



BASS WORLD

The Magazine of the International Society of Bassists



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**By John Kennedy**

Hello, everyone, and welcome to our 2011 post-convention issue, celebrating the explosion of bass performance, pedagogy, and lutherie that was San Francisco in June. For those of us that were there, this will serve to both remind us of what we experienced and give us a chance to discover some of what we had to miss while choosing among the many great events going on simultaneously. If you were not able to meet us in San Francisco, we hope this will give you a taste of what an ISB convention is all about and perhaps put the bug in your ear to set aside the first week in June 2013 to travel to

Rochester, NY and the Eastman School of Music for our next one. President-elect Kristin Korb-Støve is already planning for that event, which is sure to carry on the tradition of heart-stopping and mind-bending bass as only an ISB convention can deliver.

I am honored to take up the gavel from outgoing ISB president Rob Nairn. During his tenure, we held an amazing convention at Penn State University, where he is professor of bass, and we saw the growth and evolution of our web presence, and new innovations and features in *Bass World*, a lasting legacy! Thank you for all that you've brought to the ISB, Rob, and I look forward to leaning on your guidance as we go forward. Thanks also go to the many people who were instrumental in making this year's convention possible. Madeleine Crouch, Barry Green and the Bay Area host committee, our competition chairs and judges, Kristin Korb leading the young bassists, and the board of directors all contributed above and beyond what we could have asked for in making this such a success. All of the performers and educators who participated donated their time and talents, and without them there would not be an ISB convention. Thank you to everyone for making this possible.

My background is as an educator and freelance classical bassist. In those roles, I have seen what membership in the ISB has brought to me and to my students. I've had the wonderful opportunity to direct the Young Bassist program at conventions for the last decade, and have seen students enter timidly, participate avidly, and return to participate again or enter competitions, some going on to begin their careers, or to take the bass with them as they pursue other passions. I value the connections I have made both with my contemporary colleagues and with these exciting and excited young artists who, all clichés aside, truly are our future.

As you read about the events of the San Francisco convention, I hope that you take away the sense of awe and wonder that I felt, and heard from so many who I talked to during the week. I was thrilled to bring together some of the great pedagogues of our instrument to share their insights into the process of teaching, and into preserving the traditions we share while encouraging the innovations that continually reinvigorate our art. One highlight for me was listening to the great violin teacher Stephen Shipps outline the history of violin pedagogy and discuss with Diana Gannett what we as bassists can learn from our smaller cousins. As he described the lineage in his own teaching that stretches directly back to Corelli, I realized that we are a young branch of the string family.

As the ISB enters its 45th year, I look forward to exploring that joining of tradition and innovation that is our legacy and our future. Our founder, Gary Karr, has been an exemplar of that combination throughout his career, as have so many of the great artists and teachers who have molded the ISB into its current, vibrant form. Enjoy this celebration of the talent and excitement that is the ISB.

Sincerely,

John Kennedy

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Domestic membership rates in U.S. dollars: one year, \$60; two years, \$110; three years, \$160; senior age 65 plus (one year), \$45; full time student (one year), \$30; life membership \$750. International membership rates in U.S. funds: one year, \$65; two years, \$120; three years, \$175; senior age 65 plus (one year), \$50; full time student (one year), \$35.

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The 2011 ISB Convention at San Francisco State University



Scott Chapek's famous metal sculpture "Walking Bass" was on display in the lobby of the San Francisco State University School of Music during the ISB convention, and was a favorite photo opportunity.

**Reported by Jody Atwood, Ed Marshall, Sam Loeck, Lou Pappas,
Paul Pearce, Madeleine Crouch and Jeremy Baguyos**

Photos by Judy Kirtley and Jody Atwood

The 2011 International Society of Bassists Convention at San Francisco State University drew over 1,100 participants and presenters from 34 countries, including large delegations from China and South Africa. The convention also boasted a Young Bassists program directed by Kristin Korb, bass ensemble reading sessions for all levels of playing, and six competitions.

Monday, June 6th

Competitions for orchestra, jazz, ages 15-18 and under-14 plus the semi-final round of the solo competition and workmanship and tone rounds for the maker's competition were held. **Rachel Calin**,

2011 ISB Award Honorees

Every two years, the **International Society of Bassists** gives its Distinguished Achievement Award, the Society's highest honor, to a bassist who has demonstrated and attained the highest level of excellence, and whose career has had significant influence on the worldwide double bass community. **The 2011 Distinguished Achievement Award honoree is Franco Petracchi.** As a soloist, orchestra principal, conductor and chamber musician, Maestro Petracchi has performed in music halls around the world. Composers such as Mortari, Donatoni, Henze, Rota, Berio and Trovajoli have dedicated works to him. He has devoted much of his career to teaching at the Geneva Conservatoire, in Cremona at the Walter Stauffer Academy he co-founded, and in Fiesole at the Music School. His students hold positions in major international orchestras.

In addition, the ISB also gives a number of **Special Recognition Awards**, presented biennially to recognize those who have contributed their special talents, knowledge and support to furthering ISB ideals. **2011 recipients include:**

*Composition - John Harbison
Lutherie - Lynn Hanning
Scholarship - Tobias Gloeckler
Teaching - Orin O'Brien
Solo Performance - Joel Quarrington
Jazz Performance - Charlie Haden
Orchestral Performance - Ed Barker
Historically Informed Performance - David Sinclair
Collaborative Music - Harmon Lewis
Young Bassists Ambassador - David Young
Special Merit - Paul Ellison
Friend of the Bass - Dustin Williams*

chair of the age 15-18 category, remarked that there was a wide variety of repertoire ranging “from Bach to Berio” performed. In addition to the scheduled prizes in this category, special scholarship prizes to the Idyllwild Arts Academy were presented by **Peter Askim**, music director and composer-in-residence of the Idyllwild Arts Academy. In the jazz category, **Bill Mays**, pianist for the competitions and convention performers for nearly 20 years, remarked that this was the best year that he could remember in terms of consistently high level of ability of all the jazz competitors.

After the announcements, the first recital of the convention featured the winner of the 2009 ISB solo competition, **Nicholas Schwartz**. It was a simply stunning performance by a young artist playing with the poise of a seasoned recitalist. Nicholas opened dramatically with Elliott Carter’s *Figment III* for solo bass, then charmed the audience with Schumann’s *Fantasiestücke* and *Canciones Populares Argentinas* by Ginastera, plus works by Bottesini, Beach and Misek. He was followed by the winner of the 2009 ISB jazz competition, **Sean Conley**, whose eclectic program went from Bach to the Beatles. Sean made the difficult double stops in the Rabbath work sound easy. Highlights of the program included some sizzling drum work by his friend Abe Lagrimas, Jr. on one of Conley’s own compositions, and a double bass chopsfest on Conley’s arrangement of *Blackbird*. The convention was off to a brilliant start!

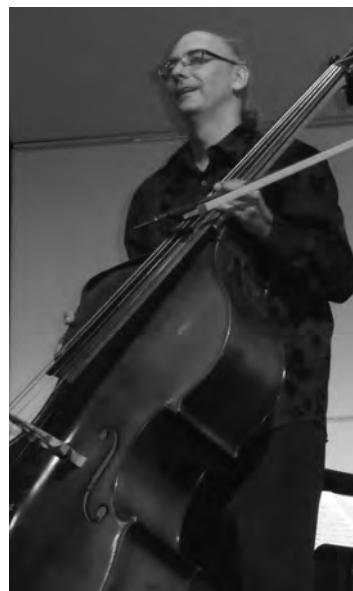
Tuesday, June 7th

Joshua Davis, director of jazz studies at Susquehanna University, presented a session on the development of meter and rhythm for musicians in any style of music and on any level of playing. He invited musicians to think about the two paths of melodic motifs: total bar awareness and beyond bar-lines, and gave his audience some innovative exercises for working on sense of time. **Linda McKnight**, on the faculties of the Manhattan School of Music and Montclair State University, shared her experience transcribing *Solo Pomposo* for tuba and wind ensemble by Al Hayes (aka Henry Fillmore) for double bass and wind ensemble. In addition to using amplification and raising the notation up an octave, she preserved the tuba quality of the original work by rethinking vibrato and articulation. The Pittsburgh Symphony’s **Micah Howard** and **Jeff Turner** shared a recital, giving elegant and nuanced performances of *Une Larme pour basse* by Gioachino Rossini, two works by Bottesini, Jeff Turner’s beautiful transcription of Debussy’s *Beau Soir*, and Koussevitsky’s *Valse Miniature*, Op. 1, No. 2. The intimate studio theater venue was packed and you could hear a pin drop as they played.

