of string recycling do not account for the energy required to ship the strings back to the manufacturer," says For-Tune's research and development manager Curdin Coray.

On the other hand, D'Addario launched a recycling programme with TerraCycle in 2016 called Playback. Although the scheme is only available to customers in the US, it has already recycled more than six million strings. TerraCycle, which describes itself as "the global leader in collecting and repurposing hard-to-recycle waste," processes complex items like Pringles tubes and contact lens packaging, often working in partnership with producers to offer consumers a way to recycle items that municipal services are unable to accept.

"Playback allows customers to send us any strings produced by any manufacturer," says Vance. "Then we pass them on to TerraCycle for processing. The whole thing is funded entirely by us." It should be clear by this point that recycling a string is an expensive business, so why do it? I put

Corayø point about energy use to Payne, who responds that recycling always prevents an item from ending up as waste. And, he says, since more than 90 per centøof the energy used in manufacturing is expended processing raw materials, recycling is almost always a means of reducing energy consumption.

Although DøAddario and TerraCycle accept all strings made from metal or synthetics for recycling, the majority of those they receive are guitar strings, a large proportion of which are 100 per cent nylon. After the strings with metal components have been removed, the nylon ones are melted down and turned into pellets for a range of industrial plastic applications, like manufacturing the fleecy material used to line the ceiling of a car,øPayne explains.



US recycling firm TerraCycle teamed up with D'Addario in 2016 to launch string recycling scheme Playback

All strings, regardless of their composition, have to be compacted before they are melted in an extruder, a stage of the process for which TerraCycle had to design and implement an additional piece of machinery. As Vance pointed out, separating out the numerous metals from which strings are constructed, while technically possible, is economically unsustainable. Instead, TerraCycle uses the molten alloys to create ingots that can be sold to manufacturers of new products, like car wheel rims, that require similar chemical compositions. Synthetic cores at the centre of many strings cannot be separated from their metal surroundings, but are simply vaporised as a result of the extreme temperatures required.

Larsenø and For-Tuneø concerns about transportation appear to be shared by DøAddario, but there are ways, they say, to keep financial and environmental costs down. Once players have collected at least two poundsøworth of used strings, they can download a pre-paid postage label from the website and use it to send the strings to us,øsays Vance. Having them send the strings in bulk reduces the

cost and the carbon footprint of the operation. We encourage people to send not just their own strings, but those of their friends, school and orchestra, too. Anyone who finds this impractical can deposit their strings in special bins at hundreds of locations across the US. There's a Playback bin at every branch of Music & Arts, and hundreds more at independent retailers and instrument makers, Vance explains.

These numbers make clear the scale of D'Addario's operation, which would clearly be beyond the means of most string makers, many of which in Europe at least are still run as smaller-scale family businesses. D'Addario, on the other hand, is the world's largest manufacturer of strings for musical instruments, and produces tens of millions of them each year. In other words, they may be able to take a significant financial hit in exchange for the marketing boost that this kind of corporate social responsibility is likely to generate, while the same cannot necessarily be said of small businesses.

The question remains, too, why another firm would take on the burden when D'Addario's scheme covers strings sold by all manufacturers.



TerraCycle specialises in recycling complex items like Pingles tubes, contact lens packaging and strings

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According to BDSV, an industry body for German steel recycling firms, around a quarter of the steel produced worldwide between 2014 and 2018 was recycled from scrap; the rates for certain other metals, such as aluminium, are even higher. If the wholesale recycling of instrument strings poses too great a challenge (or is taken care of elsewhere), can manufacturers improve the environmental impact of their operations by using recycled materials in their products? Coray is sceptical: "Using recycled materials affects the final product and turns string making into an even more difficult and challenging science," he says.

As the complexity of the alloys and physical constructions used by string manufacturers shows,

advances in the industry often come down to highly engineered combinations of very specific materials. String manufacturers appeal to players by claiming that their strings offer desirable qualities like improved response time, an expanded spectrum of tonal colours or the ability to help the quietest note carry to the back of the concert hall. To separate their products from the rest, they spend considerable time and resources testing different proportions of metals in the alloys they use for the cores, coatings and windings. Using recycled materials would undermine these processes and disrupt the uniformity of the finished product.

Or would it? Coray and Wichmann explain that, although For-Tune and Larsen do not recycle used strings, they do melt down and reuse scrap metals generated by their manufacturing processes, demonstrating that recycled metals do have a place in string making after all. Slovakian maker Warchal goes one step further, inviting players to return their used Warchal strings so that the silver component can be extracted and used again in the manufacture of new strings.

“Our scheme is different from D’Addario’s because we use the recycled metals ourselves,” explains Klaudia Warchal. “Not only that,” she says, “but we actually use the silver we collect to make new strings. The process we use to remove the silver doesn’t upset its atomic structure in a way that affects its quality, so we can use it without adjusting our usual ‘recipe.’” Although only the silver components are currently redeployed, the company is also building up stocks of other metals recovered from their strings, and hopes one day to use these, too.



Warchal’s Phoenix violin strings include metal from strings that have already been played

The “Warchal Goes Green” initiative began in 2012, providing players with credit to spend on new strings in return for their old ones. After seven years of collecting and processing the metals, in 2019 the company launched its Phoenix violin strings – the first commercially available set to include metal recycled from strings that have already been played. “I don’t want to sound mystical,” says Klaudia Warchal, “but because the silver has already vibrated with great music in concert halls around the world, we think it adds special value to the strings.” Although they are a little more expensive than most of the manufacturer’s other products, Warchal says the Phoenix set are currently its best-sounding violin strings. And, unlike D’Addario’s Playback programme, Warchal’s scheme is open to players all over the world – as long as they play Warchal strings.

“Because the silver has already vibrated with great music in concert halls around the world, we think it adds special value to the Phoenix strings” – *Klaudia Warchal*

Amid the ever greater acceptance of the need to recycle more of what we use, it’s clear that some string manufacturers are finding a role for themselves as advocates for recycling and pioneers of new uses of recycled materials. D’Addario has shown that, with enough investment, the complex, composite nature of an instrument string doesn’t mean it can’t be recycled in its entirety into new products, albeit unrelated ones. And although Warchal doesn’t yet have the ability to reuse all the component materials of its strings in its own manufacturing process, its use of recycled silver in new strings is an exciting development.

It’s clear, however, that not everyone thinks that recycling offers a sustainable way forward, though such views often seem to be based on doubts over recycling’s economic viability. The success of Warchal’s and D’Addario’s initiatives have shown, though, that environmentally engaged players are

keen to help manufacturers conserve energy and materials, while technologies like those developed by TerraCycle may one day pave the way for more string manufacturers to explore how recycling could benefit them, their customers, and the environment.