

# INTERMISSIONS

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## FEATURED INTERVIEW: STEVEN PALINCSAR

Founder and Director of The Steven Palincsar Violin Studio, Haynes Family Distinguished Master-Teacher of Violin Studies, and Editor-in-Chief of *INTERMISSIONS*.

*One of America's premier violin teachers, Steven Palincsar was recently named the first Haynes Family Distinguished Master-Teacher of Violin Studies. A native Chicagoan, he had his first piano lessons at age seven and began violin studies shortly thereafter, making his debut at the age of twelve. Ultimately, Steven Palincsar studied at some of the nation's top music schools including the Eastman School of Music, Indiana University, and The Juilliard School, as well as at the Meadowmount School of Music, and was hugely influenced by Dorothy DeLay, Ivan Galamian, Josef Gingold, and Jascha Heifetz. He has performed extensively in the US as well as in Europe, appearing both in recital, with orchestra, on radio, and as chamber musician and conductor. A graduate of the School for Strings' Two-Year Suzuki Violin Teacher-Training Program in New York under Louise Behrend, he has also studied violin pedagogy with Charles Avsharian, James Buswell, Cyrus Forough, James Kjelland, Gerardo Ribeiro, and Mimi Zweig. He has taught on the violin faculty of the School for Strings' prestigious Start-Up program, which provides full-scholarship training for minority and underprivileged pupils. A Life Member of the Suzuki Association of the Americas, he*

*is a registered Suzuki violin teacher through Level 8. Since founding The Steven Palincsar Violin Studio, his students have twice been invited to perform at Carnegie Hall. Last year, he and colleague Margaret Pressley from Seattle presented a workshop on "College/University/Conservatory Audition Preparation" at the American String Teachers Association National Conference in Albuquerque, New Mexico. Between them, they have had students accepted to almost every major music school in the nation, including Aspen, Indiana, and Juilliard. Recently, Steven Palincsar took time out of his busy teaching schedule to speak with INTERMISSIONS.*

INTERMISSIONS: Would you begin by relating your earliest musical memory?

STEVEN PALINCSAR: Certainly. When I was about three, I got a toy piano as a present. While it had less than eighty-eight keys, it did have the correct pitches. My mother showed me how I could play my favorite songs on it, and within only a couple of days, I had quite a repertoire of songs like *Mary Had a Little Lamb*, *Frère Jacques*, *London Bridge*, *Twinkle, Twinkle*, etc. I think I knew about thirty or forty songs.



STEVEN PALINCSAR KNOWS  
MORE ABOUT VIOLIN PLAYING  
THAN JUST ABOUT ANYBODY.

– DAVID TAYLOR  
Assistant Concertmaster,  
Chicago Symphony Orchestra

INTERMISSIONS: Did you begin piano lessons then?

SP: No, you see in those days, no one was teaching three-year olds, so I went on to develop other interests, but when I was six, several of my friends began piano lessons with a little old man who went door-to-door. I wanted to start piano lessons too. So, shortly after my seventh birthday, my parents found a beginning piano program through Karnes Music Company in Niles.

INTERMISSIONS: Illinois?

SP: Yes, I was born in Chicago, and lived in the Chicago neighborhood near Loyola University of Chicago's Lake Shore campus, where my father taught for over 35 years as professor of biology, ending with his untimely death. We lived there until I was four, when we moved to Skokie.

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INTERMISSIONS: Was your family musical?

SP: Yes, very much so. In fact, Margaret Hillis, the late founder of the Chicago Symphony Chorus, was a distant cousin of mine. I come from a family of scientists. My maternal grandfather once headed the chemistry departments at both Indiana University and at the University of Iowa. He had taught himself to play the mandolin. My maternal grandmother had taught herself the ukulele. My parents, who met while earning their PhDs in biology at Northwestern University, both had studied music as children—my mother on piano and my father on violin.

INTERMISSIONS: What was your father like as a violinist?

SP: Actually, he was quite good. He had a true finger vibrato—the best I've ever seen in any violinist anywhere. He never practiced, but could pick up a violin and play a number of pieces that he'd learned as a child or favorite melodies he liked such as *Grieg's Norwegian Dances* or *Fascination*. He did have a terrible left-hand position, although, it is similar to the left-hand position illustrated in Ruggiero Ricci's *Glissando* book.

INTERMISSIONS: When did you begin violin study?

SP: It wasn't too much later. My father wanted me to be able to experience playing in an orchestra, so I began violin lessons through the school system in Skokie School District 68.

INTERMISSIONS: Who was your first teacher?

SP: His name was William C. Douglass. He taught all the string instruments and conducted the beginning, intermediate, and concert orchestras. He had also founded the North Suburban Youth Symphony, which played two or three concerts every year at Northwestern University's Cahn Auditorium.

INTERMISSIONS: What was he like as a teacher?

SP: Well, he gave me the absolute basics so I was able to read music and play pieces in the Merle J. Isaac String Class Method. He was really enthusiastic and a great motivator—although he motivated me to want to become a conductor. I even bought a baton. I studied with Mr. Douglass for one year until he left to teach one year in Holland. When he came back to the US, he went to another school system.

INTERMISSIONS: Who was your next teacher?

