

Montgomery Philharmonic

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[HOME](#)

[ABOUT](#)

[CONTRIBUTE](#)

[CONTACT](#)

[GALLERY](#)

[MEMBERS](#)

Montgomery Philharmonic 2013 - 2014 Concert Season – A Confluence of Culture Music of North America – February 27, 2014

[Márquez](#) | [Hanson](#) | [Gazda](#) | [Copland](#) | [Gould](#)

Doris Gazda – *The Miller’s Fiddler* (2014)

A fiddle is any bowed instrument, but it usually refers to a violin or one of the old violin relatives. Anyone who plays the violin can be called a fiddler; however “fiddling” is the word generally used when people play folk music and dance tunes. Most fiddle music originated in Scotland, Ireland, Scandinavia and Germany and was played informally at gatherings of people who enjoyed dancing. Settlers in North America brought their fiddles with them so that they could continue fiddling. Once they were settled they learned how to make fiddles for their friends. Most fiddlers learned to play music “by ear” which means that they listened to others playing and copied what they heard without referring to printed music.

The reel is a form of dance used in Irish step dancing and in Scottish country dancing. Reels became very popular in the United States as did the hornpipe which was a popular dance in England. Reels are usually fast and have accented beats. The hornpipe is often danced by people wearing heavy shoes so it tends to be slower and have steady, even beats.

“*The Miller’s Fiddler*” is a collection of three Fiddle Tunes. The first, “Durham Rangers,” is a hornpipe. It is followed by “Tom and Jerry” and “Miss McCloud’s Reel” both of which are typical reels. If you had lived back in the days when people gathered to dance reels and hornpipes on a Saturday night, you might very well have heard one of these tunes.

About Doris Gazda

Doris Gazda is a composer, teacher and conductor based in Tempe, Arizona. Her method books, ensemble books, compositions and arrangements are part of the standard learning repertoire for young string musicians across the country.

Following her graduation from the Eastman School of Music, Gazda played violin professionally with the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra and subsequently as a freelance musician in Washington, DC while serving as concertmaster and soloist with the Montgomery Symphony Orchestra. She spent much of her teaching career as an orchestra specialist teaching elementary through high school in the Montgomery County, Maryland public schools. She later worked as a Faculty Associate at Arizona State University. During her teaching years, she attained a graduate degree from Penn State University. In Maryland she conducted the Frederick Community Orchestra and Frederick Youth Orchestra. She founded and conducted the Potomac Valley Youth Orchestra. She recently helped to form and conduct the New Horizons Orchestra for seniors who are resuming playing an instrument or starting a new instrument in Mesa, AZ. She continues to play occasionally in the Phoenix area.

Since 1990, Gazda has composed or arranged more than 40 pieces for beginning, intermediate and advanced school string orchestras in addition to High Tech for Strings, Stringtown Tunes, Spotlight on Strings and other instructional books for young string groups. She recently completed two series of ensemble books under the heading of Progressive Duets, Trios and Quartets and Compatible Duets and Trios that are uniquely designed for any combination of instrumentation. In recognition of her writing and editing for string orchestra, Gazda became the Educational String Consultant for leading publisher Carl Fischer Music. She continues to enjoy composing new educational string publications and repertoire for young string musicians.

Because of her extensive work in string pedagogy, Gazda has participated widely as a presenter at national conferences in music education and as an instructor of master classes. She served the National School Orchestra Association as national president and the American String Teachers Association as national secretary. She was honored as a Member Laureate of Sigma Alpha Iota International Music Fraternity and as an Alumni Fellow by Penn State University in recognition of achieving international distinction in her field.

Instrumentation – violin 1, violin 2, viola, cello, double bass, and piano


1. Progressive Duets Vol.1 Violin
2. Spotlight on Strings, Level One, Technique & Program Music for String Orche Stra & Individual Instruction;