



Moonlit In The Sun's Music Notes

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A bimonthly newsletter about music and performances

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Did you know?

In the March/April issue of *Music Notes* we told you that we actually have horsehair on our bows. So, why horsehair? Good question, and here's the answer! If you look at horsehair under a microscope, you will see tiny teeth or scales on each strand of hair. When we apply rosin to the horsehair, it sticks into these scales and make it possible for the scales to then grab the violin string and make it sound. Rosin is hardened tree sap – the same stuff baseball pitchers put on their hands to help them grip the ball. (By the way, horsehair without rosin doesn't work – how the original fiddle-players figured that one out is beyond us! If you have any ideas, please email us.) Although many bow-makers have tried to use other materials, at this point, no one has been able to find anything that works better than horsehair. Lately, dyed horsehair has come into the market (it's called "Wild Hair.") Carla has a bow with teal horsehair (yes, that blue-green color). Come by and check it out the next time you're at one of our performances!

Did you know that the piano is a percussion instrument? Percussion instruments include different kinds of drums, cymbals, tambourines, chimes and other various things that you have to hit to play! So, why is a *piano* a percussion instrument? Well, sometimes Nancy bangs her head on the keyboard in frustration with Alban and Carla, but that's not why it's a percussion instrument! Find out in our next issue of *Music Notes*!

Reader's Corner

This section is dedicated to answer questions of our readers. If you have a question, email us at newsletter@moonlitinthesun.com!

What is "perfect pitch"? ~Charles Baker, Great Falls, VA

Perfect pitch, also called "absolute pitch," refers to a person's ability to name the exact pitch (frequency) of a tone. For example, someone might hear the dial tone on a phone and know it is an F-sharp or they might hear Alban blow his nose and know it's a B-flat! The ability varies to some degree and some people who have it have the uncanny ability of being able to name every note played when someone randomly leans against the keys of a piano. (*Note: they can do this without looking!*) Do you think you might have perfect pitch? The University of California is currently conducting a study on perfect pitch called the "Genetics of Absolute Pitch Study." If you're interested, go online to: <http://perfectpitch.ucsf.edu/study/> and login to take their quick survey and pitch test. It takes about 20 minutes to complete.

Learning music

In the last issue, we told you how you can figure out where the note "G" is using a [treble clef](#). To recap, there are seven letters in the musical alphabet: ABCDEFG. Each [staff](#) has 5 lines and notes placed on the lines or spaces between the lines represent a different pitch. The treble clef, also called a "G-clef," circles around the second line from the bottom of the staff. That indicates that the note "G" is played on that line. The space beneath that line is an "F" and the line beneath the G-line is an E. Going up from the G, you start the musical alphabet over again. So, the space above the G-line is an A, and the line above the G-line is a B, etc. Using this rule, the lines on the staff, starting from the bottom going up, are: EGBDF. To memorize the names of the notes on the lines, we used to use the phrase Every Good Boy Does Fine – this apparently is no longer politically correct, so today we use Every Good Bird Does Fly. Choose the one you like better! To memorize the names of the spaces on the staff, simply remember it spells the word FACE.

There are several clefs used in reading music. Nancy uses two when she plays the piano: the treble *and* the bass clef. More on how to read music using the bass clef in the next issue of *Music Notes*!

Looking for a violin, viola, or piano teacher? Contact [Moonlit in the Sun](#) at 571.223.5321

Make your own

Ever see someone playing wine or water glasses? It's called a "Glass Harp." We love that instrument (in fact, a glass harpist performed for Carla and Alban's wedding!) Here's how you can do it yourself:

Materials:

- *Stem glasses*. For now, let's start with one. (Professionals use many and play several glasses at once.) You'll need wine glasses that have a thin rim. We tried using a glass with a thick rim, but couldn't make it work. Note: We've never heard of anyone using

- plastic. If you try it, let us know how it works!
- *Water.* Any liquid will do, but, since you'll be getting your fingers wet, you might want to avoid sticky liquids like juice or wine.
- *Table.* We didn't find any difference between a glass table and one with a soft top on it. Kitchens are the best place for this activity!

Procedure:

1. Put some water into the glass. To begin with, fill each glass about 1/3 full.
2. Hold the base of the glass(es) with one hand.
3. Wet one of your fingertips of your other hand with the liquid. The middle finger seems to work best.
4. While holding the glass base, rub your wet fingertip along the rim of the glass in a circular motion. The direction doesn't matter. At first, go kind of slowly – try to go around the rim once for every two seconds or so.
5. Try changing how hard you press on the rim and how fast you go around the rim to find the best tone. You can get a louder sound by pressing harder and moving faster. (We do the same thing with the bow on the violin and viola.) You'll notice there's a limit on how loud you can get – at that point, you'll need a better instrument!
6. To change the pitch, try adding or removing water from the glass. Note: You'll need to keep water around to refill the glasses (the water evaporates and also drips all over the place). Glass harp player, Jamey Turner, told us he uses a turkey baster to refill glasses as needed.
7. Feel free to expand. You can have an array of glasses, each producing a different tone. If you do that, you'll need a way to anchor them to the table so they don't fall over while you're playing them.

Interested in learning more about the glass harp? Visit Jamey Turner's website at: www.jameyturner.com ENJOY!

Upcoming **Moonlit In The Sun** Performances

- *Performing on Thursdays at [The Restaurant at Patowmack Farm](#) in Lovettsville, VA. For reservations call: 540.822.9017 and tell them **Moonlit In The Sun** sent you!*
- June 6 – Leesburg's First Friday – from 6:30-9:00pm. Location to be announced on the [First Friday website!](#)
- Coming soon to Leesburg's Zeffirelli's restaurant. Visit our website for updates to our schedule!



Moonlit in the Sun is available for receptions, weddings, private parties, and corporate events! Give us a call to arrange for us to play at your next event! Call us at 571.223.5321 or email us at info@moonlitinthesun.com Visit our website at: www.moonlitinthesun.com

Upcoming concerts of interest:

Loudoun Symphony Concert Schedule

- **Saturday, May 17, 8:00 p.m.** at Stone Bridge High School, Ashburn, VA **and Sunday, May 18, 3:00 p.m.** at Freedom High School, South Riding, VA. **Salsa to Salzburg** featuring Gershwin (Cuban Overture), Mozart (Haffner Symphony), Borodin (Polovtsian Dances), and Harris (Symphony in One Movement).

Concerts at Shenandoah Conservatory

- **Friday, May 23, 2008 The 6th Dimension Handbell Choir** a Shenandoah Conservatory Arts Academy ensemble, performs at 7:30 p.m. in Goodson Recital Hall on main campus. FREE

Waterford Concert Series

- **Sunday, June 1, 2008, 4 p.m. Next Generation.** Young elementary, middle, and high school competition winners from the Levine School of Music.

Questions?

Send us your questions about music or ideas for articles! Also, send us any articles you've written that you think we might be interested in using in our next newsletter. Email us at newsletter@moonlitinthesun.com

Moonlit in the Sun is available for receptions, weddings, private parties, and corporate events! Give us a call to arrange for us to play at your next event! Call us at 571.223.5321 or email us at info@moonlitinthesun.com Visit our website at: www.moonlitinthesun.com

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