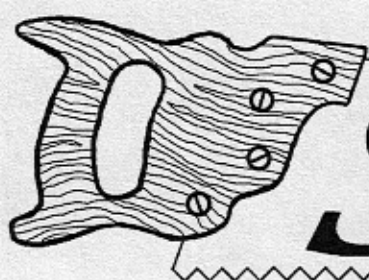


# INTERNATIONAL MUSICAL SAW ASSOCIATION



## SAW PLAYER NEWS

Vol. 13, No.3 www.SawPlayers.org Email: Info@SawPlayers.org (707) 773-1230 Designer: Ken Ball Summer 2010

### The 2009 IMSA Saw Festival in Santa Cruz – Another Winner!

Each year's Saw Festival is both wonderful and unique – but the 2009 Festival was special in a variety of ways!

This was a different Saw Festival experience for me personally, due to several unique circumstances. A little over a year ago I found out I had a type of lymphatic cancer, - one of the few types that IS successfully treatable! (So far, so good!) At the time of the Festival I was having a series of chemotherapy treatments, so I was feeling

somewhat compromised and vulnerable (as well as bald), but luckily, my treatments went well and my energy was OK, and I wasn't in pain or suffering – which happens to many people.

But besides that, I was forced by circumstances to miss all the FUN on Saturday – the first time I have missed a day at the Saw Festival for decades! I was very disappointed and sad to miss out on Saturday's festivities - but from the photos I saw and the reports from those at the



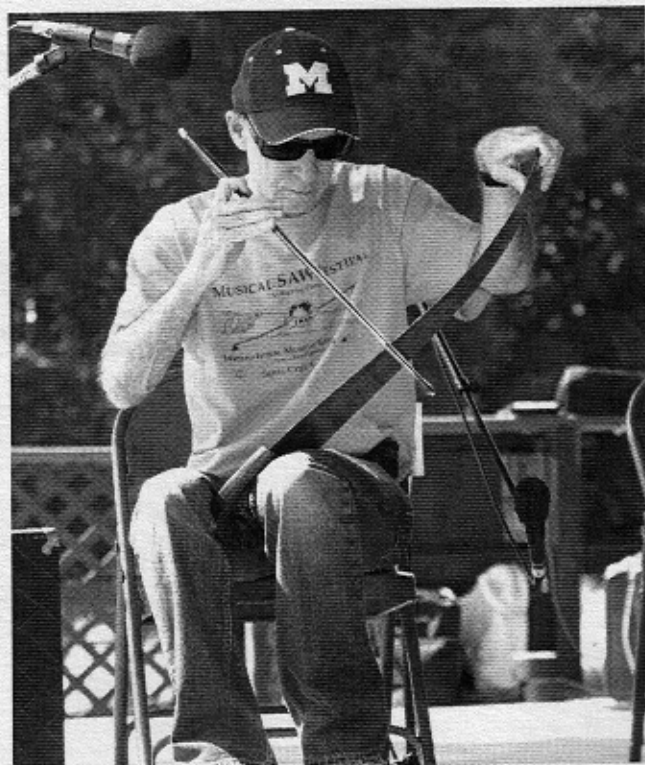
Some of the 2009 Santa Cruz Jam saw players play along with Craig Paice from England on guitar, and IMSA Vice President Art Peterson on accordion.

Photo by Ralph McCaskey



2009 Saw-Off Contest 1st Place Winner Makoto Ogibara performs on the main stage.

Photo by Ralph McCaskey



IMSA Advisor and "Saw Tips" writer David Weiss performs at the 2009 Saw Festival.

Photo by Ralph McCaskey

jams in downtown Santa Cruz and at Roaring Camp, it looks like they had a lot of fun without me! Sunday is the main day of the Festival, and that went very well too!

The economic slowdown kept many people from traveling as much as they have in the past, so overall attendance by both saw players and audience was down. But - we still had 24 saw players on the stage for the Chorus of Saws, and 13 contestants at the Saw-Off competition - and we DID have FUN!!!