David Gage hosted and moderated a **luthier Q&A** and panel discussion in an innovative, open-ended, participant-driven “unconference” format. David fielded a steady stream of questions and opinions from both luthiers and players, and everyone emerged with a greater understanding of the hard work involved in being a luthier, as well as appreciation for their frequent and generous donations of time and support for events like the ISB convention. **Peter Dominguez**, professor of jazz studies and double bass at the Oberlin College



Daniel Nix (photo by Judy Kirtley)



Catalin Rotaru



Regan Brough

Winners of the 2011 ISB Double Bass Competition

The International Society of Bassists’ biennial double bass competition was held June 6-7, 2011, at San Francisco State University in San Francisco, California. Diana Gannett, professor of double bass at the University of Michigan, served as chair of this year’s competition. The five divisions were Solo, Jazz and Orchestra, with competitors from age 19 to 30 (age 18 to 30 for jazz), and two divisions for younger bassists, Age 15 to 18 and Age 14 and Under.

SOLO DIVISION

Thierry Barbe, chair; **Paul Erhard**, **Hou Jun-xia**, **Eric Hansen**, **Catalin Rotaru** and **Paul Sharpe**, judges

The Gary Karr Prize, **Yi-Jung Su**
Second prize, **Rex Surany**
Third prize, **Théotime Voisin**
Honorable Mention and best performance of the required work “*Celestial Dance*” by **Rufus Reid**, **Nicholas Villalobos**

JAZZ DIVISION

Jeff Campbell, chair; **Paul Beaudry**, **Peter Dominguez**, **Arni Egilsson**, **Barre Phillips** and **Martin Wind**, judges

The Scott LaFaro Prize, **Or Bareket**
Second prize, **David Baron**
Third prize, **Raviv Markovitz**
Honorable mentions, **Ben Thomas** and **Adam Cote**

ORCHESTRA DIVISION

Jeremy Kurtz, chair; **Shinji Eshima**, **Alexander Hanna**, **Christopher Hanulik**, **Joseph Kaufman** and **Ju-Fang Liu**, judges

First prize, a week with the San Francisco Symphony, **Derek Zadinsky**
Second prize, **Noah Reitman**
Third prize, **William Perryman**
Honorable mention, **Joshua Lebar**



Age 15-18 division competitors (l to r) Michael Marks, Renaud Boucher-Browning, Mike Ehrenkranz and Xavier Foley

Conservatory of Music, presented a master class focusing on the bassist's back and the issue of balance. He suggested physically leaning forward, thinking in terms of playing with the whole body, and embracing yoga, for training to stand over long periods of time. **Robert Matheson** discussed and performed the concert works of German composer Theodor Findeisen, including *Elegie* and *Nixenreign-Fantasie*, with assistance from bassist **Lisa Riddering**. He emphasized that the concert music of Findeisen is densely late-Romantic and just as difficult, if not more, than the composer's more familiar etudes.

Pascale Delache-Feldman, a member of the bass faculty at the Longy School of Music, performed a daring program for unaccompanied double bass, including the Waltzes by Domenico Dragonetti, the *Prelude*, *Sarabande*, and *Gigue* from J.S. Bach's Suite No. 2 in D minor, works by Frank Proto and Teppo Hauta-Aho and her own transcription of Piazzolla's Tango Etude No. 3. Brazil's **Nilson Matta**, a transplant to New York City's busy jazz scene and at the center of the Brazilian movement in the U.S., graced his audience with his superb musicianship. Performing with pianist Bill Mays and drummer Tim Froncek, Nilson's pure and facile technique kept the ideas, which transcended analysis, flowing freely. The trio clearly enjoyed the musical ride and brought the audience along with them. **Colin Corner** is principal bass with the Rochester (New York) Philharmonic Orchestra and teaches at the Eastman School of Music. During his orchestra



(l to r) Alex Hanna, Joe Kaufman and Joseph Conyers

AGE 15-18 DIVISION

Rachel Calin, chair; **Peter Askim**, **Zbigniew Borowicz**, **Han Han Cho**, **Christine Hoock** and **David Allen Moore**, judges

First prize, Xavier Foley

Second prize, Mike Ehrenkranz

Third prize, Jackie Johnson

AGE 14 AND UNDER

Steve Reeves, chair; **Blaise Ferrandino**, **Kurt Muroki**, **Irena Olkiewicz**, **Nick Scales** and **Quirijn Van Regteren Altena**, judges

First prize, Hong Yu Lai

Second prize, Noah Baily

Third prize, Paris Myers

Special prize for best performance of required work, "Song and a Dance" by Blaise Ferrandino, Noah Baily
Honorable mention, Wen Qinqi Fu

The winners of the 2010 ISB/ David Walter Composition Competition

Robert Black, Chair, **Gottfried Engels** and **Garth Stevenson**, judges

SOLO DIVISION - **Matthew Kline**, *Fragments for Solo Double Bass*

Honorable Mentions:

Chia-Yu Hsu, *Serenity and Agility*

Nejc Kuhar, *Svasta* -

Everything is Possible

Marcin Stańczyk, *Three Afterimages*
for Solo Double Bass

CHAMBER DIVISION -

Keitaro Takahashi, *Oboro*

Honorable Mentions:

Bin Li, *Lake 1B11*

Stephen Yip, *Hundun*

David Miguel, *Scordabasso*

Liza White, *Tango*

BASS AND ELECTRONIC MEDIA -

Jeff Greene, *The Range of Their Vision*

Honorable Mentions:

McGregor Boyle, *Yahaney Inlet*



David Ballam

masterclass he emphasized that knowing the excerpts is every bit as important as the solo piece for auditions, and encouraged diligence in developing a range of dynamic contrast. Colin, who has won a number of auditions since winning the ISB orchestra competition in 2001, began seriously studying excerpts in his senior year of high school.

Hans Sturm, new professor of jazz studies and double bass at the University of Nebraska at Lincoln, conducted a very useful hands-on workshop exploring the Rabbath concepts of motion, space, and time. After an introduction that dispelled many myths about Rabbath technique, he invited participants to bring their basses to the playing area to work with some of the concepts outlined in two Rabbath DVDs, *Art of the Bow* and *Art of the Left Hand*. **Andrew Kohn**, associate professor of music theory and double bass at the University of West Virginia, discussed and performed largely unknown music with a connection to Serge Koussevitzky. He began with Koussevitzky's *Etude: Allegro Molto*, followed by a Koussevitzky transcription of John Ernest Galliard's Sonata in E. Next was a curious work, *Nocturne*, op. 2 (1927) by Fabian Sevitzky, Koussevitzky's nephew and also a bassist and conductor. The recital ended with Charles Martin Loeffler's *Norske Saga* and the Concerto in F-Sharp Minor (1910) by Georgii Konius. Kohn's exquisite playing drew loud applause. **Bruce Gertz**, mainstay of the New England jazz scene and faculty member at the Berklee College of Music, performed with pianist Bill Mays and drummer Tim Froncek. His warm, natural sound, solid bass lines and adventurous solos were a musical treat for everyone in the audience.

Jeff Bradetich, professor of double bass at the University of North Texas and faculty member at the Cleveland Institute of Music, as well as director of the popular Bradetich Masterclasses summer program and founder of the Bradetich Foundation, gave a delightful and informative masterclass based on concepts outlined in his book *Double Bass: The Ultimate Challenge*. In his session "Assessment and Evaluation of Private Lessons," **John Schimek** advocated moving past antiquated practices of teaching private lessons in favor of contemporary practices include setting goals, interaction with students, videotaping practice, singing and visualizing phrases, group lessons, social interaction and



The ISB convention shop was busy non-stop

Thanks to Our 2011 ISB Convention Sponsors

2011 ISB Double Bass Competition

Solo Division

- The Gary Karr Prize of \$2,500 has been underwritten by Peter Gallagher *Bow donated to first prize winner by Steven Reiley, Guarneri House*
- \$1,000 second prize
- \$750 third prize
- Required piece, "Celestial Dance" by Rufus Reid, commissioned in part by Diana Gannett
- \$250 prize for best performance "Celestial Dance" underwritten by Rufus Reid

Orchestra Division

- First prize, an expenses-paid week with the San Francisco Symphony
- Second prize of \$1,000 has been underwritten by Orin O'Brien of the New York Philharmonic
- \$750 third prize

Jazz Division

- The Scott LaFaro prize of \$2,500 has been underwritten by the family of Scott LaFaro *Contra Combo amplifier donated to first prize winner by Acoustic Image*
- Second prize of \$1,000 underwritten by Thomastik-Infeld
- Third prize of \$750 underwritten by Thomastik-Infeld

Age 15-18 Division

- The first prize of \$1,000 has been underwritten by the ISB board in memory of Joel & Leona Green *Carbow has donated a carbon bow as an additional prize*
- \$500 second prize
- The third prize of \$250 has been underwritten by Buell Neidlinger & Margaret Storer

Age 14 and Under Division

- \$500 first prize *Mooradian Cover Company has donated a deluxe bass bag as an additional prize*
- Second prize of \$250 has been underwritten by John Schimek
- Third prize of \$100 has been underwritten by David Murray
- Required piece, "Song and a Dance" by Blaise Ferrandino, supported by Ludwin Music

using technology for distance learning and staying in communication throughout the week. **Eric Hansen**, associate professor of double bass and director of the symphony orchestra at Brigham Young University, was joined by a chamber ensemble consisting of Scott Holden on piano, Ron Brough on percussion, David Kjar on saxophones/clarinet, and conductor/composer Joseph Sowa. Hansen's *Up and Gone* featured a propelling rhythmic *ostinato* with catchy, lyrical melodies. Commissioned by Brigham Young University's Barlow Endowment for

Music Composition, *A Field Guide to Natural History* was a 10-movement work by Sowa, featuring a complex sound canopy representing nature scenes.

