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Junior Hoedowner

Hello, fellow musicians. My name is Kodria, and I have two brothers. Our mom has home schooled us from the beginning and will continue to school us through high school.

I have been playing the fiddle since 4 days before my 7th birthday (almost 8 years). I don't really remember what started me wanting to play the fiddle, but I have always loved music. When my mom was pregnant with one of my brothers, and they would listen to his heart, I would bounce to the rhythm. Before I started lessons, I would play my "fiddle" which consisted of a ruler for the fiddle and pencil for the bow. On my first lesson, I learned how to hold the fiddle and the bow, and I remember thinking to my self, " When do I get to do all this fast finger stuff".

My older brother liked to play his "belly guitar". He would hold out his left hand, and strum his belly with his right. At age 5, he started playing the guitar, and at age 4 1/2 my younger brother started playing the fiddle. Mom plays the fiddle and the guitar, and Dad plays the fiddle, piano, and the bass. My older brother has picked up the fiddle and is doing very well, and both the boys play the mandolin.

About two years after I started playing, our fiddle teacher (Peg Willis) put me in a group called "Blazing Bows". About a year later, she started " Mulligan Stew" and switched me into that group. This group started off with 10 kids and our teacher. Now we are down to three kids, our teacher, and one of the kids' dad. We play Old Time, lots of Irish, and a mix of other styles.

Our family plays together, and at one time we had a skit that we did called "Old McHaddock". In "The Haddock Family Band" we play mostly Old Time. We have gone to the Wallowa Fiddle Tunes Workshop two years in a row. My family and I like to compete in fiddle contests and play with other musicians.

Mulligan Stew has gone to fiddle camps in Alaska and Colorado and gone on retreats to Wallowa Lake and Seaside. We have also recently released our first CD. As a result of attending the fiddle camps, I now play the fiddle, hammer dulcimer, piano, guitar, Irish whistle, spoons, and bohran. I also sing in Mulligan Stew. I teach two students, and this year I will be adding another.

A couple of years ago I wanted to stop playing the fiddle and take a year off. My parents wouldn't let me, and now I am soooooo glad that they didn't. They said that I had to keep going until I could play well. After I got to where I could play well, they would let me stop. Guess what? Now I like it and I don't want to stop. It would be hard to make me stop. So my wee little bit of advise is this: If you want to stop playing, keep

playing until you can play well, and I bet by then you will like it and won't want to stop.

I would like to thank all the people that have taught, encouraged, and backed me up. I would especially like to thank God for giving me the opportunity to learn music, Peg Willis for teaching and putting up with me all these many years, and my faithful loving parents that let me do music, take me to all these musical events, encourage and love me, and who didn't let me stop.

Sincerely,
Kodria

Leave the following out if you have don't have room.

Beverly Conrad from Pennsylvania gave us permission to use her "Teaching Tips" from the National Old Time Fiddler Association's news letter. (www.fiddlerwoman.com) (<http://www.fiddlecontest.com/>)

. If added in at the expense of solid timing, it will trip the dancer. (Continued from last month). So, what then is the best way to practice playing for sheet music and keep the grace notes graceful? Go ahead and run through the tune as written as a way of testing the writers. Once you get the general idea of the melody you are trying to learn – pare it down and play the tune in its simplest form – just enough notes to make it recognizable a the tune it is. Play it faster. Play it slower. Play it loud. Play it soft. But play it keeping good time. Imagine the dancers and play for them.

If you have devoted time to practicing things like cuts and rolls, slurs and slides you may find that on occasion your fingers will automatically begin to add in some ornamentations and you'll still maintain a solid beat. Let this happen. This is a great way of personalizing the tune and making it your own. You may want to go back and play from the sheet music. Some of your ornamentations may match up to the written piece. Some may not. In traditional music the best fiddlers maintain their regional accent, so what I might add here in the northeast will be different from what someone might add in the southwest.

On the other hand, if you are trying to learn to play fiddle in a certain regional style other than your own, spend time practicing just the specific ornamentations of that style such as the cut and crochet in Celtic music, the rolls in western swing, or slides in Appalachian mountain fiddling. Enough time spent teaching your fingers to move in a certain way when they play certain notes will help them to move and do the same naturally when you hit certain notes in a tune you are playing thereby keeping the grace notes as well as the dancers graceful. ~Beverley Conrad

Thanks Beverly – check out her website. The website is at www.fiddlerwoman.com