SP: Virginia Christopherson, who was a violinist in the Civic Orchestra of Chicago. I studied with her through the school system until she became pregnant and moved away. She's a Suzuki teacher now and lives in Ohio.

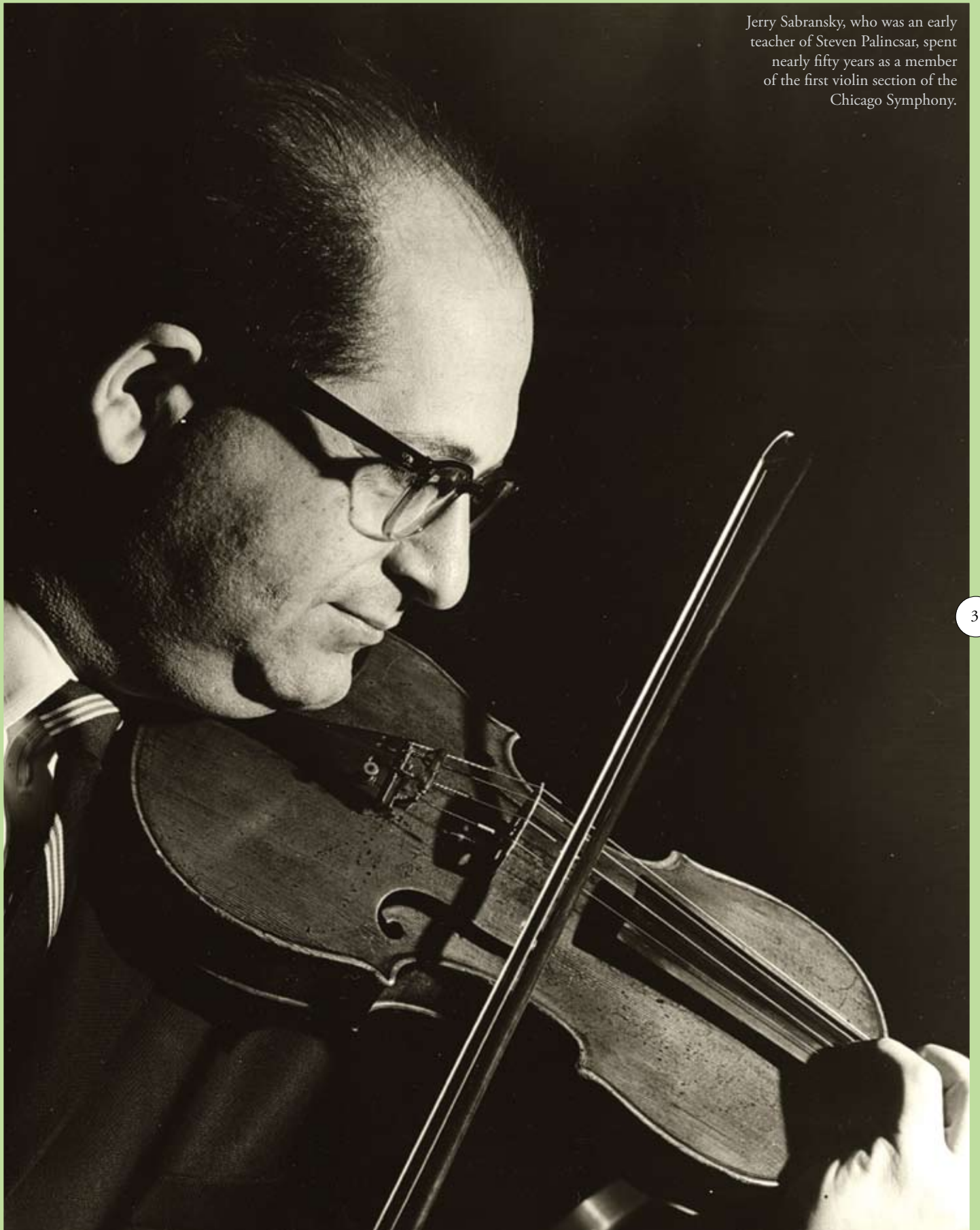
INTERMISSIONS: Next?

SP: Next, again through the school system was Georgia Staes, who was a graduate of and later a teacher at the old American Conservatory of Music. She had studied with Scott Willits, a native Chicagoan who became a pupil of Ševčík for a couple years in Prague. Ms. Staes had won the Farwell Award, which actually had an evening gown event as part of the competition! Unfortunately, she missed several lessons and was fired. Next, I had a middle-aged lady who had played in the Skokie Valley Symphony. Her name was Leonore Heller, and she gave me a good foundation—teaching me my first scales and starting me on Ševčík's *Preparatory Trill Studies*. Her teacher, Mary K. Rosen became my first teacher outside of the school system.

INTERMISSIONS: What was she like?

SP: Mrs. Rosen had been a student of Ludwig Becker, who briefly served as concertmaster of the Chicago Symphony. She was a faculty member at De Paul University, and conducted the Metropolitan Youth Symphony Orchestra in downtown Chicago. She was a very demanding and sometimes quite severe teacher quite unlike someone like Dorothy DeLay. Mrs. Rosen's approach was very traditional—scales of Sitt and Schradieck, Ševčík's *School of Bowing*,

Jerry Sabransky, who was an early teacher of Steven Palincsar, spent nearly fifty years as a member of the first violin section of the Chicago Symphony.