Pat Klobas and **Tommy Kesecker**, the Klobas Kesecker Ensemble, known for its San Francisco sound forged by the synthesis of each artist into one singular ensemble featuring guitar, sax, drums/percussion, and bass showcased tight and creative funk playing. One particularly delightful tune, *Pino Noir*, was dedicated to the post-convention ISB wine tour. With energy, creative enthusiasm, and youthful vigor, **Barre Phillips** embarked on a fantastic journey of discovery. He tapped into a deep reservoir of sounds from his bass, weaving them into a free improvisational fantasia. Audience members were on the edge of their seats with huge smiles on their faces, feeling like children opening Christmas presents. As Barre spoke and played simultaneously, there was a feeling of deep connection with this musician's mastery. **Marcos Machado**, double bass professor from the University of Southern Mississippi, accompanied by Dianne Frazer on piano, showed off his remarkable technical and interpretive facility in a recital of works by Frank Proto. Pieces performed include the world premiere of Proto's *Sonata for Solo Double Bass, Weeping Woman*, and *Nine Variants on Paganini*.

The first evening concert on Tuesday was a showcase for the versatility of **Fausto Borem**, professor of bass at the Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais in Brazil, and his Musa Brasilis ensemble: vocalist **Ana Taglianetti** and pianists **Marcelo Magalhães Pinto** and **Tânia Mara Cançado**. Fausto opened with his own variations on Jobim's sensuous "Wave," and was joined by Taglianetti



David Murray, left, presents Gary Karr with a mosaic bass on behalf of the ISB (photo by Judy Kirtley)

Winners in each division will receive a K&M Bass Stand made possible by Connolly Music Company

2010 ISB/David Walter Composition Competition

- A total of \$3,000 in grand prizes for three divisions was generously underwritten by Claudia Barritt in honor and memory of David Walter

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Diana Gannett (photo by Judy Kirtley)



Gary Karr and pianist Harmon Lewis celebrate 40 years as a performing duo in 2011 (photo by Judy Kirtley)

for his arrangements of songs by Edú Lobo and Chico Buarque. The showstopper was Fausto's performance piece, "Don't Hit My Cat with a Bat," a comedic explanation of musical terminology as sung by a wily cat wearing a tall striped Dr. Seuss hat. His rubbery facial expressions and meows had everyone laughing hysterically. After a quick set change, triple-threat jazz bassist/composer/arranger and ISB past president **John Clayton** was joined by his son, the pianist and rising jazz star **Gerald Clayton**. The two generations performed as peers, both at the top of their game, and dipped into each other's catalogs of recordings, including a luminous version of "If I Were a Bell" from Gerald's latest CD, "Bond: The Paris Sessions." John's tender arco rendition of "Where is Love," from the musical *Oliver*, was moving for both performers and audience. Is there a music gene? If so, the Claytons could patent that DNA code. It was a feel-good evening from beginning to end.

Wednesday, June 8th

Yuan Xiong Lu is a professor of double bass at Texas Christian University. He stressed his belief that you are your best teacher, recommending practice at the time of the day when you have the most energy and focus. Besides working on the fundamentals, he also suggested unorthodox approaches, like practicing in the dark to expose problems such as inaccurate shifting and carrying a pocket metronome at all times, practicing a piece mentally while walking to the beat. **Jeremy Baguyos**, professor of bass at the University of Nebraska-Omaha gave an excellent introduction and overview of interactive computer music, a relatively new genre, and how it can be incorporated in double bass repertoire and performance. While some in the audience might not be ready to dive into electronic music, everyone came away with new respect for those who work in this sophisticated medium. One of the works performed was McGregor Boyle's *Yahane Inlet*, which garnered an honorable mention in the ISB's composition competition. In **Jessica Gilliam-Vail's** session, "The Bass, The Actress and the Spoken Word," the expressive possibilities of combining double bass and dramatic voice were effectively and craftily combined. Highlights include a compelling performance of *You Dance the Samba*. Gilliam-Vail is on the faculty of Huston-Tillotson University in Austin, Texas.

Rolf Erdahl (double bass) and **Carrie Vecchione** (oboe/English Horn) comprise the Erdahl/Vecchione Duo, and for the good part of a decade they have been effectively commissioning, promoting, and performing music for the combination of double bass and oboe/English horn. For this convention, the Erdahl/Vecchione Duo featured the compositions of Timothy Goplerud. As always, the duo was effective in communicating the drama of the composition as well as impeccably performing the printed page. The bass community is indebted to the tireless work of the Erdahl/Vecchione Duo for helping to generate new chamber music repertoire for their combination of instruments. An acknowledged authority on all things Suzuki, **Virginia Dixon** explained the principles of "brain expanding," through memory, eye-hand coordination, and repetition of the music. The results give impetus for succeeding in the future. By college, students have accomplished double bass training for life. She utilizes the repertoire of George Vance's system in her teaching, and is now involved in creating more materials for the Suzuki Bass Method, currently at five volumes.

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Frederick Charlton played a daring recital of transcriptions of J.S. Bach's unaccompanied violin partitas. Mr. Charlton has received acclaim for his CD **Bach on Fire**, a recording of Unaccompanied Partitas for violin, so it was thrilling to hear them performed live. After performing her original duet *Blue Light* with **Mark Ramirez** of the Orquestra Gulbenkian, Lisbon, **Susan Cahill**, a member of the bass section of the Colorado Symphony and faculty member at the University of Denver, presented her perspectives on performing in an ensemble. Bassists often have more challenges as ensemble players. Ms. Cahill stressed the importance of both listening and eye movement and involved the audience to participate in some eye movement exercises.

Robert Black, founding member of the Bang On a Can All Stars and professor of double bass at the Hartt School of Music, performed a recital of works for double bass and computers. With a laptop utilizing Logic and Ableton Live software at the heart of an onstage technical rig, Black performed a live realization of Larry Austin's and Robert Black's *art is self-alteration is Cage... redux, one more thing* (a world premiere) by Mira Calix, and *Stronghold* by Julia Wolfe. The classic Austin work is a meditative mega bass ensemble work using subtle continuous variations resulting in a layering of multiple electronic double bass sounds in a pulsating sound mass. He seamlessly transformed and bypassed the acoustical limits of the bass and explored new expressive qualities through technology. **Scott Haigh**, longtime member of the Cleveland Orchestra and on the faculty of Oberlin College, offered tips during his orchestral excerpts masterclass. One participant improved his performance in a matter of a few minutes thanks to Haigh's suggestions, which included one pre-audition mental trick: when practicing, think of getting your playing up 120% so during an actual audition, even under stress your playing level drops to 100% instead of 80%.

Accompanied by pianist Kaishi Zhao, **Chen Zi-Ping, Li Na, Luo Bing** and **Yin Fuyuan** made their ISB convention debuts with a recital of modern Chinese compositions. Each bassist took his or her turn playing a solo work with piano. The recital ended with bass ensembles, including *Rhythmic Duo* by Qi Mianle (transcribed by Yin Fuyuan), a dynamic performance by Yin Fuyuan and Luo Bing. The recital ended with two works by Ren Siwen/Shao Shi, *A Beautiful and Mysterious Place Quartet* and *The Red Detachment of Women Quartet*, performed to perfection by the quartet. Hopefully this repertoire will find its way around the world thanks to this recital.

Tod Leavitt, on the faculty of Valdosta State University, presented "Jon Deak Meets Sherlock Holmes." Besides the composer's popular "Hound of the Baskervilles," Tod gave us a sneak peek of the long-awaited *The Speckled Band*, giving the first performance of scene one. Combining great bass playing and cagey narration, he captivated and entertained the audience. New York bassist, composer, producer, vocalist and educator **Paul Beaudry** teamed up with guitarist **Adam Rafferty** in a duo jazz performance that featured amazing interplay between bass and guitar. Even in the absence of a drummer, the duo never lost a tight rhythmic groove as they danced flu-



Masanori Ichikawa (photo by Judy Kirtley)



Jonathan Camps (photo by Judy Kirtley)

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Henry Peyrebrune
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idly and creatively around the changes. **Sonia Ray**, professor of double bass at the Federal University of Goias, and **Alexandre Rosa**, member of the Sao Paulo Symphony Orchestra, performed an exciting recital of Brazilian music for two basses. At the end of the recital, Fausto Borem and Jessica Valls joined the group in a rousing performance of *Brasileirinho* by Waldir Azedvedo. **Paul Sharpe**, artist-teacher of double bass at the University of North Carolina School of the Arts, performed a recital of music by Hertl and new music by Joshua Davis, John Allemeier and Peter Fischer, whose Sonata for Double Bass and Piano was a grand prizewinner in the 2008 ISB/David Walter Composition Competition. Sharpe and pianist Dianne Frazer performed the challenging program with deftness and intensity.

