News from the



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Schmitt House

A Fiddleheads Violin School Publication Rhiannon Schmitt, Writer, Layout & Teacher

Volume 1

Summer, 2000

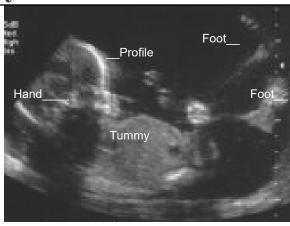
Number 2

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This is our baby's first picture, a sonogram, taken June 13, 2000 at my 19th week of pregnancy. The baby is a fair bit bigger than the image size shown here. In the next 4 months the baby will grow to several times this size, as will my belly!

Shown in the sonogram is the whole baby, highlighting the profile, tummy, and feet. At the time it was taken the baby was waving and kicking like a frog! I think it is amazing that we have the



technology to allow us the sneak peek! I am feeling absolutely wonderful these days and eagerly anticipate the arrival of "Baby Schmitt." Never in all my life have I felt so content and complete! ©

Fiddleheads Violin School Expands

I moved to Salmon Arm last June to marry my music college sweetheart. At the time I was living in Nelson and taught around 40 violin and cello students. Since I moved away many of them have not found a new teacher and

quit for lack of lessons. I have taken it on to teach lessons in Nelson every other weekend. Mason and I will take the 5-hour trip together, which makes it a lot easier during my pregnancy. I will continue with my Nelson students even after the baby arrives as I have family in

Nelson who want

to see the baby and will baby-sit while I teach.

I am very happy to have these people in my life again! I hope at some point the Shuswap and Kootenay students can meet and play music together!

& As well, with more musicians in our circle, there are more violins to be grown out of and sold. Tell me if you are looking to buy or sell a violin and we'll make a deal (see page 3).



Jasmine, and Linnéa saying goodbye during our final concert last June. Now a year later, we have started up lessons

Upcoming Events

June 23-25......Nelson Teaching Trip July 7-9.....Nelson Teaching Trip July 10-14.....Rhiannon is away *July 15.....Performance at Hudson St. Opening (SA) *July 16.....Fiddle Workshop *July 18 & 20......Music Appreciation

July 21-23.....Nelson Teaching Trip *July 30......SA students Fiddle Gig August 4-6.....Nelson Teaching Trip *August 12-13.....Rhiannon's Concerts: Salmon Arm Art Gallery August 18-20. Nelson Teaching Trip *see related articles on page 3

**** Performance!

Music was made when a few nervous, but eager musicians crawled out from the woodwork and shared their talents with their community!

A group of my Salmon Arm area students played as guests with the newlyformed Shuswap String Symphonia in two separate concerts on June 3rd. They worked diligently to prepare the pieces on their own and with the group.

Not only did they all play with gusto, professionalism,



and real heart, but they were inspiration to everyone who heard

them. Several people approached me after the performance, saying, "do you think I could learn how to do that?"

I thank Clara Anderson, Joan and Rory Cleveland, Blythe Heywood, Maria MacCrae, Cindy Malinowsky, Emily Ready, and Zoë Verlaan for their hard work!

Looking forward to more concerts? Page 3. Fun stuff for kids: pages 2 & 4.

Salmon Arm Photocopies

I remind all Salmon Arm students that I charge 10¢ per photocopy.

Photocopying student music adds up to cost me over \$300 in a teaching year. Please total up and pay for your copies soon.

Next year we may use a piggy bank and drop in change as copies are handed out. Let me know which system you prefer.



The Geek Column



Yes, it is becoming brutally obvious to me that I am a geek. But that's not a bad thing. Contrary to useless "nerds" and "dweebs," geeks are the catalysts for change in the evolving technical world. They (or shall I say we) are constantly challenging the way things are done and looking for a more efficient, simpler way to perform tasks and learn.

I think computer geeks are comparable to the composers of the 1600's to 1800's. Think about it, Mozart was a complete geek. His idea of exercise was playing table pool! Beethoven never saw the light of day and had the stereotypical geek "greenish" skin from hours spent inside.