*Shifting the Position*, and *School of Violin Technique*, etudes of Wohlfahrt, Kayser, Mazas, etc., a piece, a concerto, a sonata, and she also taught duets.

After her, I studied with Jerry Sabransky, a long-time member of the first violin section of the Chicago Symphony, and a former pupil of Paul Stassevitch. He used Ševčík for scales, the traditional etudes like Kreutzer, a piece, and a concerto. He was very

matter-of-fact—never mean, but was quite demanding especially with regard to rhythm and intonation.

In high school, I spent a summer studying with Edgar Muenzer, a wonderful violinist and teacher who played in the Chicago Symphony, was second violinist of the Chicago Symphony String Quartet, and taught at Northwestern University. He now conducts the Park Ridge Civic Orchestra. In

those days, the Chicago Symphony String Quartet included Victor Aitay, who was then co-concertmaster (and with whom I later studied), Milton Preves, the principal violist, and Frank Miller, who was principal cellist.

INTERMISSIONS: Ultimately you studied at some of America's best music schools.

SP: Yes, at Eastman School of Music, at Indiana University, at Juilliard, and in the summer at Meadowmount.

INTERMISSIONS: I know that Dorothy DeLay, Ivan Galamian, Josef Gingold, and Jascha Heifetz were a huge influence on you. What can we take away from each of them?

SP: From Jascha Heifetz, we take away a sense of the mastery and complete control over the violin. His dedication is to the performance of the highest artistic, musical, technical, and personal standards. When something needed to be said, he'd say it. True, sometimes it hurt. There is pain in true mastery over the violin. We learn how to lead, to command, to direct. We learn by using the smallest parts in music—the scale, the phrase, and the encore—mastering each of these. From these we go to the greatest works of music ever composed.

From Ivan Galamian, we get a comprehensive knowledge of the bow and its workings—in effect the *hows*. *How* to hold the bow to best advantage. *How* to draw it in the most efficient and effective way we can to produce the most sound. *How* to analyze exactly what it is that we do as players. *How* to organize our work and yes, it is work. We learn that to master a difficult problem, we practice it

Dorothy DeLay was a longtime member of the violin faculties at both the Aspen Music School and The Juilliard School.





From Jascha Heifetz, we take away a sense of the mastery and complete control over the violin.  
—Steven Palincsar

a thousand times. If it is still not mastered, we practice it another thousand times. We learn what it is that we must do to make it sound beautiful and how to avoid making it sound ugly. We get a concentration on the student that is so complete and so intense and so all-consuming. We cut to the heart of each problem in the most direct way with a dedication to improving what it is that we do.

From Josef Gingold, we get a true sense of joy in using the tools of playing to share our innermost thoughts—our very soul—with the audience. We get a sense of the moment—that each phrase deserves our complete attention. We get a sense of

the beauty that we must inject into each moment in a piece. We get access to what I call Gingold's "core of sound" that he carried with him each day. We get an *individual* perspective that each player has different equipment and demands a unique means of employing that equipment. Bowholds, violin hold, vibrato type—ways of doing the same technique that are adapted to the player rather than adapting the player to the technique.

From Dorothy DeLay, we take away a true sense of love. Love for the violin, love for the composer, love for a beautiful sound, love for the musician, love for the student, love for playing, and love for teaching. Everything is

tempered with love and kindness. Yet, there was, as in the cases of Gingold and Galamian, a great mind at work trying to figure out how best to say what needed to be said, but in the kindest way. How to celebrate the student and the student's dedication. How to alleviate the student's suffering. How to inspire and how to motivate the student—*each* student. When not to say something. How to provide support to the student.

INTERMISSIONS: When did you first play in public?

SP: It was in my first year of violin study, but my debut came at the age of twelve. Within a year, I played at Grant Park, and two



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Dr. Shinichi Suzuki—the founder of Talent Education.

years later at Orchestra Hall. At seventeen, I played in Germany (West Germany in those days). Later, I traveled throughout Austria, Belgium, France, Great Britain, Iceland, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, and Switzerland.

INTERMISSIONS: How important is it to have a teacher who at least at one time was a distinguished soloist and chamber musician?

SP: Well, not every performer can teach. In fact, some are just plain awful as

teachers bringing new meaning to the word incompetent. Some artists insist that the way they play is the *only* way to play—which is ridiculous. Some are unable to explain what it is that they do. Some have no patience with students who do not immediately grasp what it is that they are talking about. Some don't even bother to show up for their scheduled lessons leaving students at the mercy of inexperienced teaching assistants.

While it's true that Dorothy DeLay had limited performance experience, she

understood violin and bow technique in a way that few others have ever been able to match, and was able to nurture and lead her students in a truly remarkable manner.

Ivan Galamian had been an orchestral musician in the Bolshoi Orchestra in Moscow early on and had toured Europe as soloist before settling on a teaching career. At that point, he virtually abandoned his performing career much to the disappointment of the critics. Galamian said, "You can't serve two masters." So he set out to become one of the greatest violin teachers in the world.