Esra Gul, from the Anadolu University State Conservatory (Turkey), assisted by pianist Rose Chandler, performed music of composers who are also double bassists, including Tom Knific's "The Music and the Master," commissioned by the ISB for its 2009 solo competition. She dedicated her performance of Frank Proto's *Sonata 1963* to Proto's upcoming birthday, three works by Teppo Hauta-Aho to the composer's 70th birthday, and Rabbath's *Iberique Peninsulaire* to his 80th birthday. Her passionate playing and expressive vibrato were fitting gifts for this musical birthday party. **Arni Egilsson**, a creative mainstay of the ISB and long admired in multiple genres of bass playing, presented a set that opened with several of his own jazz compositions, including a tribute to his good friend, the late, great Niels-Henning Ørsted Pedersen. Backed by pianist Bill Mays and drummer Tim Froncek along with guest bassist Jeff Campbell, he moved around the fingerboard with the ease of a master, compelling us all to listen. Arni has performed with many icons of the jazz and classical worlds, including Andre Previn and Ray Brown, and has been a mentor to many of today's top working bass profes-



At the ISB College Fair Day

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(l to r) John Schimek, Joel Schimek and Nick Barnaby



Paul Ellison

further magnified the musical experience. The recital began with the dramatic *Halt!* by Karlheinz Stockhausen, replete with all the dramatic devices, props costumes as per the composer's specific and extensive performance notes. Trembly, wearing a cape and Zorro hat, played with accuracy and panache, and Ryan Bancroft made the wickedly difficult trumpet part look easy. Even audience members who might ordinarily run the other way seeing Stockhausen on a program were drawn into a shared and moving experience.

ISB past president and director of jazz studies at Western Michigan University **Tom Knific**, joined by his wife Renata (violin), son Gene, (piano) and Tim Froncek (drums) performed a recital of his own compositions. One of the more captivating works was *The Muezzin of Göreme*, performed with a pre-recorded percussion track. Knific shared the inspiration behind the work: "I had the good fortune to listen, via cell phone, to a description by friends hiking and enjoying the scenery of the magical landscape of Göreme in Cappadocia, Turkey. Suddenly I heard the call to prayer of the muezzin in the background, with the hiker's cell phone held up for maximum effect. This experience inspired the work." The performance, like the composition, was intense in feeling and mesmerizing all at once.

Wednesday evening's concerts began with **Daxun Zhang**, soloist and double bass faculty at the University of Texas at Austin, who engaged the audience with his affable personality and masterful musicianship. Mr. Zhang's world-class reputation for an impeccable technique preceded him, and the audience was not disappointed. His flawless execution of J.S. Bach's Suite No. 5 BWV 1101 transcended the printed page with a level of interpretation rarely heard live on any instrument. The rest of the program included *Cinema Paradiso* by Ennio Morricone, George Gershwin's

sionals. It was great to have him back with us!

David Neubert presented "Video Conferencing and Other New Technologies," introducing his new social media platform, the International Bass Forum (<http://isb-forum ning.com/>). He also discussed Tokbox and other videoconferencing technologies and their use by musicians. He suggested Magic Jack as an alternative to cell phones and internet-based phone services, and covered capture technologies and cloud computing for music notation, recording and music instruction. Always a convention favorite, **Dennis Trembly**, principal bass of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, performed a staple of many players, the Sonata in A minor "Arpeggione" by Franz Schubert. His tasteful phrasing and vibrato elevated the work to the highest levels of eloquence and expression. The duo interplay with pianist Dianne Frazer



S. Charles Siani (1917-1991)

Remembering S. Charles Siani

The ISB dedicated the spirit of the 2011 convention to **S. Charles Siani**, who was professor of double bass at San Francisco State University, the gracious convention host, for over twenty years. He was also principal double bass of the San Francisco Opera Orchestra, principal of the San Francisco Ballet Orchestra, and assistant principal of the San Francisco Symphony for over 40 years. He began his studies with his father, a member of the Philadelphia Orchestra, and graduated from Temple University in Philadelphia. Siani also studied with Anton Torello at the Curtis Institute of Music, who founded the double bass curriculum at Curtis in 1928. Charles Siani was a prolific teacher. His students can be found in major orchestras throughout the United States, but his influence in the double bass community was not limited to classical repertoire. Jazz greats like Barre Phillips, John Patitucci and Charlie Haden were also among his students. Legendary jazz bassist Ray Brown, who studied bowing with Siani, said it best when he described him as "a bassist's bassist." Charles married his wife Norma Urcuyo-Siani, Director of the Office of Special Events at SFSU, in 1960, and together they raised a family and enjoyed sailing in their spare time. The opening event of the convention honored the Siani family and all former students of S. Charles Siani.



Shinji Eshima, right, performed with Butoh dancer Judith Kajiwara

jazz standard *I've Got Rhythm*, a traditional Chinese song, *Song of Birds*, played on a traditional bowed Chinese instrument, Bottesini's *Elegy*, and *Souvenir d' Amerique* by Henri Vieuxtemps. The sweet and touching encore, *The Swan*, paid homage to Gary Karr's retirement recital at the 2001 ISB convention in Indianapolis. Always a convention favorite, the versatile jazz bassist **Martin Wind** took the stage with Los Angeles-based guitar wizard **Bruce Forman**. The two met at a jazz festival a few years ago, where they were paired for an impromptu performance. They clicked musically and personally, and while Martin and Bruce have only had the opportunity to play together a handful of times, anyone listening would swear they'd been a duo for years. Highlights included a performance of the title track from Martin's 1994 CD *Gone with the Wind* and a supercharged take on the ever-green *Donna Lee*. The two friends

received a well deserved standing ovation, earning an encore by Martin and Forman for a delighted audience.

Thursday, June 9th

In his solo repertoire master class, **David Allen Moore** of the Los Angeles Philharmonic spent time stressing the importance of practicing cold, especially prior to a performance. Sometimes it's a good idea to skip the scales and other warm up exercises. He offered a thought provoking tip that was a definite takeaway: the audience should know what the first note is going to sound like right before you actually play it. Hailing from the faculty of the University of Northern Iowa, **Hunter Capoccioni** gave a lecture/demonstration on playing the repertoire of Francois Rabbath with German bow. Capoccioni emphasized that the principles in Rabbath's "Art of the Bow" also apply to German bow. Fundamental concepts include approaching the string from above (letting the strings support your weight) and "a bow hold that allows for weight and freedom of the arm to be carried across or thrown into the string without compromising contact point or stick position," full resonance for every note, and the importance of freedom of motion without tension.

Understanding what is within each beat was the thrust of a session where many luminaries in jazz performance were in attendance to learn from a modern master. **Michael Formanek** demonstrated an exercise that broke down quarter notes into subdivisions, grouped accents to imply new

time signatures within the printed time signature, and moving the quarter note.

Diana Gannett and violinist Stephen Shipps, both on the faculty of the University of Michigan, presented "Raising the Bar." These two prominent educators presented a lively hour of give and take with the audience, addressing aspects obvious and not so obvious for encouraging students to excel at their highest level. Students in learning and teachers in judging need to decide what their goals are: at what level do they consider success can be achieved? Gannett and Shipps also encouraged students to take a broad view, enrolling in non-music classes to advance and develop as human beings. Practicing and achieving technique are important, but a musician must also have something to say. Led by **Charles DeRamus**, the Gothenburg Symphony Orchestra Bass Quartet and Ayla Kabaca flew their ensemble to San Francisco to perform "Greta's Dream," a children's concert for double bass quartet and narrator. Along with formidable bass chops, DeRamus has some composition chops as well. "Greta's Dream" is the story of a young hippopotamus who dreams she can fly. The performance was entertaining and engaging, but at the core of the children's show was the ensemble's virtuosity. This is educational entertainment that deserves a wide audience.

Moderated by the **Robert Black**, chair of the 2010 ISB/David Walter Composition Competition, two of the three winners in the competition performed their own winning works. **Matthew Kline** performed *Fragments* for solo bass and **Jeff Greene** performed *The Range of Their Vision* for double bass and electronic media. Afterwards, both composers lent their insights into their compositional processes and how being double bassists affected their compositions for double bass during an audience Q&A session. In his workshop, **Scott Dixon**, a member of the Cleveland Orchestra and on the faculties of Oberlin and the Cleveland Institute of Music, emphasized a whole body approach to the motions involved in playing the bass. He suggested thinking of your body as a car, with your hips as the chassis and your feet as the wheels. Any movement you make has to start in your feet and transfer the movement to your hips. Only through a unified ergonomic approach can you realize a full, rich tone and avoid tension.