If you have been reading the Saw Player News very long, you know that the musical saw is played in many countries around the world, and concerts and festivals featuring the musical saw, are held in Japan, China, France, Poland and the Czech Republic, as well as in New York and Santa Cruz in the U.S. We often have great international saw players attend our IMSA Saw Festival, and

this year was no exception.

Many times, my friend Mr. Yoshikazu Kawaguchi from Tokyo (who speaks English fluently) escorts Japanese saw players to our Saw Festival, and he was bringing



A trio of lovely Japanese saw players perform at the 2009 Saw Festival. Miwako Kitamoto is on the left, Marie Konishi (with hand-made bow) is in the middle, and Reiko Ando is on the right.

Photo by Ralph McCaskey



*The Chorus of Saws at the 2009 Saw Festival had 24 saw players. The front row includes judges David Weiss on the left and Joe Eding in the center, with 1st Place winner Makoto Ogihara on the right.*

*Photo by Ralph McCaskey*

another large group with him to the 2009 Saw Festival. Unfortunately, the day before the Festival he learned of a family emergency and had to return to Japan. But despite that setback, 8 out of the 13 contestants were from Japan, and they took musical saw glory home with them!

Top winners from the contest were: 1st Place - Mr. Makoto Ogihara; 2nd Place - Mr. Seiji Kimoto; 3rd Place - Ms. Reiko Ando; 4th Place - Ms. Giriko Shimizu and 5th Place - Ms. Marie Konishi.

Other Special Awards went to Ms. Reiko Ando for "Traveled the Farthest" (from Yao City, Osaka Prefecture, Japan), Ms. Miwako "Rakuno" Kitamoto for "Best Stage Presence," and Mr. Makoto Ogihara for "Most Entertaining."

The contestants were (in playing order): Cynthia Weyuker from Alameda, California; Ms. Miwako "Rakuno" Kitamoto from Osaka, Japan; Peter Geissert from Portland, Oregon; Mr. Makoto Ogihara from Yokohama, Japan; Ms. Etsuko

Fukuyama from Tokyo, Japan; Ms. Marie Konishi from Osaka, Japan; Ms. Reiko Ando from Osaka, Japan; Mr. Seiji Kimoto from Chiba-Ken, Japan; Ms. Giriko Shimizu from Tokyo, Japan; Rosalyn Claret from St. Paul, Minnesota; Ms. Aikiko Hattori from Chiba, Japan; Terry Bergman from Ventura, California; and Rebecca Burgan from San Pablo, California.



*The life-sized bronze sculpture of Tom Scribner accompanies the 2009 Santa Cruz Jam.*

*Photo by Ralph McCaskey*



As soon as San Francisco saw player and street musician Ms. Jackie Jones sets up her dancing cat "limber jack" - she becomes an instant "Star" when children are nearby.

Photo by Ralph McCaskey



A saw playing inventor (sorry we didn't get his name!) at the 2009 Santa Cruz Jam demonstrates his contraption that enables him to bend the saw correctly with almost no effort from his left hand!

Photo by Ralph McCaskey

## Check your calendar

The date for the 2010 Saw Festival listed in the last issue of the Saw Player News has been changed!

The 2010 International Musical Saw Festival is coming SOON - Saturday and Sunday August 14th and 15th. We encourage ALL acoustic musicians (any style) to join us at the jams, and/or to play on the stage (schedule permitting, with a saw player). Email: [Info@SawPlayers.org](mailto:Info@SawPlayers.org) to reserve a spot on stage, and act soon! Please invite fellow saw players, and other music friends too! We would love to see you there!

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# They Came, They Sawed, They Conquered - a Guinness World Record



By Natalia 'SawLady' Paruz  
- [www.SawLady.com](http://www.SawLady.com)

The 7th annual NYC Musical Saw Festival attracted 55 musical saw players to the Astoria neighborhood of NYC on Saturday, July 18th. 53 of them played together, breaking the Guinness World Record of the 'Largest Musical Saw Ensemble'.

