

TEEN STRINGS

IDEAS, NEWS & FUN FOR STUDENTS OF VIOLIN, VIOLA, CELLO, BASS & FIDDLE

TIP SHEET Nº 5

TEENS FROM LA YOUTH ORCHESTRA HEAD TO JAPAN

Teens from the **Los Angeles Philharmonic's Youth Orchestra** (YOLA) traveled to the coastal town of Soma, Japan, a city neighboring the disaster-ridden site of Fukushima, on March 26 to spend a two-day period rehearsing with local youth orchestra members of **El Sistema Japan**.

Fifteen members of YOLA arrived in Soma, a city of 35,000, to rehearse for the grand finale, a public rehearsal with the local youth orchestra, taking place in Tokyo, under the direction of **Gustavo Dudamel**, the LA Phil's music

director. "Most of the long hours of work were devoted to the last movement of Dvorak's

Eighth Symphony," penned Mark Swed, reporting for the *Los Angeles Times*.

"Soma conductor Yohei Asaoka and YOLA'S new conductor, **Juan Felipe Molano**, shared the podium at rehearsals, with Asaoka emphasizing technique and Molano trying to bring out more emotion."

The program ended with the youth orchestras and Soma's children's chorus playing Mozart's "Ave Verum Corpus," which was dedicated to those who sacrificed to help in Fukushima, the *LA Times* reports.



CHAMBER OF SECRETS

"I've loved chamber music ever since I first listened to the **Guarneri String Quartet** records as a kid," Jennifer Cho says of what sparked her desire to play chamber music.

"I loved the blended sounds and the feeling of the harmonies melding into one another. I look forward to sharing music with my friends and colleagues, who are some of the premiere chamber musicians in New York City.

"It's great to be challenged and to push each other to find different aspects of beauty in the music in sometimes unexpected places, and the combined performance is always better because you are bringing two, three, or four people's expertise into one piece."

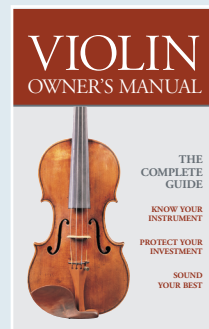


Beat the Summertime Blues

Avoid bringing your instrument or bow into the sun or heat. Consider installing a humidifier in your home.

Look into purchasing a hygrometer or humidifier for your instrument case (keep humidity at about 40–45 percent). And equip yourself with a few simple devices that can help you gauge your instrument's particular micro-climate—for instance, Amazon offers a digital hygrometer/thermometer for about \$30.

Check the *Violin Owner's Manual* (available at store.AllThingsStrings.com) for more advice. Give your instruments and bows a seasonal checkup and beat the summertime blues.



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STRINGS

4 WAYS TO PICK THE RIGHT SUMMER-STUDY PROGRAM

Summer is a great time to kick back. Or maybe not. Some string players grab the opportunity during those otherwise lazy summer months to bump their studies up a notch. Here are some ideas to keep in mind.

Clarify your goals

Do you want to improve your solo-performance skills and build your repertoire of big concertos? Are you seeking more experience in chamber music or orchestral work? Most summer programs have a particular emphasis, so narrow your list to those that match your interests.

Size up your level of playing and repertoire

A program's audition requirements can help you determine if your level of playing is a good match. Most programs can't accept everyone who applies, so focus on programs that synch up with your playing level.

Decide on your level of intensity.

Do you want to have a lesson a day or a lesson a week? Do you have the energy for twice-daily orchestra rehearsals? Also consider how many hours a day you want to spend in the practice room. How hard do you want to push yourself, and be pushed?

Check out the faculty

If you're determined to study with one particular teacher, aim for wherever he or she sets up shop for the summer. Or maybe you haven't set your heart on any one



teacher but are interested in a particular school for study during the year. If that's the case, audition at the program where teachers from that school congregate during the summer.

—Louise Lee

Master the Mechanics of Vibrato in 3 Simple Steps



- WATCH YOUR INTONATION.** Vibrato moves only between a target pitch and a slightly flat version of that pitch. If your vibrato makes you sound out of tune, it's usually because you're either not hitting your target pitch at the top, or the width of your rocking motions are inconsistent in general. To check your vibrato against your target pitch, use your second finger in third position on the D string and match it to your open A.
- TAKE TIME TO TROUBLESHOOT.** If your vibrato is too slow and wide and can be hard to initiate in fast passages, practice narrower rocking motions focused on the upswing, increasing cycles per beat, and dotted rhythms rather than steady rocking cycles. If your vibrato is too narrow and fast, perhaps created with a tense jitter in the elbow, slow "siren" practice is key.
- LISTEN TO THE VIBRATO OF OTHER PLAYERS.** Once you master the mechanics of vibrato, you must learn to use vibrato as an expressive element. Slower pieces are usually better expressed with a slower, wider vibrato, whereas faster pieces need vibrato to be narrow, quick, and explosive. Listen to the vibrato choices of others.

—Laurel Thomsen

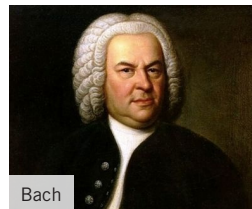
Did You Know?

It is alleged that composers **J.S. Bach** and **George Frideric Handel** were both blinded by the same ocular surgeon, John Taylor. Handel's blindness accelerated, many said, after the ocular surgeon removed cataracts.

Bach also was treated by Taylor in March or April of 1750 after which Bach became

increasingly blind. He died on July 28, 1750, just a few months after his surgery.

A contemporary newspaper reported Bach's cause of death as "the unhappy consequences of the very unsuccessful eye operation."



Bach



Handel