Josef Gingold was quite active as a performer throughout his life. He had been concertmaster of the Cleveland Orchestra under the great George Szell, a member of the NBC Symphony under Toscanini, as well as concertmaster of the Detroit Symphony and for quite a number of Broadway shows. Early on, he had toured Europe playing the premiere of the Ysaÿe Third Solo Sonata. He had appeared as soloist both in recital, on radio, and with the Cleveland, Detroit, Minneapolis, and NBC Concert Orchestras, among others. For RCA, he made the world premiere recording of the Bloch Sonata No. 1, and for Columbia, he recorded the world premiere of the Roy Harris Sonata. He had been second violinist of the Primrose Quartet and played in a trio with cellist Harvey Shapiro and pianist Earl Wild.

Of the great soloists in my time, Zino Francescatti, Arthur Grumiaux, Jascha Heifetz, Leonid Kogan, Nathan Milstein, David Oistrakh, Henryk Szeryng, and Josef Szigeti were quite distinguished as teachers, but perhaps the best was Efrem Zimbalist, former director of the Curtis Institute, who taught such artists as Shmuel Ashkenasi, Aaron Rosand, and Oscar Shumsky.

In my own case, I am a member of the American Federation of Musicians. I have performed extensively with orchestras, in recital, on radio, as chamber musician and conductor as well, but I have also taught for nearly 30 years.

INTERMISSIONS: Let's talk about the Suzuki Method.

SP: I had heard about it for years, and almost every new violin student comes from a Suzuki program. A number of years ago, I heard Heidi Castleman, a member of the viola faculty at Juilliard, express her desire to become trained as a Suzuki teacher. I felt that I just had to learn more about it. I asked Jim Kjelland, who teaches string pedagogy at Northwestern, if he would accept me as a private violin pedagogy pupil. He agreed and took me through the major pedagogical approaches in use today: George Bornoff, Kato Havas, Paul Rolland, and yes, Shinichi Suzuki. I also studied violin pedagogy with Charles Avsharian at Meadowmount. Next, I joined the Suzuki Association of the Americas and went to their national conference. There, I met Louise Behrend, the founder of the School for Strings in New York. I asked her how I could study the Suzuki method with her.

Before I went to New York, I studied first with Ed Kreitman at his Suzuki school in Western Springs, and took a Suzuki overview of the first few books with Doris Preucil. I also studied Mimi Zweig's approach to teaching children. Then I was accepted to the School for Strings' Two-Year Suzuki Violin Teacher-Training Program, where I studied under Louise Behrend, and taught both private Suzuki violin lessons and co-taught two separate group classes while commuting

between New York and Illinois in the second year. After completing the School for Strings program, I became a *registered Suzuki violin teacher* (through Level 8), and today am a Life Member of the Suzuki Association. At a subsequent Suzuki conference, I heard Ed Kreitman say that he only taught Suzuki violin Levels 1-3. After that, I resolved to accept Suzuki students who are at least on Level 4. Of course, my students are much, much more advanced than this today.

INTERMISSIONS: Recently, you were named as the first *Haynes Family Distinguished Master-Teacher of Violin Studies*. Could you talk about what this entails?

SP: Yes, it's a wonderful new program designed to further the national reputation of its recipient by providing my services as a master class and workshop clinician to non-profit string education programs throughout the US. The schools pay only a nominal fee (currently less than fifty dollars) for a one-hour session. All of my expenses are completely paid for including my fee, travel expenses, meal per diems, hotels, etc., etc.

INTERMISSIONS: Who does the school contact to make arrangements?

SP: They should email me directly at [info@palincsar.com](mailto:info@palincsar.com).

INTERMISSIONS: What kind of violin and bow do you own?

SP: I use a violin crafted by contemporary maker Joseph Curtin of Ann Arbor, Michigan. David Taylor, assistant concertmaster of the Chicago Symphony, recommended it to me. I played on it for less than five minutes and knew it was perfect for me. It's on the del Gesù model and is in my opinion as fine as

any violin in the world. I can play anything on it. It is as powerful as a real del Gesù and has a tremendous palette of musical colors and textures. I use Blue Infeld strings. I am currently using a bow made by John Norwood Lee on the Dominique Peccatte model, handcrafted by Lee for his 20th anniversary as a bowmaker.

INTERMISSIONS: So you don't believe that every violinist needs a Strad or del Gesù?

SP: No, of course not. A Strad or del Gesù is really more of a status symbol—like a Rolls Royce. And at 3-4 million dollars for a Strad or 6-7 million for a del Gesù, only the wealthiest artists are ever likely to own one. That's why what my friends at the Stradivari Society in Chicago are doing to put great instruments into the hands of young violinists is so vital today. I highly endorse everything that they are doing.

INTERMISSIONS: What led you to start publishing *INTERMISSIONS*?

SP: I read a book by Mimi Butler called *The Complete Guide to Running a Private Music Studio* in which she states that every studio should have a newsletter. I looked around at what other people did, and wasn't exactly enthusiastic.