350 people packed Trinity Lutheran Church LIC, turning the festival into a standing-room-only event, with audience resorting to sitting on the floor in front of the first pew. A battery of press personnel flashed cameras and took notes, while FOX5 TV featured the festival on their 10 o'clock news.

Though the festival was scheduled to start at 2pm, audience members started filling the church as early as 12:30pm, eager to secure themselves a good seat. While waiting for the concert to start, they were able to enjoy the art exhibit featuring paintings and collages by 8 artists, all featuring the musical saw, of course. Max Butler (TX),

both a sawist and an artist, exhibited a few of his beautiful collages. A curator from the Metropolitan Museum of Art perused the art exhibit with evident enthusiasm.

The public portion of the festival lasted four and a half hours, followed by a workshop for the saw players. The concert opened with a presentation of four World Premieres, commissioned by the festival. Composer Scott R. Munson presented 'Bend' for string quartet and musical saw, and 'The World is Too Much With Us', a setting of William Wordsworth's poem featuring soprano singer Ilya Speranza with strings and musical saw. Composer Eyal Bat presented 'Canticle of Angels' for two musical saws and piano and '1905' - a piece inspired by an old house built in that year in Astoria. This piece featured the Trinity Handbell Choir, directed by Richard Walker. Playing the musical saw part in all the world premieres was the festival's founder and director, Natalia 'Saw Lady' Paruz, who was joined by Dale Stuckenbruck for the two saws piece. To round up her set Natalia also played the duet for cello and musical saw from the 1991 French movie 'Delicatessen', with cellist Lawrence Zoernig.



Group portrait of the 53 saw players that broke the official Guinness World Record of the 'Largest Musical Saw Ensemble.'

Photo by Pat Merino 2009



*Natalia Paruz (center) leads the "Chorus of Saws" at the 2009 NYC Musical Saw Festival.*

*Photo by Pat Merino*

A succession of solos by many, many musical saw players followed, some playing with live accompaniment by harp, piano, guitar, banjo, mandolin, etc. While there were a few pianists who took turns accompanying the different saw-soloists, Heawon Kim, who is on the faculty of the C.W. Post/Long Island University, accompanied quite a few of the sawists.

Four of the sawists attached all sorts of electronic gadgets to their saw, creating loops of sound and distortion causing the saw to sound like an electric guitar.

The youngest musical saw player was 15 year old Peter Harrison, who came with his grandfather from North Carolina. They both share a passion for playing the musical saw. The oldest were two sawists, John Kerr (PA) and Lloyd Craighill (MA) - both 83 years young. Musical saw players came from near and far to participate

in the festival - two came all the way from Japan, three from Germany, four from Canada, one from Belgium, one from France and the rest from MN, TN, PA, NC, MA, TX, CA, NJ, IL, GA and of course many from NY.

Fifty-three saw players lined up to put their signature on a document for Guinness, witnessed by two witnesses and a notary public. All 53 of them then proceeded to play the Schubert 'Ave Maria', an 8 minute long piece, accompanied by Judy Dimino on church organ and conducted by James Bassi.

When they were done the audience roared with delight. The enthusiasm for the new world record was through the roof. At the end of the concert all the saw players played together again. This time it was 'Over the Rainbow' and the players surrounded the church interior, sitting in the isles all around the audience, thus giving the audience a true surround-sound experience.

The previous world record was set in Poland last



*Dale Stuckenbruck and Natalia Paruz play a duet at the 2009 NYC Musical Saw Festival.*

*Photo by Pat Merino*

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10:00 AM - 5:00 PM

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Musical Saw  
Contest

Musical Saw  
Workshop

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For Festival Information:

[www.SawPlayers.org](http://www.SawPlayers.org)

Call: Morgan Cowin  
(415)459-7722

Write: IMSA, 110 Prospect St.  
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# IT'S FREE!