Brahms had the classic geek physique; he was large and round, due that to he ate every meal at the restaurant below his apartment, close enough to his awaiting music.

These people were not normal, and certainly not "people-people." No one could understand their moods, quirks, or way of thinking. They were creative geniuses, the *catalysts for change in the evolving arts world.* However, they wrote music that changed society in unmeasurable ways.

Music has changed tremendously since the day of the geek composer and musicians are no longer geeks. It takes less far skill to be a famous musician, and famous is insanely over-the-top. Besides, how could you possibly claim geekiness when women are throwing their panties at you on stage?!?

The geek gauntlet has been passed onto the new movers and shakers of society: the computer geeks.

Which makes me wonder... if Beethoven were alive today, would Windows actually work or would it swear at you in German when you switch to shut-down mode???

~*~*~*~*~*~*~*

Geek's Program Pick of the Week: Dolphin Don's Music School. This computer program teaches reading and writing notation plus ear training. In English: the student reads and to notes and routines and deciphers them.

or listens to notes and rhythms and deciphers them into notes, or reads notes and has to name the note. It's kind of like a crash course in theory, but better.

It is a lot of fun to play, complete with encouraging "yeahs" and "all rights," a sure way to make learning theory fun. A free trial version of the program is distributed on the internet. The complete program is an affordable \$39.95 US. Find it at:

www. dolphindon.com

I thank **Tim Robinson**, my vet and violin student, for discovering this fun little gem. He has found many helpful music sites. Thanks Tim!

Funny Picture



Voter's Choice

I love surveys. And since I have supreme editorial power in this paper I decided on a whim to create one. ©

I'd appreciate your feedback and I think the young students will enjoy the results, as they are always asking *me* these questions. All respondents get a sticker!

- Why did you start playing violin?
 What is your favourite string to
- play on: G, D, A or E?
- 3. What is your favourite song? (could be on violin or not)
- 4. What is your favourite song to play on the violin?
- 5. Who is your favourite composer?
- 6. What is your goal in playing violin?
- 7. Why do you think they call the black part of the bow the *frog*?

Practice Makes Erfect!

In the last newsletter I asked for any practice hints and tips you may have come up with. **Brenda Heywood**, piano teacher and mother of my student, Blythe, made these fabulous recommendations via e-mail.



"I've just noticed that Blythe ...pretty well just plays through everything once at a sitting. If she only has 2 pieces from her last

lesson, that's what she plays. If she has 5 pieces from her last lesson, that's what she plays. Conclusion: feed her more pieces, even if some weeks they might not be at a more difficult level, and she will end up practicing more.

"...I know too well the little dance we teachers do - a sort of advance and retreat because we want to stimulate and challenge a student to his potential but we don't want to overwhelm or discourage him and I know how I find parental feedback helpful. It's hard for the teacher to tell what's happening at home therefore whether she's overloading a student or could

double the workload.

"Blythe's approach is pretty typical in my experience. Most children enjoy playing but don't like going over and over anything. In Blythe's case, she does play several times a day so she gets lots of repetition even though she doesn't realize it.

"Children also seem to loathe review. For example, John (her father) suggested Blythe play some scales. She either ignored him or dashed off 1 scale. My idea here is ...give her a new (or modified) one each week. If she is not ready to learn a new key, maybe she could play the same key the next week with different articulation or dynamics or rhythm or something and then it seems like something new to her

"Also, Blythe adores you. If you told her she needed to do that same scale that John asked her to, she would do it every time she picked up the violin! I don't want to spoil that relationship by putting in my 2 bits worth at home or by making practice for her lesson a chore. I also try to let her be the 'expert' when it comes to violin."

Thanks to Brenda Heywood for all her feedback. All ideas are always welcome!

"Producing a Concert Like The Pros Do"

The Salmon Arm Art Gallery's the place to be **August 12th and 13th** when I put on my first solo concert ever! After playing as opening act and guest musician for many shows I've decided to create my own show!

For me a concert is a creative process and the plans are always changing up to the night of the show. I'll let you in on a few of the concrete plans for now. (And welcome your ideas as well.)