Shinji Eshima, associate principal bass of the San Francisco Ballet Orchestra and a member of the San Francisco Opera



Wayne Darling



Young bassists in performance

Orchestra's bass section, as well as an instructor at our convention host, San Francisco State University, led an innovative and interactive multi-media program session. Members of the audience were invited to bring their instruments and come on stage for an ensemble performance of Paul Chihara's *Logs*. The bassists were joined by Butoh dancer Judith Kajiwara, guest Mark Izu playing bass and Sho, a traditional Japanese instrument, and monks from the San Francisco Zen Center chanting. **Bertram Turetzky**, a pivotal figure in contemporary music for the double bass, was joined by his wife, flutist Nancy Turetzky, for "A Salute to San Francisco," a program of works that were written or inspired by composers with connections to the city by the bay, including Richard Felciano, Ronald Caltabiano and Lou Harrison. Turetzky's own *Remembering LOU* was a particularly memorable and touching moment. The intimate theater venue was the perfect setting for the Turetzkys' love letter to San Francisco as they played music by and for friends. The audience was riveted.

Taiwan's **Han Han Cho**, whom Gary Karr has described as his musical daughter, made her ISB convention debut with a beautiful program of transcriptions. Pianist Rose Chanceler joined Han Han in brilliant performances of Robert Schumann's *Three Romances* op. 74 for oboe and piano and *Fantasy Pieces* op. 73 for clarinet and piano. She further demonstrated the versatility of the double bass by performing Handel's Sonata in C Major for Viola da Gamba and Bruch's *Kol Nidrei* op. 47, originally written for cello. The audience left knowing they had just been introduced to a major talent. In "Sperger Meets Bottesini," **Dean Ferrell**, a member of the Icelandic Opera and Iceland Symphony orchestras, was joined by his Juilliard classmate **Mark Morton**, professor of bass at Texas Tech University, for a comedic imagining of a meeting between the two composers, with the romantic Bottesini (Morton) coaching Sperger (Ferrell) on how to win the woman of his dreams, soprano **Sara Ganz**. Even pianist **Dianne Frazer** got into the act, commenting on the action from the keyboard and rolling her eyes in exasperation. Ferrell and Ganz sang hilarious lyrics penned by Ferrell to the music of Sperger, poking fun at sacred musical cows and leaving the audience convulsed with laughter. Ferrell also performed his version of "Per Questa Bella Mano," a tour de force, or should we say farce, playing the bass with virtuosity and all the while singing an ode to "the fearless Herr Pichelberger" and his devotion to Mozart. Gilbert & Sullivan would have been proud.

Carlos Del Pino, Cuban jazz virtuoso bassist, performed a "Classical/Jazz Bass Meets Pizzicato." Performing with pianist Chiemi Nakai, Carlos Del Pino performed an eclectic set: Suite for Bass by Carlos Del Pino, Study No. 1 by Eduard Nanny, Chaconne by J.S. Bach, and *Gankina* by Simeon Venkov. **Diana Gannett** gave a charming solo lecture-recital of repertoire with folk influences, "When It's Just You and Your Bass." She discussed and demonstrated the practice of arranging favorite folk tunes for double bass solo. Not only is it a good exercise in writing and arranging, but it also provides a high quality musical and emotional template for performance. In short, it's fun! And speaking of fun, the Groucho Marx Double Bass Ensemble, consisting of bay area bassists **Bill Everett, Jon Keigwin, Richard Worn**, University of Puget Sound faculty member **Steve Schermer**, Fort Worth Symphony bassist **Paul Unger**, percussionist Loren Mach and conductor David Milnes presented *The Great Eight Bass Project*. Works from an

ORCHESTRA AUDITION PANEL

A panel discussion led by recent major symphony audition winners **Joseph Conyers** (Philadelphia Orchestra), **Alex Hanna** (Detroit Symphony), and **Joe Kaufman** (Seattle Symphony) shared some golden perspectives on their successful auditions. Preparing for auditions includes a long checklist for a presentation that lasts just a few minutes. The enthusiastic panel focused on some main points: 1) huge and challenging repertoire lists, 2) physical strength, and 3) facility in both fundamentals and performance.

Some of the panel's suggestions for preparing for auditions included:

1. Working out problematic parts first, recognizing your weaknesses, and moving from hard to easy, checking out arpeggios and weird bowing. Nail rhythms before notes.
2. You need strength. Exercise, but don't get hurt. Running and lifting weights were two preferences of the panelists.
3. Know your scales! In a practice session, utilize your time well. Write down and work on the basics. Back away from too much intensity, such as showing off speed or dynamics. Spend your time with fundamentals that need shoring up. Play for friends, get fired up mentally, and think about how you are interpreting your own ideals, carrying a line musically and making a musical presentation. Videotape yourself, and listen to interpretations of different artists.

Finally, slow down during practice the last week before auditions to get fast parts down solidly. Have a chamber music party to get away from the repertoire list. And don't change rhythms on the day of auditions. The panelists suggested that every audition is a no-fail opportunity because regardless of outcome, you'll be even more prepared the next time. Each one should be a positive experience, and remember, every audition is just a snapshot frozen in time.



Bassist Jorge Roeder and his ensemble played Afro-Peruvian jazz

adventurous set list included music by Acker, Eshima, Jaffe, Utsyolskya and Worm. The highlight of the program for many was the first movement of the Schuller Quartet.

Doug Mapp and **Bertram Turetzky** joined sound engineer **Steve Treager** for a panel discussion, “Do I Really Sound Like That?” Many relevant and useful points were made, including an observation that many engineers are not trained to hear classical and jazz styles. The panel provided some suggestions for working with sound engineers. One suggestion was to ask engineers to stand onstage and listen to the band from the band’s point of view. And the next time an engineer says he is there to help you get a good bass sound, you can say, “I don’t want a good bass sound. I want my sound.” **Irena Olkiewicz**, **Thierry Barbe** and **Catalin Rotaru** joined forces to perform an elegant program of double bass trios, including Olkiewicz’s own arrangement of Rabbath’s “Ode d’Espagne” and a three-movement work by Polish composer Stefan Boleslow Poradowski. The three bassists combined for a rich and lush sonority as a cohesive ensemble, but they each also had very defined lines when it was a single member’s time to shine. They were joined by guest bassist Eric Hansen for Hansen’s clever “Peach Fuzz Marmot Trio” and a quartet version of “Besame Mucho.” Bassame mucho!

Fearless and commanding in their use of the bow on bebop heads and solos in front of an audience that knew all of the tunes intimately, **Craig Butterfield** and **Jeff Eckels** creatively performed *Confirmation, Relaxin’ at Camarillo, Donna Lee*, and

other Charlie Parker standards as bass duets. As if *Donna Lee* with the bow were not difficult enough, both Butterfield and Eckels performed the head melody with bows an octave apart. **Guillermo Delgado** and **Juan Pablo Navarro** presented “Tango and Folklore.” The excitement generated by these two bassists (along with their fine pianist) was palpable during this session: a crowded room indicated the audience’s interest in their repertoire. Both men have studied in the United States, but it was the Argentinean rhythms, and the enthusiastic presentations that raised the temperature of the listeners. Both pizzicato and bow emphasized the rhythms, and we were introduced to the music of a number of Latin composers. **Hagai Bilitzky** is an expert in presenting and performing Middle Eastern music to western audiences. His lecture/demonstration, “Double Bass in Classical Arabic Music,” discussed the special performance techniques, such as how to handle playing the quarter tones that appear in Arabic music, which is outside the traditional modalities of Western music and perhaps unfamiliar to audience members before Bilitzky’s excellent introduction.

Bassist and vocalist **Kristin Korb**, the new president-elect of the ISB, presented a valuable lecture/demonstration about teaching young jazz musicians. She emphasized the use of the cycle of 4ths in learning tunes and putting them in other keys. She advised teachers to have recordings available for students to play with, even if it’s open strings and only roots. It’s more fun to play with others and get a context for what you’re doing. Sing what you play, and remember that you can always use your ears to teach your fingers

where to go. If you saw **Barry Green**’s youth bass ensemble, the **Green Man Group** in the hallway getting ready to go onstage, you knew you were in for a musical and visual treat. Their repertoire was drawn from a set list influenced by classical, folk, rock, funk, Latin and jazz styles, as well as popular American and Irish tunes. The show included glow-in-the-dark masks and stage props. Not only was this a well-disciplined musical group, but these talented high-school-age performers were also exuberantly choreographed in this delightfully zany production.

