



more competent,' he opines. He also believes that another advantage of the double bass is that it can strengthen motor activity in children who find the violin requires too delicate a touch. Findings from this work contributed to a presentation that Choi gave in April 2003 to the ninth European Congress on Music Physiology and Performing Arts Medicine in Freiburg, Germany.

'There is no end to the demand [for double bassists]' enthuses Choi, outlining the vast spectrum of folk, classical, jazz and rock music available to the bassist. Because lessons start at such an early age, pupils are encouraged to tackle a sophisticated range of bass literature during their time at the school. They confidently play into almost inaudible regions, at an age when young people elsewhere may not even be aware of the double bass. Ensuring this variety is encouraged requires teachers of a very high standard, an essential requirement of the PAK-BW. Double bass, they say, is

not a substitute instrument and therefore they can't accept substitute teachers. Fully qualified, experienced double bass players are now standard as tutors in Baden-Württemberg.

Early in 2003, a first official meeting of all the pupils and teachers associated with PAK-BW took place in Ochsenhausen, a small town in Upper Swabia, South Germany. Over 40 double bass players were present at the event, which culminated in a group performance of the *Prager Polka*, led by Professor Günter Klaus of Frankfurt am Main University of Music. Choi and PAK-BW would like this meeting to act as the first stage in a broader programme of events, but sponsorship is their next major challenge. Financial matters aside, the innovative methods of teaching in Baden-Württemberg are also beginning to have an effect elsewhere. PAK-BW has received enquiries from several other areas of Germany and international renown is also spreading with events by visitors such as Cathy



Elliot from the UK, who is due to present to the group on the *Essential String Method* in May.

More importantly, these initiatives are having a positive effect on the image of the double bass as an instrument for young players. 'Once childrens' enthusiasm for the instrument has been sparked, they will want to persevere,' Choi observes. 'These classes are taking the bass out of its dusty corner.' **DB**

*For further information visit:*

[www.jms-allgaeu.de](http://www.jms-allgaeu.de)

Contact for PAK-BW: Song Choi, email: [choipakbw@yahoo.de](mailto:choipakbw@yahoo.de)

Photography by Roland Rassemann