The art in the gallery during the show is by Okanagan artist Francince Gravel entitled "A Poetic & Musical Journey." The theme for my concert was inspired by her art, which depicts musicians! I am calling the concert a tribute to musicians or something along those lines. (Note for future rockstars: It is very important to have a theme when you produce a concert.) I hope to

invite Francince and have her give a talk on some of her art, hopefully learning what her inspiration as a painter is.

The format for the concert is simple. There is a Saturday



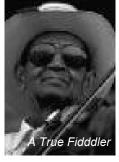
night show at 7pm and a Sunday matinee at 2pm. I simply play my violin and let the room take care of the sound. The atmosphere is casual and not at all "stuffy classical." Coffee, juice, and cookies are served at intermission. Tickets are \$10. Mason will record both concerts and we will release the best tracks on *my first CD*, a live album.

I cordially invite all my students, friends, and music lovers to this new branch in my career. I appreciate being surrounded by people I care for and sincerely hope you can be there with me.

Calling All Fiddlers

The deadline is approaching for sign-up for the *Shuswap Summer School of the Arts Fiddle Workshop.* The instructor is an *amazing teacher, fiddler, and social guru...* wait, um, he he, the teacher is me.

Fiddlers of ALL experience levels are welcome. That means, even if you have NO experience you can participate. The advanced players play harder parts and serve as mentors for the beginners.



The workshop is an allday Sunday class with an optional concert Monday night at the school opening.

The class is held in the Salmon Arm Art Gallery, the best venue in town for violin music.

The cost is *only* \$45 for the day, including music. Sign up soon before the deadline, June 26 (though if you miss it, I'm sure they'll squeeze you in!) Nelson students can stay at my house if needed.

Miscellaneous Stuff



As I mentioned on page 1, if you need to sell and/or buy a violin let me know. Summer is when many students quit and is a great time to start looking for that new fiddle. Most people wait until the Fall, when all the good ones have been taken already. Don't get the "fiddle's too little" blues. I am starting classified ads in this newsletter (see page 4), free of charge for my music students.

⁹ A great way for for any fiddler, especially young, daring, *cute* ones, to *earn playing experience and money* is to *Busk*. Busking is playing music on the street for tips.

A refined art form, many musicians can make a living off of busking. I earned over \$1,400 US in two months of busking in 1997, which paid for a trip to California and some immigration costs to Canada.

Busking is an acquired skill. Not everyone can make "good coin," but the player's *skill isn't the first criteria*. A "**Thank You" sign** in your case is a must. Put a \$5 bill and a few toonies in your case to **start the "bidding" high. Smile** at passers-by and avoid using music so you can look people **straight in the eye**.

Not only will you make great cash for the summer, but you will

Who Said Your Agent Never Gets You Gigs?

I have 2 "gigs," that's musicianese for "performances," for my Salmon Arm students this summer. One is confirmed, the other will be no problem to get into.

July 15 is the opening day of renovated Hudson Street in Downtown Salmon Arm. There will be live music in the afternoon all performed by local groups. I am the music coordinator (and a performer) for the festival and am booking all the groups. The committee hopes to have some student musicians play, and that's where you come in. The "set" would be at most 15 minutes and we'd be paid by tips. We would play a few simple songs, and have a few solos/ duets by the braver students.

If you are interested in doing this show we will do it, but let me know ASAP.

The second show is **July 30** in Vernon. This is a confirmed gig and I just need to know who's going to be there. We will be paid as a group (all money will go towards music and festivals next Spring). As well, I am negotiating meals into the deal. Considering it is a *food festival*, I can guarantee it will be a fine dining experience for all involved!

We need to begin rehearsing for these shows soon. I was hoping Wednesdays at 5 would work for everyone. I'll be in touch with the details.