I had always thought that I would like to be a sort of Samuel Applebaum, who specialized in teaching violin to younger students and who wrote those fourteen wonderful *The Way They Play* books, so I have tried to do something similar to that. Each issue contains a featured interview with a distinguished violinist or string teacher, as well as an interview with me on violin teaching which we call "In

Conversation.” In addition, there have been articles on sheet music websites, sheet music on CD-ROMs, reissues of CDs by great violinists, college application information, and an interview with Geoff Fushi of Bein & Fushi on choosing a violin and bow.

All of the past issues are posted on my website <[www.palincsar.com](http://www.palincsar.com)> under “News.” I also want to begin a new *Profiles in Music Education* feature with a one-page profile of some of our local orchestra directors. We celebrate famous artists all the time; we need to do more to encourage our students to go into teaching. Each issue is free—we don’t sell them, we just give them away to whoever wants one—Steven Palincsar Violin Studio students and parents, prospective students, colleagues and their students, anyone.

INTERMISSIONS: Why have you chosen not to affiliate yourself with a school?

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Of course, my students often study music theory and chamber music and play in the various orchestras at Midwest Young Artists,

which doesn’t offer private lessons, so it supports my teaching rather than being a competitor. It’s a wonderful program, we’re so lucky it’s there.

INTERMISSIONS: If your conditions were met, would you consider joining the faculty of a school?

SP: Well, I don’t play auditions and I won’t provide names and addresses or phone numbers of my private students to serve as references. That would put me in a horrible position with my kids and their moms and dads. I would have to be able to audition and interview each prospective student and his/her parents, and my decision as to whether to accept a student into my class would have to be final. I must also continue to determine my own fees. If these conditions were met, then yes, I would consider joining a school’s violin faculty.

INTERMISSIONS: Who are some of your favorite violinists?

SP: I guess my favorite violinists are mostly dead. Of course I grew up listening to recordings by Jascha Heifetz, Nathan Milstein, Zino Francescatti, David Oistrakh, Isaac Stern, and Henryk Szeryng. Szeryng’s playing was particularly special as was the playing of Leonid Kogan, who of course was a huge Heifetz fan, and then there was Arthur Grumiaux, who for me was the quintessential artist. Today, Salvatore Accardo is still around—he’s one of my favorites too. I also always particularly liked Itzhak Perlman. Of the younger players (younger than me that is), I don’t have a particular favorite. The “older” musicians filled themselves with the music so that you almost forgot that it was Heifetz playing the Brahms Concerto.

That’s the mark of true greatness. Today’s players are so into themselves rather than the music—they don’t seem to be as interested in making music as they are in showing off. Their interpretations capture the essence of their conceit rather than the essence of the music. Isaac Stern said once that to be a virtuoso you had to have an unquenchable conceit, but never did that show in his playing—never.

INTERMISSIONS: What makes you so different from other violin teachers?

SP: I believe in (and celebrate) the individuality of each student. It’s my job to provide each student with professional-level training in classical violin, to provide each student with my undying dedication and support, and to lead each student to love the violin and violin playing as much as I do.

With this mission in mind, I do not follow one specific method even though I am a Suzuki teacher. I believe in using anything that works regardless of from which approach it comes—Bornoff, DeLay, Galamian, Gingold, Havas, Rolland, Suzuki, or Zweig for example.

I pride myself on the fact that no one can really identify my students except by their technical mastery, their beautiful sound, their pure intonation, their rhythmic accuracy, and their impeccable musicianship. What difference does it make if one plays the hand vibrato and another the arm vibrato? Absolutely none at all. It’s all in how the vibrato is used in the service of the music as with all technique. It is the music that I celebrate, and it is the music that I teach my students to celebrate too.

## IN CONVERSATION STEVEN PALINCSAR ON VIOLIN TEACHING

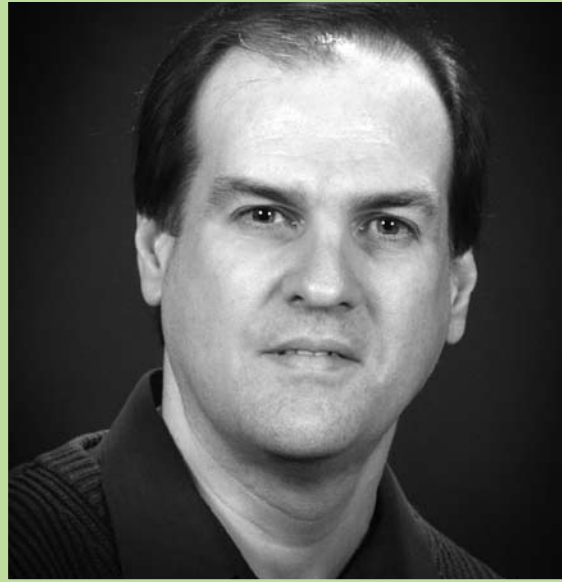
INTERMISSIONS: Since this issue of *INTERMISSIONS* contains a feature interview with you, could you talk about your approach to violin playing and teaching?

STEVEN PALINCSAR: Certainly. Above all else I believe in teaching my students to love the violin, to love classical music, and to love playing classical music on the violin. Period.

INTERMISSIONS: Could you elaborate a bit more?

