

# Fiddling Demystified for String Players

workshops & performances with fiddler Donna Hébert,  
cellist Renata Bratt & guitarist Max Cohen



## Sample program for string groups & orchestras

**Swallowtail Jig** (Irish 6/8 Jig, E minor - Dorian, AABB) violin, viola, cello, chord chart  
- plain and fancy settings

**Cluck Old Hen** (Appalachian Old-Time song and tune, A minor - Dorian, ABAB) violin, viola, cello, chord chart, lyrics - plain and fancy settings

**Un canadien errant** (French-Canadian tune & song, 3/4, G major) 2 parts each for violin, viola, cello, chord chart

**Fisher's Hornpipe** (New England reel, 2/4, D major) violin, viola, cello, chord chart, plain and fancy settings

*We work on up to four tunes in one day (one tune per workshop hour), with tunes above chosen from more than 50 titles. Program includes an evening concert.*

**Repertoire & Chord Theory:** Tunes are learned by ear from customized recordings in advance. The recording plays tunes at speed, then breaks them down into style lessons, then plays them at about 2/3 of tempo to allow students to play along as they read and listen. When we arrive on-site, we help the group arrange the music authentically for an evening performance, teaching how to read and follow chord charts and how to find harmonies and rhythms within the tune. Sheet music is provided for reference, but all rhythm cues come from the recordings and from playing with us onstage, learning rhythms and backup lines. We don't conduct, they JAM with us!

**Jam session & performance etiquette:** A conductor keeps an orchestra in time, but who does it in a jam session? We cover the basics of sharing leads and harmonies, listening, learning and refining non-verbal cues and signals, finding a common group rhythm or groove and common-sense do's and don'ts.

**The 60-minute evening program** begins with Donna & Renata in concert and ends with the students performing onstage with them.

**Please contact** Donna Hébert for information about "Fiddling Demystified" programs for one-day workshops or residencies of up to three days for middle and high school string players and for college music education and string education departments.

**Donna Hébert** - dhebert@crocker.com  
www.fiddlingdemystified.com  
413-253-4058

**Renata Bratt** - renatabratt@earthlink.net  
www.renatabratt.com

**"Donna gets it all right . . . I suspect that the general level of fiddle knowledge and playing will take a major uptick soon after [Fiddling Demystified] is published, just as other great music books such as Earl Scruggs' original banjo book, O'Neill's great Irish fiddling reference, and the infamous jazz Real Book influenced the course of musicians' lives and work." String wizard Darol Anger in his foreword to Fiddling Demystified**

Donna Hébert and Renata Bratt met and performed together while teaching at Mark O'Connor's San Diego Strings Conference in 2006 and Renata later offered to edit the cello settings for Donna's Fiddling Demystified books.

Fiddling Demystified - the book and the workshops - teach Donna Hébert's method for teaching and playing in multiple fiddle styles. Donna fills in the style points for each tune and plays slow and fast both on the CD and at workshops where she breaks down right hand bowing licks like stuttered triplets and shuffle bowings and left hand ornaments like turns and bent-note smears into manageable lessons for teachers and students.

With more than 60 tunes arranged for violin, viola and cello, drawn from Irish, Scottish, New England, Canadian, Québécois, Appalachian Old-Time, Cajun and original sources, there are many layers of lessons available for orchestra string players. Students dig below the melody for the chords and harmonies, bending notes and creating ornaments with the left hand and dynamic shadings with the bow as they create new rhythms.

In Renata's workshops, cellists learn the same tunes in the same keys and occasionally the same voicings as the violinists, with idiomatic bowing styles and left-hand techniques. Cellists also delve into accompaniment styles including bluegrass bass playing with just the root and the fifth, newgrass cello sounds including playing bass notes with chops, harmony with root, fifth and tenth with the bow, and how to finger major and minor chords. Cellists also learn simple but effective improvisational techniques using the pentatonic scale as well as different rhythmic grooves include one and two measure-long riffs.

Evening concert programs start with Renata and Donna playing solo and together, joined by guitarist Max Cohen, who also helps coach rhythm in workshops. Workshop participants always join us to end the concert and we perform the workshop tunes together in a big jam session onstage - usually an orchestra's conductor joins right in the jam if they play a stringed instrument!

Cellist and clinician Renata Bratt (www.renatabratt.com) is president of the IAJE String Caucus, chair of the 2007 ASTA Alternative String Styles Committee and is the author of "The Fiddling Cellist" and "Celtic Grooves for Two Cellists" for Mel Bay Publications. She has taught classical styles, jazz improvisational and fiddling techniques at national string workshops for children and adults including the Mark O'Connor String Conference, Valley of the Moon Scottish Fiddling School, New Directions Cello Festival, the National Cello Institute, IAJE, ASTA, MENC and Suzuki institutes and conferences. Ms. Bratt received her Ph.D. in Music from the University of California at San Diego.

Adjunct fiddle instructor at Amherst College, Donna has been recognized by New England arts councils, NPR, Smithsonian-Folkways Recordings and the independent recording industry for her fiddling and cultural contributions. Teaching workshops for universities, conferences, dance camps and ASTA chapters, she also directs Fiddling Demystified Camp, a five-day August fiddling intensive in western Mass. and The Great Groove Band of school-age musicians every year at both the Old Songs and Philadelphia Folk Festivals. A Franco-American fiddling master, Donna has worked under state arts council sponsorship with apprentices from Connecticut, New Hampshire and Rhode Island. With the Vermont Folklife Center and fiddler George Wilson, she also co-directs The Beaudoin Project, preserving, documenting and presenting the music of Louis Beaudoin and his family with new generations of Beaudoins.

Jane Ezbecki, 2006 President of the Massachusetts String Teachers' Association, hired Donna in 2006 to work with the Wayland MA High School Orchestra and remarked, "This changed the way my students and I think about fiddling. Donna and her colleagues actually helped us to feel confident enough to turn our music over, close our eyes and play independently!"

Says Dr. Alan Jabbour, Director (ret.) of the American Folklife Center at the Library of Congress, "Donna is an outstanding performer and a world-class teacher of the art of fiddle. I consider her at the forefront of the developing field of fiddle pedagogy."

# # #



www.FiddlingDemystified.com