



'...from Baroque to avante-garde with ease, dexterity and expressiveness.'

MICHAEL CAITO
The Providence Phoenix

Providence
MANDOLIN
Orchestra

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The Providence Mandolin Orchestra is a group of amateur and professional musicians united by the love of performing a unique style of music. We are committed to carrying on the rich tradition of the American mandolin orchestra while actively promoting original, new pieces.



We welcome new members and take pride in introducing audiences to our unique sound and instruments. We strive to enrich our community with our cultural presence and to become a major contributor in the international field of plucked string music.





Providence Plectral Orchestra, ca. 1930

The Providence Mandolin Orchestra was founded by the late Hibbard Perry in 1973, fulfilling a lifelong dream to revive his own Providence Plectral Orchestra from the 1930s. This group carries on an American musical tradition which goes back to the 1880s when a group of Spanish bandurria players toured the United States and began a craze for mandolin and guitar music that rivaled

the popularity of rock and roll today.

Over the past twenty-five years, the Providence Mandolin Orchestra has become one of the leading American mandolin ensembles, with appearances throughout the Eastern United States and Canada. In 1989, the PMO became the first American mandolin orchestra to perform at the Festival Internacional de Musica de Plectro in Logroño, Spain.

MARK M. DAVIS

Best known for his guitar work with the Mair-Davis Duo, Mark Davis also pursues an active career as a solo guitarist, educator, and conductor. He has performed as a soloist throughout Europe and the United States, and has released a solo guitar CD, "Guitar Cafe," on the Soundworks label. He also performs with a number of jazz, folk, rock, and chamber groups in the New England area. Mr. Davis composes and arranges, and his work has been published by Zimmerman Verlag in Germany and Plucked String Editions in the USA.

Mr. Davis currently directs the classical guitar program at the University of Connecticut. He is also director of the Conservatory at Wheeler School in Providence. With Marilyn Mair, he founded and directs the American Mandolin & Guitar Summer School, which has run annually since 1986. He is the music director and conductor of the Providence Mandolin Orchestra and also conducts the American Mandolin & Guitar Orchestra. He has been a guest conductor at Musica Festiva Lincopensis, in Sweden, and the annual conventions of the Classical Mandolin Society of



America in Montreal, and Louisville, Kentucky.

Mr. Davis studied guitar with Hibbard Perry in Providence, and Robert Paul Sullivan at the New England Conservatory. He was a protégé of the late German guitarist Siegfried Behrend and performed in master classes with Leo Brouwer, Gilbert Biberian, Rey de la Torre, and others. He holds a BA degree from Brown University, a Bachelor of Music Performance from Rhode Island College, and an MA in musicology from the University of Connecticut.

PERFORMANCES

Jordan Hall
Boston, Massachusetts

University of Connecticut
Storrs, Connecticut

First Congregational Church
Cambridge, Massachusetts

Common Fence Point
Portsmouth, Rhode Island

Convergence Arts Festival
Pawtucket, Rhode Island

The Kennedy Center
Washington, DC

Festival Internacional
de Musica de Plectro
Logroño, Spain

Erskine Episcopal Church
Montreal, Canada

American Mandolin
and Guitar Summer School
Wolfeboro, New Hampshire
Bristol, Rhode Island

New York Mandolin Orchestra's
75th Anniversary Concert
New York, New York

University of Massachusetts
Dartmouth, Massachusetts

Linden Place
Bristol, Rhode Island

First Night
Providence, Rhode Island

International Festival of Mandolins
Providence, Rhode Island

Brown University
Providence, Rhode Island

European Concert Tour
Germany, Luxembourg, France

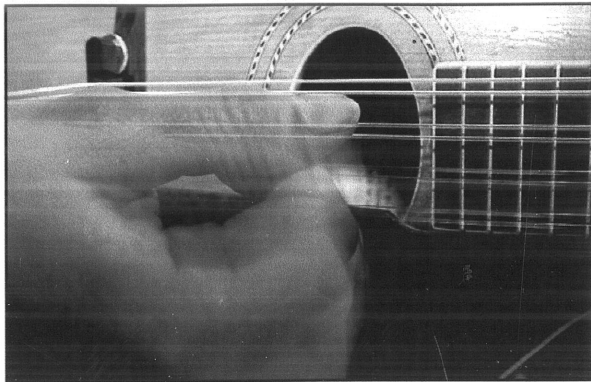


“The resurgence of the Providence Mandolin Orchestra is part of a nationwide encore for an instrument whose popularity at the turn of the century would have rivaled that of rock and roll today.”

RICHARD C. DUJARDIN
The Providence Journal

MANDOLIN IN PROVIDENCE

Since the late nineteenth century, Providence has enjoyed the reputation of being the capital of the American mandolin scene. Giuseppe Pettine, a young Italian immigrant, settled in Providence and forever changed the mandolin world. His mandolin virtuosity and technique influenced thousands, including William Place and Hibbard Perry who, in 1924, formed the original Providence Mandolin Orchestra. The Pettine Methods are still in demand by mandolin students around the globe. Today, Providence remains in the forefront through the PMO's sponsorship of community and international events and premier performances of original compositions.



