



ISB Announces Winners of the 2014 Research Competition

After a long hiatus, the International Society of Bassists re-launched its Research Competition in 2014. The competition is in keeping with the ISB's mission to advance scholarship pertaining to the double bass.

The ISB called for previously unpublished papers reflecting a high quality of scholarship in a wide variety of disciplines relevant to the double bass. Topics could cover any number of different perspectives or disciplines, such as historical musicology, classical or jazz performance practice, pedagogy, lutherie, iconography, biography and/or analysis, and could also deal with subjects stemming from any period in the instrument's history up to the present.

There was a professional category and a student category with one winner for each category. Authors submitting papers in the professional category are scholars and/or practitioners who are finished with their formal institutional studies and have embarked on a professional career. Authors submitting papers in the student category must be enrolled in an academic program on the graduate student level and actively pursuing completion of a post-undergraduate degree as their primary focus.

The prize in each division is \$500, publication in the Online Journal of Bass Research (OJBR), and an invitation to the winners to present their research at the 2015 ISB Convention, to be held June 1-6 at Colorado State University in Fort Collins, Colorado.

Papers were adjudicated anonymously by a three-member panel. The members of the adjudication panel were: **Andrew Kohn**, Associate Professor of String Bass and Music Theory at West Virginia University; **Andrea Beckendorf**, Associate Professor and Research and Instruction Librarian at Luther College; and Research Competition Chair **Jeremy Baguyos**, Associate Professor of Music Technology and Double Bass at the University of Nebraska at Omaha.

Winners of the 2014 ISB Research Competition

Winner, Professional Category

Beethoven, the Viennese Violone, and the Problem of Lower Compass

By Stephen Buckley

Stephen Buckley has lived in Scandinavia since 2002. He has been Assistant Principal in the Copenhagen Philharmonic since 2003, and has also worked extensively with the Bergen Philharmonic Orchestra in Norway, and the Gothenburg and Malmö Symphony Orchestras in Sweden. Dr. Buckley was a prize winner in the 2004 Ludwig Sperger Double Bass Competition, and has also appeared as a soloist in the 1/212 Chamber Music series in Copenhagen. He has a bachelor's degree from the University of Colorado in Boulder, where he studied with Paul Erhard, and a master's degree and doctorate from Rice University, where he studied with Paul Ellison.

Stephen Buckley studied Beethoven's use of lower compass of bass range. He chose this topic because of Brahms' care with low register writing; he noted Beethoven's inconsistencies and was curious as to why. Brahms was reacting to reductions (mentioned in Shanti's talk); composers wanted consistency in performances of their works so started writing more carefully. They felt reductions sounded "sloppy." Until Op. 55 Beethoven used Viennese tuning (F A D F# A). Then he began using low E, indicating bassists' move to 4-string instruments and tuning. The 18th century concept of the bass voice was not instrument-specific, could be bassoon, cello, bass, or other bass-clef instruments. A written memo by Beethoven lists contrabassoons in an ensemble even though they are not in the performance score. Bassoons and contrabassoons were often listed as part of a "bass" section, not in the woodwinds, i.e.

cello/bass/bassoon/contrabassoon. Buckley noted that some orchestral works seem to be more carefully notated than others. His opinion is that Beethoven desired the notes, but no double bass was capable of playing them, so they were covered by contrabassoon. Low C appears as unison with cellos, and was probably just not edited out. He showed an example page from an original score, and it was indeed very difficult to see what Beethoven actually intended. In Brahms'

Symphonies 1-3, everything is E and above, only the 4th Symphony contains lower notes. The Fourth Symphony was originally played by Hans von Bulow's orchestra, which had a bass with a low C, so Brahms wrote it in. We can check for Brahms' intent in the first three symphonies with Brahms' own two-piano arrangement, which did include lower notes. Beethoven's later works included a contrabassoon part, which was always derived from the double bass part."

— *Review by Connie Martin of Stephen Buckley's presentation at the 2015 ISB Convention at Colorado State University, Fort Collins*

Honorable Mention, Professional Category

Lino Jozé Nunes's 1838 Methodo:

Historical, analytical and editorial aspects of an Afro-Brazilian double bass jewel

By Fausto Borém, Alfredo Ribeiro, Gustavo Neves, João Paulo Campos, and Rodrigo Olivarez

Fausto Borém is senior professor at Universidade Federal de Minas Gerais (UFMG) in Brazil, where he created Per Musi (the country's leading journal of academic music) and the Graduate Music Program, and teaches double bass, chamber music and music research. He has premiered significant new double bass works in the US, Europe and Brazil, and edited and published dozens of double bass transcriptions and scholarly articles on the instrument. He has won numerous prizes in Brazil and internationally for his accomplishments as a soloist, composer and theorist. As a specialist in Brazilian music, he has been featured as a recitalist and lecturer at ISB Conventions since 1983. Fausto Borém composes, arranges and plays with Trio Musa Brasilis, an ensemble centered around the double bass with the help of voice, piano, percussion and theatrical elements.

Winner, Student Category

Examination of mid-nineteenth century double bass playing based on A. Müller and F.C. Franke's debate in the Neue Zeitung für Music, 1848-1851

By Shanti Nachtergaele

Shanti Nachtergaele grew up in Davis, California and attended Shenandoah Conservatory, where she graduated summa cum laude with a bachelor of music degree in double bass performance in 2013. She then moved to the Netherlands and is currently pursuing a master's in early music at the Royal Conservatoire in The Hague. Her primary teachers have been Donovan Stokes and Margaret Urquhart. She continues to play modern double bass, and plays both 8' and 16' violone (baroque bass) in historically informed performances. While in the Netherlands, Shanti has performed under the direction of Frans Bruggen, Barthold Kuijken, Patrick Ayrton, and Susanna Mälkki, among others. Shanti enjoys being involved in all sorts of bass-related activities, including attending bass conventions in the U.S. and Europe, and working as a staff member at the Bass Coalition Summer Workshop (Winchester, VA).

Shanti Nachtergaele studied the debate between two bassists, 1848-1851, during their conflict about pedagogy and reduction of orchestra parts, using the example of Beethoven's works. As she explained presenting her winning paper at the 2015 ISB convention at Colorado State University, "In the period 1849-1851, a collection of articles by A. Müller and F.C. Franke appeared in the Neue Zeitschrift für Musik, which discussed various aspects of double bass playing. The two double bassists agreed on some points, including that the double bass has a very important role in the orchestra, that there was a lack of good double bass players at the time, and the general characteristics of a good instrument; but they debated other subjects, such as playing stance, left hand technique, bow technique, the components of daily practice, and the common practice of simplifying double bass parts. Their discussion on these topics has implications for historically informed performance, especially in regards to the performance of orchestral works, while also raising questions regarding technical development that are relevant to modern double bassists who play all styles of music."