(though there IS a parking fee)

Funded, in part, by a grant from the  
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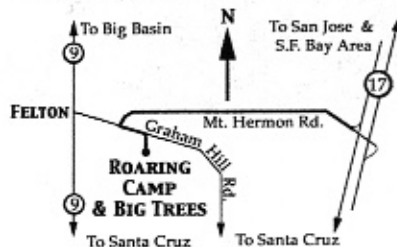


For Directions to

Roaring Camp & Big Trees  
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Call: (831)335-4484

[www.RoaringCamp.com](http://www.RoaringCamp.com)



Take the Mt. Hermon Exit off Hwy. 17 to Graham Hill Rd., Then Left 1/4 mile to Roaring Camp.

For more information contact:  
Morgan Cowin, President  
International Musical Saw Players Association  
(415)459-7722 Email: [Sawman@DistinctivePhotos.com](mailto:Sawman@DistinctivePhotos.com)  
Download a Saw Festival Flyer at: [www.SawPlayers.org](http://www.SawPlayers.org)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE:

For great music that's a cut above the rest, come to the 32nd Annual International Musical Saw Festival, Saturday and Sunday, August 14th & 15th, 2010, in beautiful Santa Cruz County, California.

The cutting edge music starts Saturday, August 14, 2010 at 1:00 PM, with a free acoustic jam near the world's only life-sized bronze statue of a saw player - in front of Bookshop Santa Cruz, located at 1520 Pacific Avenue. Next comes a free potluck dinner and jam at 6:00 PM in the outer parking lot of Roaring Camp in Felton, just seven miles north of Santa Cruz.

The big event happens Sunday, August 15, at Roaring Camp when the world's greatest saw players come out of the woodwork to join other acoustic musicians in a variety of musical performances. You'll hear bluegrass, country, folk, gospel, blues, classical, and even show tunes (believe it or not, no heavy metal) throughout the day. Festivities start at 10:00 AM, with spontaneous acoustic jams throughout the day. There's a Saw-Off competition from 11:00 AM to 1:00 PM, and a Chorus of the Saws at 3:00 PM., with up to 50 saw players trying to play in unison.

And for those who want to learn how to play music that really has some teeth in it, there's a free Musical Saw Workshop at 4:00 PM.

The entire event is free, and fun for the whole family. For more information, check out [www.SawPlayers.org](http://www.SawPlayers.org), or [www.RoaringCamp.com](http://www.RoaringCamp.com). Produced by volunteers of the International Musical Saw Association, this event is sponsored in part by the Cultural Council of Santa Cruz County and KUSP Public Radio. Come to the 32nd annual Musical Saw Festival, and say you saw it here first!

###



year with 27 musical saw players. When the Polish festival was in the makes, the organizer told me over the phone how exhausting it was to organize the Guinness attempt. It was only when I was going through the procedure myself that I understood what he was talking about. It took 7 months of work prior to the actual attempt, plus another 2 months afterwards to get the confirmation.

The festival was a huge success. As people left the church some asked if they could take saw-lessons.

During the festival, audience members updated their Twitter Internet account: "Interesting range of techniques"; "Marlene Dietrich played the musical saw!?" said one. "Currently witnessing a new world record for largest musical saw ensemble" said another. "The players raised their saws in victory! They did it! They set the new Guinness World Record for largest Musical Saw ensemble" said another.

The musical saw workshop, given by Adam Wirtzfeld (MN), was highly informative and was geared to interest the more advanced sawists as well as beginners in the technique of Multiphonics - playing two notes at once on the

saw. The festival came to a close with many of the musical saw players dining together at a restaurant. "I am so fired up by the Festival! What a great day!" said Gregor Kitzis (NY), who played the musical saw in public for the first time at the festival. "Such a wonderful program. This was our first Saw Festival" said audience member Steve Stokes.

Videos and photos from the festival can be viewed at [www.MusicalSawFestival.org](http://www.MusicalSawFestival.org)

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[www.SawLady.com](http://www.SawLady.com) Printed with permission.