Classified Ads



FOR SALE: Conn Evette Tenor Saxophone. All new pads. Refurbished last summer and played less than 10 times since. Near immaculate condition. Case, strap, cleaning kit, reeds, and sax stand included. \$800. Call Rhiannon: (250) 833-5626

WANTED: Location in Nelson for teaching. I seek a room in a

conveniently located Nelson business or residence to use every 2nd weekend for teaching. The room must be isolated enough not to distract my students or disturb others in the building. I can offer lessons or other trade for the use of the room. Do you have a basement or spare bedroom that would work? Do you know anyone who wants lessons and has a big house? Call Rhiannon: (250) 833-5626

WANTED: Used Computer parts. Old 486 or Pentium PCs, video and Ethernet cards, hard and floppy drives, etc. Call Mason: (250) 832-8875.

Book in Progress

Although this newsletter is starting to take on enough pages to warrant a book, the book I'm referring to is the Fiddleheads Method Book 1.

Using the pieces we have learned in the past few years, technical exercises, and other teaching tools, the book will offer a "student's choice" approach. There will be a play-along CD with examples and duets to practice with. Other neat features will be included, but at this point are TOP SECRET. As well there is a series in the works after the first book is complete. I am working on the book every night with a September deadline for new students and the Fall semester. Do you have any songs you would like to see in the book? Have you written a song you want to see in print? Submit ideas to me soon.

Learning Outside the Lesson on Your Own

As many of you know, I was self-taught in music during the first 6 years of playing violin. I owe almost all of my progress to the San Diego Library! I checked out hundreds of music scores, tapes, and anything violinrelated and crammed my brain full. (I was a very strange teen. I even had a crush on Beethoven!) Because learning outside the lesson is so incredibly important to development as a musician, I am making my library of books, music, and CDs available to all my students. I encourage you to check some out and lead yourself into a fascinating, new direction in your violin playing. (And maybe even fall in love with Beethoven!)

Music Crossword #1

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ACROSS

1. ___ your finger against the string

6. "," is the sign for low or

8. "﴾" is called __ _makes 11. "

perfect" __ de France _, up and

away" 15. O or no fingers 16. Shhh, elephants

have big 18. My Siamese cat or composer

21. The world's best instrument

23. On the violin it is short, on the giraffe it is long 24. Wolfgang

Amadeus Orchestra 26

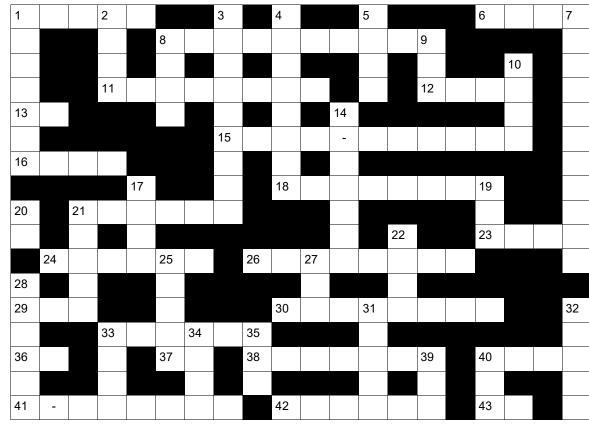
29. Herbal for Violin 30.

& Orchestra 33. It holds the

strings up _ you're happy and you know it clap your hands"

37. "Just say ___ to drugs"

38. Composer of "Four Seasons,"



Antonio
40. Big violin: double
41. Lowest note on violin
42. Violin's curly end
43. "Ready, set,!"

DOWN

1. How you stand determines good 2. When you play two notes at once: a double-3. "Ode to Joy" composer: Ludwig van

4. Wear these in the rain (hint: sounds like "stickers") 5. To play 2 notes in 1 bow 7. "Nutcracker" composer, Peter 8. To rip or shred paper

9. Brahms was not thin, he was round and

10. The black part of the bow

14. F# is called ___-17. "_{\theta}" is the symbol for

19. Beethoven never wrote symphony number

20. Beatles Album: "Let it 21. Held at the chin like a

violin, but slightly bigger 22. Eighth25. You use it on your bow: it's made from tree sap 27. The cow goes " 28. Pizzicato: to pluck the 31. Like a violin, but bigger and held between the legs " to the ears 32. Violin is " Simpson, a bad boy 34. If you're playing sharp, move your finger 35. December 24th is called

Christmas

39. Chopin was sick, or _ most of his life

40. An ant, spider, or butterfly