Regan Brough, rising jazz star and member of The Army Blues, presented a tribute to great piano and bass duos. Regan joined forces with Bill Mays to play standards as they would have been performed “back in the day.” Standouts included were *Sophisticated Lady* by Duke Ellington as played by Duke Ellington and Jimmy Blanton, *There’s No Greater Love* by Isham Jones as played by Kenny Drew and Niels-Henning Orsted Pederson, and Jim Hall’s *Waltz New* as played by Bill Mays and Red Mitchell with Bill Mays again at the piano. We first heard about Regan when he was a young teenager playing for John Clayton in a young bassist’s masterclass, and knew we had a great bassist in the making. Regan performed on Mr. Clayton’s bass, previously owned by Ray Brown. **Christine Hoock**, former principal bass with the WDR Symphony Orchestra Cologne and currently on the faculty of the Mozarteum in Salzburg, played for a packed theater. The recital ranged from well-known tonal works like J.S. Bach’s Sonata No. 2 to Sofia Gubaidulina’s *Pantomime*. A highlight was Ms. Hoock’s performance of *Gloria*



Han Han Cho



Young bassists orchestra members waiting to play

Coates's *Nightscape für Kontrabass und Klavier*, an ecstatic exploration of the many timbral, gestural, and expressive possibilities for double bass. For the last work, Thierry Barbe, David Murray, and Jonathan Camps joined her in a scintillating performance of the concerto for four basses by Georg Philipp Telemann. Pianist Dianne Frazer was a sensitive accompanist for Ms. Hoock.

Jeff Campbell, professor of bass and jazz studies at the Eastman School of Music and *Bass World* columnist, interviewed Helene LaFaro-Fernandez, whose award-winning biography of her brother, the legendary jazz bassist Scott LaFaro, is in its second printing. She shared memories of their family life and his early influences during a lively question-and-answer period with audience members who were clearly in awe of Scott's talent and his impact on jazz fifty years after his death in a car accident at age twenty-five. It was a rare opportunity for Scott's fans to access a primary source of information, and Jeff, a contributor himself to Scott's biography, *Jade Visions*, expertly led the conversation. Helene signed copies of her book after the presentation. **Volkan Orhon**, double bass professor at the University of Iowa, performed another gorgeous recital, a well-balanced concert that was capped with a performance of the monumental *Divertimento Concertante* by Nino Rota. Also of notable mention was *Color of Anatolia* by Erdal Tugcular. Throughout the recital the audience was captivated by Mr. Orhon's rich and projecting tone. He was accompanied by his frequent collaborator, the wonderful Rose Chandler. Joined by vocalist Sophia Rey and Tupac Mandia on *cajon* (a simple box) **Jorge Roeder** performed a concert of Afro-Peruvian jazz. The winner of the ISB's 2007 jazz competition, Jorge has a sunny stage presence and big talent. His bass playing, at turns melodic and rhythmic, wove a rich tapestry of sound that made the simple instrumentation of his trio sound like a much bigger ensemble. It was a wonderful opportunity to explore the world's influences on jazz, and Jorge and his trio were the perfect tour guides.

Catalin Rotaru, double bass professor at Arizona State University and sought-after international soloist, presented a dazzling recital of transcriptions of repertoire for violin, cello and even piano that had the audience cheering and on its feet. Catalin, accompanied by the marvelous pianist **Marina Pakowski**, opened with *Ballade* by Prokofiev, followed by two etudes by Chopin, gorgeously played, a fiery *Tarantella* by Vieuxtemps, the well loved *Cantilena* from *Bachiana Brasileira No. 5* by Villa Lobos, and the *piece de resistance*, the C. Saint Saëns cello concerto. Catalin demonstrated a wide range of emotional expression as well as astonishing technical facility. Any cellists in the audience would definitely have envied how well he played their repertoire.

Brian Bromberg opened his highly anticipated set by improvising with solo bass alone. With recognizable but creatively altered quotes of music by the Beatles, Sting, and Miles Davis, he often interjected dazzling flurries of notes in his improvisations. Even with the quick gestures, his attacks and sustains were consistent, even, and clean, allowing him to soar with a singular voice.

Friday, June 10th

Paul Ellison, professor of double bass at Rice University, sees masterclasses as laboratories. Looking back at tales of America's wild west, he said "The cemeteries were full of people who thought they were the fastest gun. Art is about your own personality, not who is fastest." He recommended Hal Robinson's book, "Strokin'," to improve bowing technique, and demon-

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Alexis Cuadrado, left is coached by performance injury prevention specialist Randall Kertz.



Laura Menangozza and Stefano Sciascia

strated a number of useful exercises. After a student played selections from Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, he quipped, "Another one of our national anthems." At the close, the audience bowed down to this master of bowing technique. Besides this masterclass for a packed room, Paul gave another class focusing on double bass pedagogy. **Alex Cuadraido**, a rising star of jazz bass, stressed the importance of learning fast heads by practicing at performance tempo and learning smaller isolated snippets of the passage, but always keeping the feel and tempo. In his lecture/demonstration "Applying Rabbath to Jazz Performance," it was especially enlightening to hear him play bebop heads to illustrate his teaching ideas.

Accompanied by Jason Palmer on drums, **Tyler Abbott**, on the jazz and double bass faculty at the University of Oregon, discussed and presented strategies for learning

how to improvise in odd meters. Mr. Abbott emphasized the importance of playing regularly with other musicians in odd meters in order to internalize and reproduce the rhythmic vocabulary of odd meters. He demonstrated the three basic levels of pulse: basic quarter notes, the larger half notes, and the motor rhythm and approaches to practicing. In keeping with the ISB's year for collaborative music, **David Young** led a panel discussion with **Christine Hoock**, **Louis Levitt**, and **Kurt Muroki** about chamber music for double bassists. One of the most important points was that there is chamber music for bass beyond Schubert's "Trout" and Octet, Beethoven's Septet, Dvorak's Quintet, Rossini's duo with cello and quartets, and the Prokofiev Quintet. Some resources for finding the thousands of available chamber music that includes double bass are Paul Nemeth's massive online list at <http://paulnemeth.com/basschamber.htm>, Murray Grodner's *Comprehensive Catalog*, available at the ISB's Online Store, and the IMSLP/Petrucci Music Library at www.imslp.org,

Zbigniew Borowicz, professor of double bass at Laval University in Canada, took a creative approach to his recital programming by playing the first movement of all of the major bass concertos. From Dittersdorf and Vanhal to Bottesini and Koussevitzky, he performed in orchestral tuning. It was a powerful reminder that you don't need solo tun-

ing to make a beautiful soloistic sound. **Leon Bosch**, accompanied by pianist **Marina Pacowski**, performed a recital of music by Spanish composer Pedro Valls. Recitals that focus on the work of a single composer serve as a larger overview of a composer's body of work, and are a great way to get to know the works of a possibly unfamiliar composer. With Mr. Bosch's recital, audience members received a lesson in the style of Valls: romantic, virtuosic, idiomatic writing with much panache and flair but without pretension. Mr. Bosch communicated the feeling of the music as if he had been intimate with it all his life. It is always enjoyable to listen to a recitalist who is deeply immersed in the music of a composer.



(l to r) Virginia Dixon, Paul Erhard and Susan Cahill

VII. International Sperger-Competition for Double Bass

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Limited 50 participants

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Strings by: Pirastro, Thomastik-Infeld, Corelli,
Music by Hofmeister-Edition, various money-prizes

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Stephen Shipps (left) with Bryan Hieronymus

Ashley Adams stood out from the crowd with her demonstration of a new and compelling technology, the kBow, an integrated system consisting of a bow controller and corresponding software that seamlessly allows a bassist to include in real-time just about every possible type of effects processing in live double bass performance. The kBow system's ease of use should be of interest to all levels of players. **Derek Weller, Virginia Dixon and John Kennedy** presented the panel "Starting the Very Young Bassist." The panel got off to a humorous start. Mr. Weller noted he was working with the siblings of his wife's violin students, seven or eight youngsters under age six. The Cleveland Institute had called parents who were waiting for violins and suggested these youngsters get started on basses. As the panelists noted, for these new classes for very young string players, the first steps were to find students and find instruments. Can you visualize a 32nd-size double bass?

The 2011 convention's line-up of the ever-popular **Bad Boyz of Bass** included **Volkan Orhon, David Murray, Paul Sharpe**, and standing in for absent Bad Boy Anthony Stoops, Anthony's teacher **Diana Gannett**. Their trademark sound is rooted in sensitive collaboration, virtuoso classical technique, and repertoire that often morphs, quite humorously, into familiar popular hits. There is always lots of a playful banter and joking among the quartet members, and they delighted the audience with their signature tune, "I Like Big Bouts," with rapmaster Paul Sharpe. Riding the wave of renewed interest in Argentina's most exciting export, **Tango Telelectric** (David Clampitt on violin, Mark Rubenstein on accordion and Ohio State University professor **Paul Robinson** on double bass), performed and informed the audience about recital music for

small ensembles in the tango genre. Some useful information included a description and demonstration of music from *Che Bandeon! Ten Essential Tango Arrangements*. They stressed adding interest to small ensembles through introductions, melodic interaction, and countermelodies.