## NOTE:

The 8th Annual NYC Musical Saw Festival will be held Saturday, August 7th, 2010, at 2pm at the Hellenic Cultural Center, 27-09 Crescent Street (corner of Newtown Avenue), Astoria, NY 11102. Admission is \$10. For more information and to register to perform, please contact the festival through the website above.

### ADVERTISE In The Saw Player News!

We are now accepting both Classified and Display advertising for music-related and Musical Saw-related merchandise and services. You can now reach hundreds of saw players at a reasonable cost!

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Quarter Page.....	(3.75" wide by 4.75" high) -	\$ 50
Business Card.....	(3.75" wide by 2" high)	\$ 25
Flyer Insertion.....	(8.5" wide by 11" high) -	\$ 200

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## Announcements

1) An apology from the IMSA President is due. As you have noticed, I have had some sort of mental "block" about completing and mailing this newsletter for almost a year – and I need to apologize. I have neglected the writers and contributors, as well as the IMSA Membership – you – by being so slow to act. Perhaps I am still recovering from the chemotherapy I had, or maybe I was just avoiding the task, but I do feel that I have let you all down, and I am sorry! I will try to do better in the future.

2) IMSA Vice President Art Peterson can't come to this year's Saw Festival due to a medical procedure at about the same time as the Festival. David Weiss has other commitments this year and is also unable to attend.

# Really Effective Practicing

by David Weiss



Getting students to practice effectively has always been a top priority for teachers, no matter what instrument. MOTIVATION is really the key to successful practice. It is simply human nature that a lot of us tend to put off the more difficult things until we absolutely have to deal with them -- whether it be paying taxes, studying for tests at school, or practicing your instrument! The DESIRE has to be there, and one of the best ways for that to happen is to have EVENTS on your calendar where you have places to perform or people to jam with! By putting lots of dates like these on your calendar, you then have reasons to be much more regular with your practicing, and that will lead to becoming a much better player. Playing in a group also teaches you a lot about music that you can't learn by practicing alone. Here's part of an email that Morgan Cowin recently sent me: "... I play so much at open (and some closed) groups of jammers -- that I'm really ALWAYS practicing. The most SIGNIFICANT improvements I've made in my musical development in the 38 years I've been playing the saw - have come from playing with other musicians on a REGULAR basis. I now play between 4 and 16 hours a week at jams -- some happen every week, some every other week, some every month. The more you play, the faster you learn, and the better you get!" Let's hope Morgan will write a column for a future issue giving us details about his experiences jamming with other musicians.

I have a T-shirt with a slogan that reads, "I Played It Better At Home!" That's something we can all relate to, and makes us smile. Why is that funny? Because when you're a little nervous or feeling "on the spot" you become more distracted by things that aren't an issue when you're by yourself. Getting used to performance situations really helps you improve by making you all the more aware of your weaknesses, and better able to correct them.

The two "R's" of good practice are RELAXATION, and REPETITION. For all my students, I recommend sitting in front of a mirror -- to immediately see how your body looks when you are playing. As with anything physical, using only the muscles needed to func-

tion effectively is ideal. You don't want to tire yourself out unnecessarily. Getting into a good position while playing is very important! Presuming you are seated and bowing with your right hand, your left shoulder should be down and relaxed. Left elbow should be down, fairly close to your side. The saw should be angled over the left knee and towards your body a little, in such a way that you don't have to extend your left arm too far forward. This will also help your right arm, keeping it from stretching too far, and enabling it to work most efficiently. The left wrist should have a relaxed arch to it so that the thumb "pivots" into the saw, with the fingers pulling back on the tip. DON'T OVERDO the s-curve! A common mistake for novices is to get frustrated and bend the saw too much. "Just enough!" is what I consider to be the correct amount. For comfort where the thumb meets the saw, I use a 1-inch square piece of thin bulletin board cork under the thumb. It is not glued down, but can move so I can position my thumb slightly up or down the blade as needed, with no fixed pivot point. This is especially important when playing the highest and lowest notes.

