



## Spring 2016: The String Section

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Message from FLASTA President:

We were so very happy to have the National ASTA Convention come to the sunshine state in early March of this year. This was the first time that Florida has ever hosted it, and it was one of the highest attended ASTA conferences on record. Not only was it a chance for our string teachers to be inspired by so many wonderful string clinicians and performers from around the world, it was also a unique opportunity to showcase the wealth of talent and teachers we have right here in our backyard. I received plenty of unsolicited positive feedback from ASTA colleagues around the country that admire what we have here and the many good things our chapter does to promote string education.

As my term as FLASTA president winds down in a few months, I reflect with much gratitude the opportunities I have had to work with so many dedicated and passionate teachers. Despite all the challenges that come with our profession, I am very optimistic for the future of music education in our state. We have secured top-notch leadership for our chapter in the years ahead, and we have not yet even begun to realize our fullest potential...but we are definitely on the way and the possibilities for the kind of impact we can make together are limitless.

As a final word of encouragement, I would like to remind you all again that we as teachers and musicians are not in an isolated vocation. We are called to share this wonderful gift of music with our students and our colleagues and anyone who will engage us. We all know that relationships are an essential part of our humanity and all of us need to be meaningfully connected with each other on a regular basis. The purpose of ASTA is to foster community through a mutual passion for string education and its ability to impact lives. I encourage you to not only be a member of ASTA, but to actively work alongside us. Encourage other members of your local string family to join us too. It really does make a difference... for all of us.

Brian Powell, DMA

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## National Conference

This year FLASTA had the privilege of the national ASTA conference being offered right here in Tampa in early March. Many FLASTA members presented including Ross Harbough, Brian Powell, Kasia Bugaj, and Vivian Gonzalez.

Alexander Downs, a freshman studying with Dr. Nick Curry at the University of North Florida performed for Paul Katz in the collegiate cello masterclass. UNF violin student Seika Yamada played for Charles Castleman's collegiate violin class, and a UNF student string quartet played the Ravel String Quartet for members of the Bergonzi String Quartet in a chamber music masterclass. UNF and Frost school of music students performed in several masterclasses and sessions throughout the conference, including Frost students Molly Page and Joy Adams in the eclectic strings masterclass with Jeremy Kittel.



Vivian Gonzalez presents on inclusion

FLASTA members were able to attend presentations by internationally and nationally known artists and teachers. More pictures and video can be found [here](#). Next year's conference will be in Pittsburgh, PA.

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## Miami-Dade Honors Orchestra Festival

Started several years ago as a FLASTA special project by Tinder Burris, the Miami-Dade honors orchestra program continues to flourish. Started as a middle school honors orchestra for students from public, private, youth orchestras, and homeschooling programs, the program now includes high school levels. Next year's plans include adding an elementary honors orchestra. This year's middle school conductor was Brian Powell and the high school was conducted by Carlos Riazuelo from LSU. The festival also honored Barbara Duffy for her years of service to string education in South Florida.



Brian Powell and Carlos Riazuelo

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## Play A Piece Day

Don't forget to sign up for play-a-piece day to take place at the UM Frost School of Music on May 21st. Play-a-piece is a solo and ensemble festival for elementary string players in a fun and supportive environment!

[Play A Piece Brochure](#)

[Play A Piece Registration Form](#)

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## Get Involved!

FLASTA is now accepting nominations for President-elect and Secretary for our state chapter. Please contact [Brian Powell](#) with nominations. Elections will be held in April.

Interested in participating in ASTACAP certification? Contact [Vivian Gonzalez](#) or [Barbara Cripe](#).

Check out Jennie Klim's method books "The Guide to Teaching Violin" and "The Guide to Teaching Violin to the Very Young". These two books, in addition to 45 other books, can be found on Amazon.com. Visit her website at [www.beachside-publications.com](http://www.beachside-publications.com) or Facebook page, Beachside Publications.

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## Violinist Eden Vaning receives the Pinellas County Sheriffs' Community Leadership Award for making the community safe through her Violin Program. Congratulating Eden is Sheriff Deputy, Wilson.

The Pinellas County Sheriffs' Department honored violinist Eden Vaning with a special "Community Leadership" Award for her work in making the Community Safer, through her "Musical Alternatives" String Program at the High Point YMCA. The program, which she directs, was originally started in a collaboration between Eden, the Florida Orchestra, The Junior League, and the High Point YMCA, due to the high crime rate and the drug use in the area.

It was a perfect match because Eden had just released her illustrated, step-by-step series of teaching books, The Violin Book Curriculum, (now for violin, viola and cello), which enabled young area string students to teach the High Point area underprivileged children. Her string program has provided a safe place for children to learn stringed instruments for over 15 years now, with students winning awards such as full scholarships to Interlochen Music Camp, and becoming leaders in community youth orchestras. Children going through the program have themselves

become excellent string teachers, as they turned around and later taught other children how to play. One 10-year-old child received a full-paged, color article in the "Highlights for Children" magazine for his love of teaching.

With Eden now celebrating her 50th year as a string teacher, Eden decided to "Step-up" the program, to increase community visibility of the benefits of string training. Last summer, the children stepped out of their day-care centers, turned off their computers and I-pods, and under her direction, learned and performed 9 special concerts in four months! These included a Patriotic Tour, marching in a Fourth of July Parade, Christmas in July at Steinbrenner Field, a performance on live TV at a city council meeting, a special concert at the Clearwater Centennial Celebration, and even several "Smoking-Hot" Country Music concerts at large community events. As well, these young "musical ambassadors" played at the opening Gala for the Clearwater Public Library, and at several Retirement Centers. And many of these children were only first-year beginners! The comments from several beginners included they now felt, with work, they "could accomplish anything in life!" Comments from the community included "these children were amazing, with their rich, lush sound," and already more requests for their concerts are pouring in!

Eden's Award by the Sheriffs' Department, and her work in bringing "String Performances" to the attention of the Community, is a perfect vehicle to help get our message out as to the importance of what we are doing as string teachers. It is her goal to help people realize the amazing results from string playing and how we are doing something effective, in contrast to the results of the dwindling education system in place today.

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## Special Concert Event



The UNF Orchestra, conducted by Dr. Simon Shiao, will present a world premier of a percussion concerto by Piotr Szewczyk on April 13th in Lazzara Theater of the UNF Fine Arts Center. The orchestra also has been invited to perform at the annual FOA/FLASTA Fall Conference in Orlando on October 27th. Free and open to public.

This concert will feature percussionist Charlotte Mabrey performing a world premiere of Piotr Szewczyk's Percussion Concerto, celebrating professor Charlotte Mabrey's illustrious teaching and performing career in Jacksonville.

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