Bay area bassist **Richard Duke** introduced and performed music by "the heretofore unknown 19th century Italian double bassist and composer Francesco Burlone," whom we suspect is actually the brilliant creation of the talented Richard Duke himself. Duke never revealed his ownership of the music, which could be compared to Bottesini. He was joined by bassists **Andy Butler, Bill Everett** and **Alden Cohen**, and pianist **Jieune Lee**, piano the bass trios *Grand Fantasia on a Theme of Bellini* and the Prelude to Act III from *Phoebe and Daphne*. It was a superb display of imagination and musicianship. In his session "Injury Management and Prevention," **Dr. Randall Kurtz**, a chiropractic physician and acupuncturist along with his own electric and double bass activities, had a wide range of suggestions for bassists. Much of his advice was related to posture, a major concern for performers. A number of the practice exercises he demonstrated, with assistance from audience members, are pictured in his popular and useful book, *The Bassist's Guide to Injury Prevention*. An ounce of prevention is definitely worth a pound of physical therapy later!

Indiana University double bass professor **Bruce Bransby** returned to the ISB convention after far too long an absence to perform a charming program of recital encores, accompanied by pianist Antoinette Perry. Several of the works presented were transcriptions that provided a vehicle for Bruce Bransby's facile technique, such as Valentini's *Grave and Allegro* and Carl Maria von Weber's *Adagio and Rondo*. Three compositions by Roland E. Curb were standouts in a program of pieces meant to capture an audience's attention, including the world premiere of Curb's *Theme and Variations*. **Gene Perla** and the Gene Perla Go Trio made their ISB convention debut playing an enjoyable set displaying solid musicianship and high energy. Perla is an alumni of the Berklee School of Music, and has played with a who's who of jazz greats, including Woody Herman, the Thad Jones/Mel Lewis Orchestra, Sarah Vaughan, Miles Davis, Elvin Jones and Sonny Rollins. The founder of the PM jazz record label, he runs a studio and a web communication company in addition to his performing career.

Vassilis Papavassiliou, principal bass of the Greek National Opera in Athens, performed a

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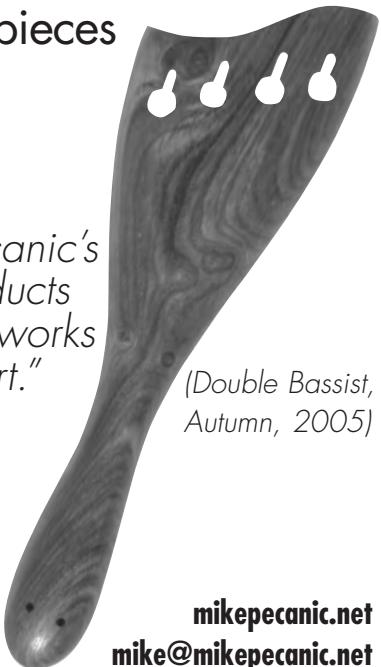
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beautiful program that included Boccherini's Sonata in A, a transcription of Beethoven's Sonata for piano and violin, F Major, op. 24, and Bottesini's *Carnival of Venice, Theme and Variations*. The appreciative audience enjoyed a recital performed with eloquence and conviction. **Jun-Xia Hou**, professor of double bass and director of the orchestral instrument department at the China Conservatory in Beijing, president of the Chinese Society of Double Bassists, and executive director of the China Youth Philharmonic Orchestra, made his ISB convention debut with a lecture and demonstration of music for double bass and piano from different regions of China. In his presentation "Suzuki Bass School," **Dan Swaim**, who has been extensively involved in the Suzuki program for young double bass learners, brought a number of students performing bassists from several youth levels, including four (count 'em!) bass playing Myers brothers, to demonstrate the repertoire. He pointed out relative goals in the music for the students, as they performed from the Suzuki Bass School Volumes I through IV.

Stefano Sciascia's recital was aptly subtitled "Bass Love." Sciascia's romanticism and fresh nuance touched the hearts of the

audience members. Accompanied by Dianne Frazer, Sciascia presented one of the most passionate performances many have ever experienced, with a program of some of the most beautiful lyrical solos for the bass. **Wayne Darling**, professor of double bass and jazz studies at the University School of Music in Graz, Austria, performed a set with pianist Bill Mays and drummer Tim Froncek. It was inspiring to hear such creativity flowing in such a natural and unforced way. He paid tribute to his close friend, the late jazz bassist Niels-Henning Orsted Pedersen, with his presentation of *Do You Know What It Means to Miss New Orleans*. Darling is a fantastic player, educator, composer and a very cool guy!

Stephen Tramontozzi, assistant principal bassist with the San Francisco Symphony, appeared with his fellow members of the Richmond Trio, guitarist **Paul Grove** and flutist **Rhonda Bradetich** (yes, Jeff's cousin), plus guest bassist **William Everett** and pianist **Aileen Chanco**, for an appealing program that blended elements of folk, tango and classical music. In an exciting cameo performance, international opera star **Andrea Silvestrelli** dashed over from the San Francisco Opera, where he was appearing as one of the giants in Wagner's

Das Rheingold, to sing a rousing version of Mozart's *Per Questa Bella Mano*, expertly accompanied by Tramontozzi, who later confessed he couldn't hear himself play over Silvestrelli's booming basso (hear for yourself on YouTube.) **David Murray, Tom Knific, Diana Gannett** and **Paul Sharpe** presented "College Auditions: Where Are We Today?" Professors Murray, Knific, Gannett and Sharpe represented, respectively, Butler University, Western Michigan University, the University of Michigan, and the University of North Carolina School of the Arts. Among the nuggets of valuable information for college-bound students were 1) get a lesson before an audition, 2) communicate with the appropriate professor, and make online inquiries on time, 3) most schools over commit on scholarships, 4) contact music departments and don't miss university scholarship possibilities, 5) consider more than one discipline, and 6) seeking leadership in the orchestra (principal) requires a high level of accomplishment.

Swedish bassist, composer and performance artist **Tuomo Haapala** was joined by vocalist/composer **Marie Selander** for an intimate recital entitled "Comfort and Defiance." The spare combination of voice and bass plumb the quietest dynamic lev-



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els, creating an atmosphere of introspection. The expressive compositions, which included *Night is the Mother of Day* and *The Continents move in the Night*, seemed to draw inspiration from the natural world and elicited very positive reactions from the audience. Bassist **Putter Smith** and saxophonist **Gary Foster** combined forces and vigorously explored all the wonderful music and interaction that can occur with this combination of instruments. Putter has worked with a host of jazz greats including Gerry Mulligan, Chet Baker, Pete Jolly, Shelly Manne and Thelonious Monk. As an educator, author and composer, Putter is a walking jazz encyclopedia who has recorded a number of albums as a sideman and leader (check out *Perfect Circularity* with saxophonist Gary Foster).

Bret Simner, faculty member at Gymnasium Oberwil in Basel, Switzerland, performed a recital of music from the “Golden Age of Viennese Classical Bass.” He was joined by Fumiko Wellington and Noah Strick (violins), Charith Premawardhana (viola), Jeannot Maha'a (cello), and Darija Andzakovic (Viennese bass). The ensemble performed music of J. Michael Haydn, Franz Josef Haydn, Dittersdorf and Pichl. It was a treat to hear this repertoire in a historically informed performance. **Kurt Muroki**, faculty member at the Juilliard School and Stonybrook University among others, presented a lecture/demonstration on performing chamber music that includes the double bass. Much of **Mark Dresser**’s approach to “Teaching Contemporary Techniques” has been recorded in his popular DVD, “Guts.” He demonstrated how every note on the fingerboard has a corresponding harmonic if executed properly, and emphasized that evoking harmonics requires a thorough knowledge of overtones and corresponding divisions of the string to allow for bowing on the notes to create harmonics with the right hand. He also introduced the idea of stretching the idea of string divisions to time divisions in using the overtone series, as a metaphor for time and timbre.

Thierry Barbe, principal bassist of the Paris National Opera orchestra, performed a recital of formidable repertoire that included contemporary classics like Hans Werner Henze’s *Biagio* and four duets from Béla Bartók’s *44 Duets for Violin*. He was accompanied by Marina Pacowski on piano, and guest bassist Yung-chiao Wei on the four Bartok duets. Dan Styffe joined Thierry for the finale, the fascinating *4 x 4 for Two*

Double Basses by J. F. Zbinden. As always, Thierry’s playing was elegant, precise and expressive. At the young age of 24, **Jiri Slavik** is already capable of bending an audience to his will and personal vision. His solo bass program, influenced by classical, jazz, folk and popular music, covered territory from Bach to the 1967 pop hit *San Francisco (Be Sure to Wear Some Flowers in Your Hair.)* He asked the large audience to move in closer, and we all leaned closer to hear every note, mesmerized by Slavik’s careful choices of tones, timbres and chords. Everyone left feeling that they had been present at the creation of something new and exciting for music and our double bass community.