As for the right hand grip on the bow: for best balance and a relaxed arm, I suggest gripping the bow between 3 and 8 inches below the "frog," the end with the tightening screw (as you improve, you can grip the bow closer to the frog for longer phrases -- playing more than one note on each bow stroke). Place the thumb between the bow hair and wood (the back of the thumb should be somewhat facing you), the four fingers opposing the thumb. So there is no confusion, this is NOT like how you would bow a violin. It is easier to begin with the hand close to the saw, pulling the bow upward. Position the bow perpendicular to the saw, that is, at roughly 90 degrees or right angles to the edge, in the "Sweet spot" -- the flat area between the curves of the saw when you bend it into the s-shape. NOTE: Since this column is dealing with "effective practice techniques" and not "how to play the saw for beginners," those instructions can be found at the website: <http://www.sawplayers.org/> and click on "Instruction" for photographs and detailed analyses about bow angles and lots more. Even for those of us who are more advanced players, a review of the fundamentals is always a good idea!

Practice bowing the saw in both directions. This will enable you to play a lot faster and more musically once you get the hang of it. In addition to putting rosin on the bow, I also rub some rosin on the edge of the saw. String bass rosin seems to work best, since it is stickier and gives more friction for better response. Start with one of the lower notes (less stress for the left hand, since the s-curve is slight and requires less pressure). Pull the bow upwards slowly and steadily until you get the note to ring. Make a mental note of the placement of the bow on the sweet spot when you hear it ring easily. Try again. You may have to experiment with the amount of S-curve, the amount of pressure of the bow against the blade, and the speed of the bow stroke to get a good quality sound. Once you get the tone ringing easily, hold that position steady, and bow a down-stroke starting at the tip and going to the frog (handle) of the bow.

Once you get this first note to respond consistently, bend the tip of the saw down slightly, move the stroke-spot up a tiny bit, and try again. You should notice the tone being a step higher. Use your ear to determine a whole tone up, and then a whole tone back to the starting note. Repeat. Look in the mirror. Relax. Repeat. Don't go further until you can get those first 2 notes well in tune, back and forth. If you have another instrument in the house, play those 2 notes on that, and then go back to the saw to check yourself for good pitch. You can vary the speed and pressure of the bow until you get the tone to respond quickly with minimal bow noise, and then remove the bow to allow the sound to ring for as long as possible. TAKE FREQUENT BREAKS! It is a good idea to rest every few minutes when practicing. During the first couple of weeks using this kind of diligent approach, saw practice can be very tiring!

Once you can play 2 notes well in tune with each other, go on to a third, fourth, etc. (the beginnings of a scale). This may seem like slow, tedious practice, but it will yield the quickest results. Try not to "approximate" the pitches - force yourself to play right on the note. At this point I should mention that for about \$25 you can purchase a battery operated "tuner." Smaller than a deck of cards, tuners have a display that will tell you if your note is sharp or flat, and by how much! Korg is the brand I like best (model CA-30), and can be found in any music supply store or online ([www.korg.com](http://www.korg.com) - click on "products"). Using this type of tuner can be INVALUABLE in helping you to train your ear for good pitch.

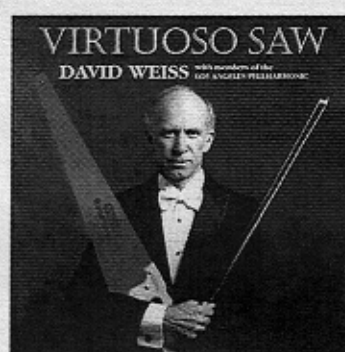
You will notice that the right arm has to reach further

when playing a higher note, since the sweet spot is moving up the blade. Always remember to keep an approximate 90-degree angle of bow against the saw.

After you have mastered an 8 note scale, going up and down one octave, you are ready for INTERVALS: for example, from your first note, play a 3rd higher and return to the starting note (C-E-C), or 4th (C-F-C), etc. Try to be as "on pitch" as you can. You will soon be able to get a feel for the note changes, developing a "muscle memory" for what you have to do physically to play clearly and expressively.