COMMUNITY EVENTS

“How to Play the Mandolin”

Free Seminars

Community Performances

**Schools,
Retirement Homes,
Libraries, Churches**

American Mandolin
& Guitar Summer School
International guest artists
and students

INTERNATIONAL ARTISTS

Jungen Hessische Zupforkester
Germany

Duo Capriccioso
Germany

Trio Grandio
Spain

Den Danske Mandolinenduo
Denmark

Radim Zenkl
Czech Republic and California

Modern Mandolin Quartet
California

Duo Calace
Luxembourg

Barry Mitterhoff
New York

FESTIVALS AND CONVENTIONS

International Festival of Mandolins 1998
featuring
**Simon Mayor & Hilary James • England
Richard Walz • France**

Classical Mandolin Society of America
Annual Convention 1995
featuring
**Sanae Onji • Japan. Paul Sparks • England
Keith Harris • Germany**

A Festival of Mandolins 1983
featuring
**Yasuo Kuwahara • Japan, Andy Statman • New York
Neil Gladd • Washington, DC**

With well over two hundred pieces in its repertoire, the Orchestra features a wide range of musical styles from Renaissance dances to Baroque concertos, from turn-of-the century works to avant-garde expressions. Within its wide range of musical tastes, the Orchestra is probably best

known for its lively interpretations of traditional music from sources as diverse as Appalachian folk ballads and Brazilian chorinho. In addition, the PMO's unique tonality has inspired exciting new works by composers Will Ayton, Stephen Funk Pearson, Bruce Graybill, Michael Nix, Robert Martel, Owen Hartford, and others.



CLASSICS

Sonatina in C for Mandolin

L. Beethoven

Clair de Lune

C. Debussy

Pavane

G. Fauré

Eine Kleine Nachtmusik

W. Mozart

Concerto for Mandolin

A. Vivaldi

Concerto in G for Mandolin

J. Hasse

TURN OF THE CENTURY

Sunset on the Pawtuxet

G. Pettine

Dawn of Hope

A. Casella

Sweetcorn Ragtime March

A. J. Weidt

AMERICAN CONTEMPORARY

Three American Folk Songs

Michael Nix

Elassomorph

Stephen Funk Pearson

Walnut Valley Suite

Bruce Graybill

Wrung from the Silence

Robert Martel

The Frog Prince

a mini-opera

Owen and Betsey Hartford

Serenade

Don DeVoe

ZUPFMUSIK

Tafelmusik

K. Wölki

Suite No. 6

H. Ambrosius

Tanzstuck

K. Schwaen

Serenade

S. Behrend

Concertino for Recorder and Mandolin Orchestra

G. Gunsenheimer

WORLD MUSIC

Flatbush Waltz

A. Statman

Rumanian Folk Dances

B. Bartok

Suite Española

E. Ulierte

Three Neapolitan Folksongs

M. Davis, arr.

Get ready, Rhode Island, there may be mandolins in your future.

That's the prediction of some of the members of the Providence Mandolin Orchestra who say they already see signs of a comeback for an instrument whose popularity at the turn of the century would have rivaled that of rock 'n' roll today.

Numbers alone seem to suggest that something is going on. Though mandolin orchestras were very popular in the early part of this century — Providence alone had three large mandolin orchestras back in the 1920s and 1930s — they gradually faded from the scene as musical tastes changed.

But then along came Hibbard Perry, founder of one of those early mandolin orchestras, the Providence Plectral Society. It was Perry's dream to revive the orchestra, and that's what he did in 1973. Working with some of his former students, he renamed the group the Providence Mandolin Orchestra.

In the years since, membership has jumped from 4 or 5 players to an orchestra of 24. At the same time, other guitar and mandolin groups have begun popping up again all over the country, bringing the total number, by some estimates, to more than 100.

A broad and diverse group it is. In Providence, the membership ranges from such musical veterans as Yvette Cote of Woonsocket, who first played the mandolin in the 1940s, dropped it for 30 years, and picked it up again when she heard the orchestra perform in Burrillville, to relative newcomers like Lisa Newby, a Journal-Bulletin picture editor who picked up the mandolin for the first time just 18 months ago.

Conductor Mark Morgan Davis, a guitarist, and his wife Marilyn Mair, a mandolin player, are well-known performers whose recordings as a duo have sold more than 100,000 copies over the years. Six years ago they took the orchestra to northern Spain for an international music festival that brought mandolin and string orchestras from all over the world. The Providence Mandolin Orchestra was the only United States group that was invited. Though people may be apt to associate

the mandolin with 12th or 13th century Spain or Italy, its current popularity may be due more to the ingenuity of Orville Gibson of Kalamazoo, Michigan, who at the turn of the century created a new series of mandolin instruments based on the principles of the violin. By inventing the mandola, the mandocello and mandobass — counterparts to the string viola, cello and bass viol — Gibson opened the door to creating a full mandolin orchestra, with a full range of sound.