Finally, the moment everyone was waiting for had arrived, the return of living legend and touchstone to double bassists around the world, the great **Gary Karr**, to the ISB convention stage for a program he called “Gary Karr’s Basses Loaded.” Gary invited many of his current and former students to play with him in ensembles and as featured soloists, making the evening even more special. The entire company (**Jonathan Camps, Han Han Cho, Ryan Ford, Diana Gannett, Masanori Ichikawa, Sarah Klein, David Murray, Daniel Nix, Volkan Orhon, Quirijn Van Regteren Altena**, and Gary’s duo partner of forty years, pianist **Harmon Lewis**) entered from the four corners of the hall in matching black t-shirts commemorating the occasion to perform an exquisite, “surround sound” version of the chorale “Erbarm’ dich mein, O Herre Gott,” BWV 721 by J.S. Bach. The singularity of musical purpose under Karr’s guidance was apparent and made for perfect unity and an amazing sound. The program alternated between solos and ensembles, and there were many touching moments. Masanori Ichikawa dedicated his performance to his country of Japan, devastated by the tsunami of 2011 and its aftermath. Jonathan Camps poured out his deep feelings on the loss of his mother only days earlier through his music. Gary and Han Han Cho, whom Gary describes as his musical daughter, performed an impromptu duet that was full of affection and joy.

Although Gary retired from the concert stage (he is still busily recording what must be the most all-encompassing repertoire portfolio of any bassist), there was renewed freshness and vitality in Karr’s performance, with his trademark bold projecting tone, intensely expressive vibrato, and fun, larger-than-life stage presence. After the ensem-

bles, Mr. Karr and Harmon Lewis treated the audience to multiple encores, including the sentimental “Granny’s Dream.” The ISB gave Harmon Lewis its first Special Recognition Award for Collaborative Music, and then, in a surprise for Gary on the occasion of the 10th year since his historic farewell solo recital at the 2001 ISB convention, the 50th year since his New York debut, and his 70th birthday, presented Gary with the mosaic double bass commissioned from Jackie Stack Lagakos. That work of art is featured on the cover of this issue of *Bass World*. Gary posed for dozens of pictures next to the mosaic bass the next morning during an autograph party. For those lucky enough to be there, the concert evening was a once in a lifetime event that will be remembered for decades to come.

Saturday, June 11th

The last day of the convention started with the ISB’s first ever College Fair, a meet-and-greet that gave college-bound students a chance to speak with more than twenty artist teachers representing major music schools. Tables were arranged in a semi-circle on the stage of the Little Theater, and students and their parents moved from table to table to learn more about college music programs and opportunities available during this efficient and well-run event.

Scott Pingel, principal bass of the San Francisco Symphony, offered a number of important insights into the performance of orchestral excerpts during his masterclass. For example, at rehearsal number nine in Strauss’s *Ein Heldenleben*, Mr. Pingel suggested, “As you cross strings, make sure you figure out some contortion of the left hand so every note has tone. Don’t be too fast with shifts, and think like a French horn player. ‘Sweep’ feeling is important in bowing and feeling.” **Josep Quer Agustí**, a member of the bass section of the Symphony Orchestra of Liceu in Barcelona, Spain, performed a number of short works by composers from the Catalonian province of Spain. Highlights included the world premiere of *El Cercle Fantastic* by Torres, *Asturias* by Albeniz, and *Zapateado* by Valls.

Bob Sinicropi is a bassist and jazz educator in the Boston, Massachusetts area who is especially interested in the history of jazz bass. He gave a fascinating and well-researched talk on the history of jazz bass with examples from several types of media, including recordings, transcribed solos and

clips from musicals. A list of the recordings discussed in this session is available from Bob (sini@milton.edu), or John Goldsby's website, www.goldsby.de/john/index.php. **David Young, Barry Green, and Andrés Martin** presented a panel discussion on appropriate repertoire (scales, études, sonatas and concerti with piano, double bass solos with piano accompaniment, solo bass) for the advancing high school student.

The "Deep Tones for Peace" concert, hosted by **Mark Dresser**, saw many prominent bassists active in experimental areas exploring timbres and gestures that combine and layer to form masses of drones. Highlights included *Detones for Joelle* and a work by Jiri Slavik. It was very satisfying to be present with so many gifted bassists in one room driven by the same conviction, that music can be an instrument for change. **David Ballam**, a doctoral student at the University of Texas at Austin, presented a practical nuts-and-bolts session about starting and maintaining a successful private teaching studio. He covered topics that included the creation of studio policies (absences, cancellations, sheet music purchase, practice expectations, contact info, and contracts), business advice (business bank accounts, sole-proprietorship small business, employer ID numbers, filing taxes, bookkeeping, communicating with parents), creating an effective teaching environment (defining goals, accommodating student personality, student self-assessment, studio recitals, competitions, wishing kids a happy birthday), and use of technology (blogs, websites, social media, audio/video recording with Zoom recorders).

The **Young Bassists Concert** in McKenna Auditorium was the culmination of an amazing and intense week of prepara-

tion for many very talented students, including a large number of local young bassists from the San Francisco Symphony's youth program. Although the stage was huge, it was overflowing with instruments, students and their group leaders, including **Cielito de Jesus, Eric Price, David Ballam, Matt Hare, Johnny Hamil, John Schimek, Richard Duke, David Young** and the 2011 Young Bassists Program Director, **Kristin Korb**. Students played ensemble music, some written just for them, and winners of the age 15 to 18 and age 14 and under competitions were featured soloists. **Catherine Pettinger** of Fargo, ND, was the lucky recipient of a beautiful new double bass, given by **Barrie Kolstein** of **Kolstein Music** in memory of his father, Sam Kolstein, to a deserving young bassist who does not yet own his or her own instrument. It was a particularly joyous moment among many during the Young Bassists Concert.

Dan Styffe, co-principal bassist of the Oslo Philharmonic and professor at the Norwegian Academy of Music and Barratt Due's Institute of Music, performed a recital that featured new music by Norwegian composers. Mr. Styffe's assured and solid playing was well-received by the large enthusiastic audience. **Paul Erhard**, double bass faculty at the University of Colorado, Boulder and leader of the fusion group Atmic Vision, presented an information-packed session on raga music of India and its synthesis with Western music. The hypnotic musical examples were at once complex in their structure and traditions, as well as emotionally uplifting. **Sandor Ostlund**, associate professor of double bass at Baylor University, collaborated in the past year with three different composers on new works for double bass. Accompanied by Dianne

Frazer, he performed Matthew Kline's *Leap of Faith*, Edward J.F. Taylor's *Ascension*, and Scott McAllister's Concerto for Double Bass to the acclaim of the audience.

Avery Sharpe made his ISB debut, showcasing his top-flight talents in jazz works for solo double bass and electric bass, including many of his own compositions. One highlight was a Slam-Stewartesqe solo on *There Is No Greater Love*, where he bowed the melody and sang the same melody one octave higher and also scattered along with his improvised solo. **Michael Cameron**, professor of double bass at the University of Illinois in Urbana-Champaign, performed a recital of music by his pianist and collaborator **Andrew Simpson**, Stuart Sankey and Gluck. A charming arrangement of the turn of the century popular song "My Wild Irish Rose," introduced one of the highlights of the convention week, a screening of the silent film *Fiddlesticks* complete with a live soundtrack provided by Cameron and Simpson. The hilarious 1927 Mack Sennett movie, written by Frank Capra and Arthur Ripley, starred Harry Langdon as a young man determined to pursue a career in music as a bassist, despite the disapproval of his family and lack of apparent musical ability. Cameron and Simpson made the virtuosity involved in pulling off such a perfectly synchronized performance look easy, although we all knew how much work went into the performance. They have presented *Fiddlesticks* in a number of high-profile venues and festivals, and we were indeed fortunate to be one of their whistle stops.

Nicholas Walker, professor of double bass at Ithaca College, earned a standing ovation for an eclectic program that got off to a big start with his own *Grease Fantasy*, a five-movement suite of music from the

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popular musical. With pianist Bill Mays, he presented "Look at Me (I'm Sandra Dee)" as a series of variations that would have made Bottesini jealous, and "You're the One that I Want" got a swinging, high energy Afro-Cuban jazz makeover. He followed with virtuosic solo interpretations of the Beatles hits *Eleanor Rigby* and *Come Together*, and was joined by Shawn Conley for a jazz meets classical duet on J.S Bach's "Air" from his Orchestral Suite No. 2. Walker closed with his own composition, *Pop Song*, and a beautiful version of the Bill Evans classic *Very Early*. He also spoke to the audience about his own positive experiences as a member of the ISB. It was a feel-good concert that transcended musical genre. Walker is not only a great bass player but also a great communicator, with an affable stage presence.

The finale of the convention

was bass guitarist extraordinaire, the Bay area's own **Michael Manring**. With hundreds of recordings on sessions and thousand of concerts performed nationally and internationally, he is credited for the development of new approaches to electric bass such as unorthodox tunings and extended techniques, innovations also of note to double bassists. On this final evening, Manring dazzled the audience with a technical facility that worked in tandem with his vast creative capacity. As a forward-thinking bass artist, Michael Manring provided a fitting conclusion to the 2011 convention. Everyone left the last event of the convention looking forward to the robust future of the art of bass as well as the 2013 convention, June 2nd-8th, at the **Eastman School of Music**.

For more reporting on the 2011 ISB convention, go to <http://www.isbworldoffice.com/c>

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