Along with all this no-nonsense type of practice, you'll also want to play some tunes. Melodies like "Long, Long Ago," or "Home Sweet Home," or "Twinkle, Twinkle, Little Star" are good choices. Practice them S-L-O-W-L-Y and don't be satisfied until you can get the tones to respond immediately to the bow strokes, keeping the pitches as accurate as possible and minimizing bow scratch noise, which is caused by too much pressure and/or the wrong speed for the notes. Then you can gradually speed up the pace until you reach the right tempo. If you have a video camera, record yourself now and then to make sure you look relaxed and that your notes are in tune. If you have a friend who plays piano who will work

*continued on page 11*



David Weiss bends steel in his bare hands, backed by members of the L.A. Philharmonic in this cutting edge CD of pop and classical favorites. "The most beguiling sounds emanated from David Weiss... heavy metal maestro enthralls with his handsaw artistry..."

He came, he sawed, he conquered." (Los Angeles Times)

#### Play List:

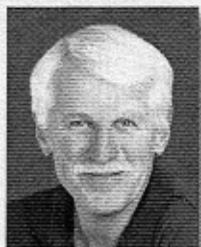
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## Musical Saw Exhibit At The California State Fair



By Morgan Cowin

What a FUN adventure it was! Last Spring I got a call from a representative of an exhibit curator at the California State Fair at "CalExpo" in Sacramento, asking about the possibility of producing an exhibit about the musical saw. The theme for the 2009 California State Fair was "Weird, Wild & Wacky" (and "Wonderful"?) things found in California. Of course the musical saw fits right in!

This was a GREAT opportunity for us to enlighten the public about the beautiful voice of the musical saw, so naturally, I assured him that we could have a fascinating, entertaining and educational presentation for those State Fair visitors intelligent enough to come out of the 100° F (38° Celsius) summer sun, and into a large, air-conditioned building with all kinds of art exhibits.

The day after the Saw Festival I drove to Sacramento on Monday, August 10, 2009, and delivered our Saw Festival banner, all seven of my saws (plus my 6' long 2-man

crosscut saw) and Joe Eding's Sandvik Stradivarius, and his gold-plated Mussehl & Westphal musical saws. I also brought some Saw Festival T-shirts, saw concert posters from China & Japan, and a San Francisco Chronicle article about the Saw Festival with a photo of Hajime Sakita playing his saw with the handle under his chin, violin-style.

To enhance the actual musical saw exhibit at the Fair (open August 27 – September 7th), we offered to have actual saw players demonstrating the musical saw and educating the public in front of the exhibit display. IMSA Advisors Cynthia Weyuker, Joe Eding, Caroline McCaskey, and I played three times on the weekend days that worked for our schedules.

All four saw players presented his/her own program, agreed to perform at 2, 4 and 6 PM, and talked and played for about 1/2 hour each time. We all played some, talked in general about the instrument, the basics of how it is played, and took questions afterwards.

Cynthia Weyuker (who won 2nd Place at the 2008 Saw Festival, using an electronic "loop box" system) played on August 29th with her boyfriend Jason Webster on guitar. Joe Eding, an excellent saw player who



Jim Tepperman, Melissa Muller, Kim Richards and Morgan Cowin on the sound stage at CBS television station KOVR CH 31 in Sacramento to promote the Musical Saw Exhibit at the 2009 California State Fair.

Photo by Morgan Cowin

is often a judge at the Saw-Off contest, played solo on August 30th. Caroline McCaskey (who won 1st Place at the 2007 Saw Festival) played with her boyfriend Cole Ingraham on guitar on September 5th. Morgan Cowin was fortunate enough to enlist three great vocalist/musician friends I jam with regularly (Jim Tepperman, Melissa Muller and Kim Richards) played on September 6th.