Even before Gibson, however, America had already warmed to the mandolin. The instrument's first reported use in America was in 1760, when Giuseppe Gualdo, an Italian from England, brought the instrument to Philadelphia. But America's craze for the mandolin didn't actually begin until 1878, when a group of musicians from Spain, calling themselves the Spanish Students, took the country by storm with a concert tour.

Conductor Davis says the important thing to remember about those times was that there were no radios or record players. If people wanted to listen to music, they needed to find live performers. The need for local talent fueled the creation of amateur mandolin ensembles all over the country.

Dr. Mac Johnston, a physician at Harvard Pilgrim Health who switched from playing classical guitar to mandola about five years ago, also sees the movement growing. He notes that when the Association of Mandolinists held its national convention in Providence 18 months ago, it drew 120 musicians, twice the number of five years earlier. Johnston believes there is, already, a strong interest in the mandolin in Rhode Island because of the large numbers of older people here who may have played the mandolin earlier in their lifetimes.

The music is wide ranging, taking in various folkloric traditions, including Spanish, Brazilian and Appalachian, as well as classical and contemporary. The group already has one cassette recording out, *Songs Without Words*, and is preparing for a new CD soon.

Locally, the orchestra holds weekly rehearsals every Tuesday evening at Nathan Bishop Middle School on the East Side, with free seminars from time to time at the Music School for people interested in learning more about the mandolin.

Richard C. Dujardin
PROVIDENCE JOURNAL

Quotes and comments

...Players like the Mair-Davis Duo have brought new sophistication to the classical mandolin/guitar duet, while groups like the Modern Mandolin Quartet and the Providence Mandolin Orchestra prove that mandolin-family ensembles can still deliver vital performances from the concert stage.

Richard Johnson
ACOUSTIC GUITAR
February 1998

The Providence Mandolin Orchestra mesmerized us... the effect on the mere mortal is truly overwhelming. When the PMO joined us in rehearsal and again... in performance, the result was spellbinding.

Peter Mix
ACOUSTIC MUSICIAN
September 1997

...I am extremely grateful for your participation in making Mayor (of Florence) Primicerio's visit to Providence so enjoyable and enlightening. It was a great pleasure for me to be able to share with him and our other guests, an evening that soared with the magical strains of the Providence Mandolin Orchestra...

Vincent A. Cianci, Jr.
MAYOR OF PROVIDENCE

Sunday night I stepped out with a couple of friends... and saw the Providence Mandolin Orchestra at Jordan Hall in Boston. We were overwhelmed to say the least. What splendid playing — the experience was monumental. Thirteen mandolins, three mandolas, four mandocellos, one mandobass, and three guitars — all on one stage — but who's counting? It was great to hear among other things, Bruce Graybill's Walnut Valley Suite performed so majestically.

Sandy Oxley
COMANDO List serve

The Providence Mandolin Orchestra has existed in various incarnations off and on since the turn of the century. The present day PMO was founded by the late Hibbard Perry in 1973, and is conducted by Mark Davis of Mair-Davis Duo fame.

The thing I like best about this recording is that it contains new original music for mandolin orchestraThe situation has been changing over the last ten years, but before that, most of the surviving American mandolin orchestras have been stuck in a time warp since the beginning of the century.

...Moving on to the new American works, there are two pieces by Robert Martel...and two more by Owen Hartford. The Martel works are musically interesting, well orchestrated, and not overly difficult. Evening Sky is a slow and simple, but haunting piece, while Sky-Colored Lake has a folk-bluegrass inspired modal melody, propelled by open fifths in the accompaniment. Owen Hartford's Rondo Bacchanal is marked by a gentle syncopated melody and some lovely ninth chords created by passing tones and suspensions. Family Squabble is in a fast 7/8 which makes it more of a challenge to perform, but the orchestra does a good job, and the music ends appropriately on an unresolved chord, as family squabbles often do.

The Three American Folksongs of Michael Nix are not mere arrangements, but well composed settings of these classic tunes. Wagoner's Lad begins traditionally enough but then goes through a polytonal section (the melody in one key and the accompaniment in another). Darlin' Corey was recorded by the Monroe Brothers in 1936 and this sounds a little bit like "Bill Monroe meets Stravinsky" at times with huge, irregular block chords pitted against the melody. Hush-a-bye is a sad lullaby which brings the set to a whispered conclusion.

Konrad Wölki's Lieder ohne Worte (in translation) give the CD its title, and the disc is rounded off by two Brazilian tunes and Andy Statman's Flatbush Waltz. This is the sort of innovative programming that mandolin orchestras need to be playing if they are ever to flourish again in America ...and I am glad to see the Providence Mandolin Orchestra...leading the way.

Neil Gladd
MANDOLIN QUARTERLY
Summer 1996