SP: I believe that students need to find their own artistic voices, and that beginning violin study is like beginning a journey into a world outside of ourselves. Of course, to find our voice, we need to be in complete control of the violin and the bow. Jascha Heifetz taught students this. So did Ivan Galamian, so did Dorothy DeLay, and so too did Josef Gingold. There is always a new discovery for us as artists, but only once we have technical mastery over the piece that we are studying. It must be played in tune, in rhythm, cleanly articulated, with a beautiful sound, and with impeccable musicianship.

I don't believe in stepping on students or hurting their feelings or saying hurtful things. I believe in honey over vinegar, and I never ever use sarcasm with a student. I believe in kindness, professionalism, nurturing, positive reinforcement, and above all patience. Dorothy DeLay once said that a teacher should never do anything to squelch a student's enthusiasm. I couldn't agree more. Miss DeLay was a huge influence on my teaching as was Gingold, and of course



I'm a Life Member of the Suzuki Association of the Americas.

INTERMISSIONS: You're known for not having all of your students play the same way.

SP: Well, I follow the principles of individuality that Josef Gingold established in this regard. I pride myself on the fact that some of my students use the hand vibrato and some the arm vibrato and others some combination. I guess I'm an advocate of the old adage, "if it aint broke, don't fix it." In other words, I don't change a student's set-up, or which vibrato they use, or even their bowhold just for the sake of changing it or to have that student become a clone of Itzhak Perlman or Jascha Heifetz or anybody else. I believe in individuality. You know, if Suzuki believed in the clone approach, he could never have taught a blind student to play. Check out his book, *Nurtured by Love*. If you've read it, read it again.

INTERMISSIONS: How should the violin be held?

SP: I can't really answer questions like this. It depends on what works best for each individual student. I can only give you my preferences. I prefer that the violin rest on the collarbone—not on the shoulder. Heifetz had it on the shoulder, but Milstein played with it on the collarbone. You know, even though I now use a shoulder pad, for over thirty

years (including my entire performance career), I played the violin on the collarbone with no pad, and I have a long neck and I was not uncomfortable at all. Why then do students play with the violin on the shoulder? The answer is a no-brainer: to keep the violin from falling on the floor. You see, the shoulder provides much firmer support for developing young muscles. It is also better to use a pad if the violin is held on the shoulder. The pad, in my opinion, should not touch the back of the violin, but of course, with a powerful violin it doesn't make much difference. Again, if the student comes in with a pad and holds the violin on the shoulder and sounds terrific, I won't change anything. How a violinist sounds is everything to me.

INTERMISSIONS: What if a student comes in playing out of tune?

SP: Well, that's different. When a new student first comes to me playing out of

tune (usually they come in playing on the flat side of the note), I spend as many weeks as necessary to teach them how to tune the violin by themselves, and learning the sound of a perfect fifth by singing it first (we use *Twinkle* e.g. “A A E E”). Most of the kids come from a teacher who at the beginning of the lesson takes the kid’s violin, tunes it, and hands it back, thus cheating the pupil out of the opportunity to really learn how to tune it himself or herself. These teachers further ruin the kids’ ears by having them match pitches from the piano. Even at the very beginning when the child cannot yet manipulate the fine tuners, s/he should be taught how to guide the parent or teacher’s tuning. I used to ask kids to say “higher” or “lower.” If they make the wrong choice, I say “are you sure?” Then I play it on my violin. I frankly don’t care how long it takes. I have unlimited patience as a violin teacher.

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In the beginning, we use A-440. Then much, much, much later, we switch to A-442. I couldn’t possibly care less if a kid can hear the note they’re about to play in their head first. What I care about is whether they can hear and identify the *interval* they’re about to play in their mind first. I use *Auralia* software from Sibelius to teach ear-training (actually, it is really brain-training). First, I teach all the perfect intervals (both ascending and descending)—beginning with the fifths, then do fourths and octaves. Next, I teach the major and minor intervals, then eventually such things as the tritone. I especially like to use double-stops (even on the simple level as found in Josephine Trott’s wonderful books). Later, I use Ruggiero Ricci’s wonderful *Left-*

*Hand Violin Technic* book—especially the exercises which require a finger being held down while the other fingers play around it. We also discuss tempered pitch and the position of notes within the scale, among other topics. I also use Schradieck to develop both velocity and intonation. I have the kids change the keys in which they’re playing Schradieck so that every possible finger placement combination is mastered.

INTERMISSIONS: What about scales?

SP: I prefer to use double-stops to teach intonation. Scales really come after we have mastered the intervals. I like to use Harvey Whistler’s beginning scale book. Next I use Ritter-Stoessel, then the Ševčík *Complete Scale and Arpeggio Book*, then Flesch, then Galamian-Neumann, then Paul Zukofsky’s book, and finally the Elizaveta Gilels Kogan four-octave scales, which I got from Cyrus Forough. With Galamian, I especially like the rhythm supplement which is included. I also like to use the variants from Kreutzer No. 2 in the Galamian edition with scales, and then later I use the variants from Massart’s *The Art of Studying Kreutzer*. I also like kids to practice scales both with and without vibrato. I like to have students use a metronome first, then turn it off and count (out loud) while playing. Eventually, I like kids to be able to play a scale beginning on a note other than the tonic.

INTERMISSIONS: What etudes do you teach?