In case you're interested, my friends and I chose 10 songs to play: Across The Great Divide (Kate Wolf), Ain't Misbehavin' ("Fats" Waller, Louis Armstrong, Nat King Cole), Daydream (Lovin' Spoonful), Fields Of Gold (Sting, Eva Cassidy), Hallelujah (Leonard Cohen's version), Love Potion #9 (By Jerry Leiber and Mike Stoller, sung by the Beatles, The Searchers), Norwegian Wood (Beatles), Over The Rainbow (Judy Garland from "The Wizard of Oz,"), You Can't Do That (Beatles), and Ready For The Times To Get Better (by Allen Reynolds, recorded by Chet Atkins, Doc Watson, Crystal Gayle).

In addition to our appearance at the fair, Sacramento CBS television station KQVR CH 31 in Sacramento – which produces "the most-watched morning show in Northern California" - "Good Day Sacramento" asked me and my friends to show up early on the 6th to play a few songs to help publicize the last weekend of the State Fair.



Judges Kenny Blacklock, Joe Eding and David Weiss at Saw-Off Contest.

Photo by Ralph McCaskey

You can view one of the two live video segments we did at my MySpace page: [www.Myspace.com/MusicalSawExpert](http://www.Myspace.com/MusicalSawExpert) (follow the link to "videos").

The California State Fair provided us with a great opportunity for thousands of people to see, hear and meet some outstanding musical saw players in a fun environment. The feedback we got from passers-by, the Fair staff and the saw players was consistently positive, and we all considered the time and effort we donated to be both a lot of fun and a great success!

## David Weiss

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with you, that can be an enormous help, too.

VIBRATO is a key element in the characteristic sound of the saw. But for basic practice purposes I recommend not using ANY! Vibrato often tends to hide the true pitches of the notes you are trying to get. So beware – vibrato can act like perfume hiding bad odor, or in this case, poor intonation! So spend a lot of time practicing without vibrato to make sure your pitches are accurate and not "fudged."

When you are ready to work on and improve your vibrato, you should devote separate practice time just for that. Play one note, add vibrato gradually, and experiment with making it fast or slow, wide or narrow. The important goal with vibrato is that you can CONTROL IT. Vibrato is most successfully used when it ENHANCES the music you are playing, without becoming too obvious or distracting, and without it being used to cover up poor intonation. Most players lift one heel, and bounce the knee to achieve vibrato. Another method is to use a wrist

vibrato, but this tends to be more difficult to master, and not one I'd recommend until you are fairly advanced.

For those of you who are thinking about entering a contest, here are a couple of pointers to help you play your best:

- 1) play a preliminary "mock audition" for friends or better yet, some professional musicians, and ask them to critique you.
- 2) Record or videotape your mock audition. Playing it back can be very revealing, and help you cure flaws that you may not have realized you had.

Good luck to all who participate in "saw-off" contests! Whether you compete or not, I hope to see as many of you as possible this August (August 14 & 15, 2010) in Santa Cruz!

David Weiss  
[www.davidweissgallery.com](http://www.davidweissgallery.com)  
[www.cdbaby.com/davidweiss](http://www.cdbaby.com/davidweiss)

NOTE: If a green dot appears next to your name, your membership has expired. To continue to receive the SAW PLAYER NEWS, please send a check and a completed Membership Application. Thanks for your support!

International  
Musical Saw  
Association



IMSA,  
110 Prospect St., Petaluma, CA  
94952 U.S.A.  
www.SawPlayers.org

## Application for Membership to the International Musical Saw Association

Annual Membership Fees (in U.S. Dollars only) are \$20/Individual, \$25/Family.

Dues entitle Members to 3 issues of the Saw Player News, and eligibility to enter (with \$5 entry fee) the "Saw-Off Competition" at our annual Saw Players Picnic and Music Festival.

Please send your check\* with completed application to: IMSA, 110 Prospect St., Petaluma, CA 94952 U.S.A.

*\*Membership payments can now be paid by "PayPal" at: [www.sawplayers.org/form.html](http://www.sawplayers.org/form.html)  
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Saw players frequently contact us to look for fellow saw players in their areas, but we don't want to give out your name and contact information without your permission. We do not intend to share your information with anyone but fellow saw players.

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