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Paul Neubauer on Alan de Veritch

In anticipation of this year's [Primrose Memorial Concert honoring Alan de Veritch](#), Utah Viola Society will be presenting visiting guest bloggers! This week's guest contributor is the distinguished violist [Paul Neubauer](#). As a young man, Mr. Neubauer worked with [Alan de Veritch](#), and will be participating as a panelist, teacher, and featured performer at the Primrose Memorial Concert/Alan de Veritch Tribute events September 22-23, 2017 at Brigham Young University.

"I first met Alan de Veritch because Alan's father and my mother both taught at a school in the San Fernando Valley in Los Angeles. They became very good friends, and our families grew quite close. When I was 10 or 11, my godfather, [Paul Doktor](#), suggested to my parents that it was time to leave my local viola teacher to study with Alan. I wasn't keen on the idea since I really liked my teacher, but move on I did, and it was a great decision. I recall Alan's teaching style as very confident and decisive – he always had a great deal to say. How much I absorbed at the time I'm not sure, but I am extremely grateful for the solid foundation that he instilled in my playing.

I have memories of Alan trying to get me to work on scales, exercises and etudes. I must have done a considerable amount of work on these studies as I still have numerous study books by Flesh, Schradieck, Kreutzer, Campagnoli, Sevcik and others with various exercises marked for my attention. Alan worked with me on numerous pieces and his knowledge about the repertoire and Ysaye-Primrose pedigree was very helpful in my music education. After I left Los Angeles to study with Paul Doktor in New York, Alan was always available to offer his advice on any questions that I had, and there were occasions when I would return to play for him since his counsel was always appreciated. One of the most helpful couple weeks was when I was preparing for my New York Philharmonic audition. I had auditioned for Zubin Mehta to be a soloist with the orchestra and the word back from the Philharmonic was the question of whether I would have interest in auditioning for the Principal Viola chair. I had known that the orchestra was looking for a new principal but had never thought about it due to my lack of orchestral experience and not to mention my young age. With an invitation from the Philharmonic to take the audition, I of course was flattered and thought I would give it my best shot. I think I had 4 weeks' notice to prepare for the audition. I was familiar with all the solo and chamber pieces that they wanted

but was pretty much clueless on the very long list of excerpts that were asked for. I contacted Alan and he agreed to work intensively with me for a couple weeks during that time. His guidance (and knowledge of Zubin's preferred way of approaching certain pieces) were incredibly helpful in my preparation for that audition and I think it's fair to say that Alan had a tremendous amount to do with my being asked to join the orchestra.

There were some amusing moments in our lessons that stand out in my mind. Alan was not happy with my strolling around the room when I played for him so he made me play for him while I was standing on a chair. Needless to say, it worked. (These days I have been known to stroll around audiences playing so he wasn't entirely successful on this count!) Alan also complained about my high left thumb (courtesy of my first teacher) and claimed that he could throw horse shoes on it! Alan was not particularly happy that I would yawn in my lessons. My father took care of that by paying me 10 cents for every lesson that I didn't yawn in. For a kid who didn't have an allowance, this dime a week did the trick. If only I had invested those dimes in a wise way... Alan likes to remind me that I would come in and play show tunes instead of my assigned repertoire. This part is a bit hazy for me but I know that I did like to fool around by playing show tunes and any other tunes that I was interested in. I certainly learned a great deal of repertoire with Alan so it's fair to say that I couldn't have just played show tunes.

Whenever I have the occasion to visit Bloomington, I always try to meet up with Alan and Evie. Alan also invited me to take over his viola studio on a couple of occasions while he was on sabbatical. I'm thrilled to take part in this tribute concert for Alan and to return to the epicenter of all things viola – Provo, Utah, the home of the [Primrose International Viola Archive!](#)"

Please join us for the Primrose/de Veritch weekend at BYU September 22-23, 2017!