SP: I use the standard etudes: Wohlfahrt, Ševčík *School of Bowing*, Kayser, Mazas (both the *Special* and *Brilliant* studies), Dont Op. 37, Kreutzer, Rode, Fiorillo, Dont Op. 35,

Gavinies, Dancla Op. 73, both Wieniawski books, Vieuxtemps Op. 48, Paganini (both *La Barucaba* and *24 Caprices*), and Ernst. I use Galamian or Gingold editions whenever available. I also like Whistler’s *Preparing for Kreutzer*. This is a standard order, but I don’t usually follow it. I choose *specific* etudes from this literature based on the technical level of my students and what their needs are at any given time. I also use the Massart variants with Kreutzer and certain etudes of Rode and Dont for example, but also with the Paganini *Perpetual Motion* (an idea I took from cellist Fritz Magg, who used to teach at Indiana University years ago).

I know some teachers don’t use any etudes preferring to develop technique only through concerti, pieces, sonatas, etc. For myself, I have had enough of hearing Mozart, Mendelssohn, and Beethoven butchered by someone who doesn’t have the technical training to make music, and prefer that if a kid is going to have to butcher a composer in developing their technique, let it be Kreutzer or Kayser or Mazas or Gavinies.

I describe technical mastery over a piece in this way. It’s like standing over a creek under a bridge that you can just barely reach up and touch. By practicing your stretching over and over, eventually you will develop yourself enough to be able to grab hold of the rail of the bridge and pull yourself up so that you can stand on the bridge and look down over the repertoire that you’ve just mastered. I prefer to have my kids standing on the bridge by the time that they approach each new piece—all of the stretching and pulling themselves up already over through etudes. Technical works are *designed* for

this purpose. Then we can concentrate on music-making. In Talent Education, we know that if we don't prepare the pupil for Gossec Gavotte well in advance, they simply won't be able to play the thing once they get to it.

**INTERMISSIONS:** Do you allow your students to listen to recordings when they are learning a new piece?

**SP:** Of course. I'm a Suzuki teacher. I see nothing wrong with a kid listening to CDs before trying out a new piece. However, I do need to be careful in working with each student, so that they learn to go their own way—to develop their own voice.

In my own years of studying, although we didn't have Suzuki programs in my area in those days, I had listened to the violin repertoire on LPs extensively by the time I would begin each new piece, and was able to virtually sightread works even on the level of the Glazunov concerto.

**INTERMISSIONS:** What if your students try to copy say Itzhak Perlman's interpretation of the piece?

**SP:** Let them try. They won't be very successful—there's only one Itzhak Perlman. There was only one Heifetz, but a kid can get a lot from trying and if they're inspired to put in more time, I don't see the harm. I'm pretty effective at leading students toward their own interpretations—to their own artistic voices. I draw on Pablo Casals' wisdom in the *Casals and the Art of Interpretation* book recommended to me by my friend Nick Birchby. So let kids copy Perlman or Heifetz or Joshua Bell or whoever. I'm ready for them.

## CONSERVATORY AUDITIONS

*Students should contact the school for the latest information and deadlines.*

**CARNEGIE-MELLON UNIVERSITY,  
SCHOOL OF MUSIC**  
Auditions in February, 2009. Application deadline: December 1, 2008. Contact: Carnegie-Mellon University, School of Music-CFA108, 5000 Forbes Avenue, Pittsburgh, PA 15213. Phone: 412-268-4118. Website: cmu.edu.

**CLEVELAND INSTITUTE OF MUSIC**  
Auditions in February, 2009. Application deadline is December 1, 2008, but apply by September or October. Contact: Admissions Office, Cleveland Institute of Music, 11021 East Blvd., Cleveland, OH 44106. Phone: 216-795-3107; website: cim.edu; theory test in addition to audition.

**THE COLBURN SCHOOL**  
Auditions in March, 2009. Application deadline is January 15, 2009. Contact: The Colburn School, Office of Admissions, 200 South Grand Avenue, Los Angeles, CA 90012. Phone: 213-621-4534. Website: colburnschool.edu. Pre-screening DVD due with application.

**CURTIS INSTITUTE OF MUSIC**  
Auditions in February and March of 2009. Application deadline is December 11, 2008. Contact: Admissions Office, Curtis Institute of Music, 1726 Locust St., Philadelphia, PA, 19103. Phone: 215-893-5262. Website: curtis.edu.

**DE PAUL UNIVERSITY SCHOOL OF  
MUSIC**  
Auditions in February, 2009. Application deadline is January 15, 2009. Contact: De Paul University School of Music, Office of Admissions, 804 W. Belden Avenue, Chicago, IL 60614. Website: music.depaul.edu.

**EASTMAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC.**  
Auditions in February of 2009. Application deadline is December 1, 2008. Contact: Admissions Office, Eastman School of Music, 26 Gibbs St., Rochester, NY 14604-2599. Phone: 800-388-9695. Website: esm.rochester.edu.

**INDIANA UNIVERSITY JACOBS SCHOOL  
OF MUSIC**  
Auditions from January to March, 2009. Application deadline is December 1, 2008. Contact: Office of Music Admissions, Indiana

University Jacobs School of Music, Merrill Hall Room 101, Bloomington, IN 47405. Phone: 812-855-1583. Website: music.indiana.edu.

