

Tompkins had her heart set on performing violin after being introduced to the instrument in the fourth grade. By high school, she was studying with Lenny Schranze '81E at the Fine Arts Center in Greenville, where Schranze taught chamber music in the public-school magnet program. Over one school vacation, he took the class to New York to hear top performers. He encouraged Hall-Tompkins to apply to Eastman.


"She has always been a bright, sparkly player," says Schranze, an associate professor of music at the University of Memphis. "She's a natural leader and is someone who takes the initiative."

That's an important trait for someone determined to make a living playing classical music, a career that requires entrepreneurial savvy. This summer, Hall-Tompkins signed on as a soloist to the roster of Columbia Artists Management, opening up new performing possibilities.

Initiative can also be key when it comes to finding the best instruments. For three years, Hall-Tompkins played a prized 17th-century Stradivarius on loan from a private collection. Made available through the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, the instrument was rotated to another player whose turn with the violin had arrived. By late June, Hall-Tompkins had found another classic violin with equal nuance and complexity, but was still seeking private supporters to keep the instrument. "This violin has a great sound," she says. "And I'd really like to make it my own."

She hones her own playing sound by keeping in touch with Charles Castleman, a professor of violin at Eastman, who has mentored her since her graduation in 1993. "He has a very developed sense of the mechanics of violin playing, and he can perceive what you are doing, and translate it into words," she says. "He has an incredible way of enhancing your natural style."

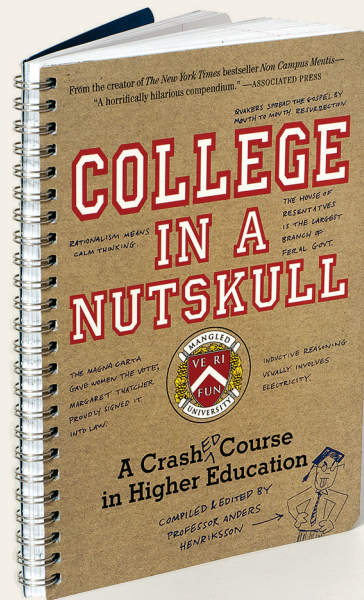
Her style has made Hall-Tompkins one of the most sought-after violinists in New York and one who's known for sharing that talent with those who might ordinarily not get to hear such music.

"Music reaches the core of our being," she says. "It can play a vital role in nourishing love, hope, and strength, particularly when played at an extremely high artistic level, and performed in a friendly, relaxed setting." 

David McKay Wilson is a New York-based freelance writer.

Who Was 'Too Loose Latreck'?

From the best students, professors can learn. From the most hapless ones, they can get a laugh. **Anders Henriksson** '71, a professor of history at Shepherd University in West Virginia, reads some pretty funny things on student exams and papers, and so do his colleagues, in virtually every discipline and in universities across the country. Now we can all share in the fun, with *College In A Nutskull: A Crash Course in Higher Education* (Workman, 2010), Henriksson's second edited collection of student bloopers. According to Henriksson, each blooper has been lifted directly from exams and term papers written by actual (albeit anonymous) "unwitting student collaborators." We offer a few highlights:



What you never knew about philosophy:

"A priori knowledge is things that you have already prioritized."

New discoveries in art history:

"Too Loose Latreck could be found at work in cafes and brasseries throughout Paris."

The lives of literary greats:

"Keats frequently downloaded his emotions on an unsuspecting public."

Know much about history?:

"Thomas Paine thought the problem with monarchy was that it tended to rely too much on having a king."

A stab in the dark:

"The Civil Rights Act of 1964 gave equal rights to civilians."

Another stab in the dark (and a favorite of Henriksson's):

"Pontious Pilot was an official in the Roman Air Force."

A bit of B.S.:

"The Dawes Plan let Germany pay its debts excrementally."

Free association:

"Hamas is an Isrealy leader who refuses to remove his sediments from the bank."

And in other malapropisms . . .

"The only career option other than peasant was often beggar or village idiot. Some, however, went to town and became gelded craftsmen."

And what was not covered on our Chaucer quiz (See page 14):

"Even today a few people have heard of Chaucer. It is, however, a little known fact that he did not know a word of English. *Canterbury Tales* is about pilgrims on their way to Thanksgiving. This was Chaucer's seminole work."

Excerpted from College in a Nutskull (Workman Publishing Co., 2010).

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