**THE JUILLIARD SCHOOL**  
Auditions in March, 2009. Application deadline is December 1, 2008. Contact: Office of Admissions, The Juilliard School, 60 Lincoln Center Plaza, New York, NY 10023. Phone: 212-799-5000. Website: juilliard.edu.

**MANHATTAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC**  
Auditions in February-March, 2009. Application deadline is December 1, 2008. Contact: Manhattan School of Music, Office of Admissions, 120 Claremont Avenue, New York, NY 10027. Phone: 212-749-2802. Website: msmnyc.edu. Pre-screening CD required. Apply online ONLY at www.unifiedapps.org.

**MANNES COLLEGE OF MUSIC**  
Auditions in March, 2009. Application deadline is December 1, 2008. Contact: Mannes College-The New School for Music, 150 West 85th Street, New York, NY 10024. Phone: 212-580-0210 ext. 4862. Website: newschool.edu/mannes. Pre-screening CD required.

**NEW ENGLAND CONSERVATORY OF  
MUSIC**  
Auditions in February-March, 2009. Application deadline is December 1, 2008. Contact: New England Conservatory, Office of Admission, 290 Huntington Avenue, Boston, MA 02115. Phone: 617-585-1101. Website: newenglandconservatory.edu. Pre-screening CD required.

**NORTHWESTERN UNIVERSITY  
SCHOOL OF MUSIC**  
Auditions in February, 2009. Application deadline: January 1, 2009. Contact: Northwestern University School of Music, Office of Music Admission and Financial Aid, Room 1-Music Administration Building, 711 Elgin Road, Evanston, IL 60208-1200. Phone: 847-491-3141. Website: music.northwestern.edu.

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PAGE 5: HEIFETZ, BY RÖHNERT  
PAGE 6: SUZUKI, COURTESY OF MARILYN MONTZKA  
PAGE 12: GALAMIAN BY PETER SCHAAF



There is such a thing as good violin playing and bad. Whatever is beautiful is good, whatever is ugly is bad.  
—Ivan Galamian

**PEABODY CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC**

Auditions in February, 2009. Application deadline: December 1, 2008. Contact: Peabody Institute of Johns Hopkins University, Admissions Office, 1 E. Mount Vernon Place, Baltimore, MD 21202. Phone: 410-659-8100. Website: peabody.jhu.edu. Prefers online application.

**RICE UNIVERSITY, SHEPHERD SCHOOL OF MUSIC**

Auditions in January-February, 2009. Application deadline: January 2, 2009. Contact: Shepherd School of Music-MS 532, Rice University, P.O. Box 1892, Houston, TX 77251-1892. Phone: 713-348-4854. Website: music.rice.edu.

**ROOSEVELT UNIVERSITY, CHICAGO COLLEGE OF PERFORMING ARTS**

Auditions in January-March, 2009. Application deadline: January 15, 2008. Contact: Chicago College of Performing Arts, Roosevelt University, Office of Enrollment-Room 918, 430 S. Michigan Avenue, Chicago, IL 60605. Phone: 312-341-3500. Website: ccpa.roosevelt.edu.

**SOUTHERN METHODIST UNIVERSITY, MEADOWS SCHOOL OF THE ARTS**

Auditions in January-February, 2009. Application deadline: January 15, 2009. Contact: Tommy Newton, Recruitment Director, Meadows School of the Arts, Southern Methodist University, P.O. Box 750356, Dallas, TX 75275-0356. Phone: 214-768-4067. Website: smu.edu/meadows.

**UNIVERSITY OF CINCINNATI, COLLEGE-CONSERVATORY OF MUSIC**

Auditions in January-February, 2009. Application deadline: December 1, 2008. Contact: CCM Admissions, College-Conservatory of Music, University of Cincinnati, P.O. Box 210003, Cincinnati, OH 45221-0003. Phone: 513-556-5463. Website: ccm.uc.edu. Regional auditions in Chicago on January 29, 2008.

**UNIVERSITY OF ILLINOIS SCHOOL OF MUSIC**

Auditions in January-February, 2009. Application deadline: January 2, 2009. Contact: Admissions, The School of Music, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, 1114 W. Nevada Street, Urbana, IL 61801. Phone: 217-24-7899. Website: music.uiuc.edu.

**UNIVERSITY OF MICHIGAN SCHOOL OF MUSIC, THEATRE, AND DANCE**

Auditions in February-March, 2009. Application deadline: December 1, 2008. Contact: University of Michigan, School of Music, Theatre, and Dance, E.V. Moore Building, 1100 Baits Drive, Ann Arbor, MI 48109-2085. Phone: 734-764-0583. Website: music.umich.edu.

**UNIVERSITY OF SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA, THORNTON SCHOOL OF MUSIC**

Auditions in January, 2009. Application deadline: December 1, 2008. Contact: University of Southern California, Thornton School of Music, Office of Admission, University Park-UUC 218, Los Angeles, CA 90089-2991. Phone: 800-872-2213 or 213-740-8986. Website: usc.edu. Prescreening DVD required.

# INTERMISSIONS

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For further information, please visit the website:

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