

Sustaining Notes

The Newsletter for Symphonie Jeunesse Youth Orchestra for Strings

Vol. 2
No. 5
May 3,
2021

SJO News

We are getting closer and closer to "normal". We hope, for those who are interested, that student orchestra members ages 16 and older take advantage of obtaining a COVID-19 vaccine. With vaccinations, we can worry less and work together more when we do convene again. As of now, it looks like this summer will be our likely reunion, so just a little longer!

For this month, we wish to acknowledge Cinco de Mayo, Mother's Day and the birthdays of Austin T. on 5/14, Jayden C. on 5/16, Gabriel H. on 5/22, and Lauren D. on 5/31. Happy birthdays!

Vivo Vocabulary

A piacere (It.) ~ indication for the performer to play according to his/her own pleasure, especially with regard to tempo and rubato.

Adagietto (It.) ~ a tempo a bit faster than Adagio; a brief composition in a slow tempo.

Elegy ~ a piece of music with a mournful quality; a lament.

Articulation ~ the characteristics of attack and decay of single tones or groups of tones.

Segue ~ indication to the performer to proceed to the following movement or section without a break.

Atonality ~ the absence of tonality; absence of key or tonal center.

Where Are They Now?

SJO Alumni Update *Marisol Zarate, Violin*

I joined Symphonie Jeunesse in 2011 as a member of the violin section. During my time there, I really enjoyed SJO's supportive nature and the opportunities to challenge oneself. After high school, I was accepted to Stanford University on full scholarship to study Urban Studies and Political Science. I was drawn to the issues of urban poverty and policing affecting big cities like my hometown and grew interested in becoming a lawyer and researcher. Meanwhile, I also continued pursuing music through the Mariachi Cardenal de Stanford.

Currently, I am a paralegal with the Washington Lawyers Committee for Civil Rights and Urban Affairs. As a paralegal, I work with individuals who have experienced police misconduct or discrimination in education.

These experiences have continued to solidify my interest in criminal legal reform. This fall I will continue my education by pursuing a PhD in Sociology at Stanford, studying issues of urban poverty, policing, race and inequality. I hope to earn a JD/PhD to become a lawyer and professor in criminal law.

My advice: Any note you play on a string instrument rings naturally louder when it is in tune. Like any note you play, remember to focus on the spaces and people who make you happy, because when you are "in tune" you will naturally feel your own voice and sense of self be amplified, seen, and uplifted without effort.

> Accent On

Symphonie Jeunesse

As we get closer to making music together again, I want to make "Accent On," about the orchestra. Many of you may know the beginnings of such an endeavor, but I wanted to include some details as well as to thank some of the outstanding early supporters of my idea to start an orchestra for the youth of our community.

In 2007, I became very interested in the El Sistema music program for the children of Venezuela. I learned about it, listened to lectures, watched programs, read about it, and immersed myself in everything I could find on their youth orchestral program at the time, fourteen years ago. My favorite story was that of a little boy, about 9 years old who loved his cello so much that he could not go to sleep at night in his bed without his little cello lying beside him.

One evening at a board meeting of the Redlands Chamber Music Society, (of which I was a founding member), I spoke with CSUSB professor Dr. Ernie Garcia, (also a founding member), about my idea to form a youth orchestra for strings in San Bernardino. He asked me to write a proposal, including a start-up estimate of expense. He asked me to present my idea to the board of the San Bernardino Valley Concert Association, which I did a couple of weeks later. Shortly following the presentation of my proposal, the SBVCA awarded me a grant of six thousand dollars under a generous bequeathment from concertgoer, Mr. Frank Plash, to purchase music and music stands

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and to start the orchestra. To honor Mr. Plash's memory, the motto we created for the orchestra would be **Preserving Live Arts Symphonic Heritage.**

One of the many questions the board had for me was "Where will you hold rehearsals?" Since that was not yet determined, they asked for a conference of their board, and low-and-behold, the SBVCA Board and First Presbyterian Church of San Bernardino invited us in to share space with them and to fill the halls with beautiful music. In the meantime, I also spoke with then San Bernardino Mayor Patrick Morris about my idea and he whole-heartedly supported it and encouraged me to go forward with it, having his full endorsement. So, with that, I established our youth orchestra. I'll admit that then, at age 53, this was daunting for me. Though I had been teaching instrumental string music for 20+ years, I hadn't worked with teenagers and all I could think of was, what if they don't like me? One of the first things I thought of was that teenagers need to sleep in on Saturdays so why don't we start rehearsals beginning at 11:30 a.m.?

I also needed to come up with an original name for the group (Youth Orchestra was too bland) so I decided to go back to my roots and give it an authentic name. Voila! Symphonie (French spelling for Symphony) Jeunesse (French word for youth) was born! Thank you, Dr. Garcia, Mayor Patrick Morris, the board of the San Bernardino Valley Concert Association, Frank Plash Endowment, and First

Presbyterian Church of San Bernardino, Pastor Sandy Tice for your support of my work in music with the young musicians of our community!

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## Mrs. T.'s Listening List

This month, I would like to express my thanks to Mrs. Naomi Myerchin, Symphonie Jeunesse Board President who has been the layout artist and editor for all of the SJO Newsletters. One of her favorite pieces of music is Symphony No. 6, in F Major, op. 68 "Pastoral Symphony" by Ludwig van Beethoven, (1770-1827). To honor and thank her for helping me produce our newsletters, I would like you to listen to a recording of the Beethoven Sixth Symphony in this month of May.

Beethoven was an ardent lover of nature and frequently left the city of Vienna for rural countryside. Beethoven's first sketches for the sixth symphony appeared in 1802. It was composed simultaneously with the Fifth Symphony during the years 1804-1808. The Pastoral Symphony has five movements instead of the traditional four. Each movement contains a programmatic title:

1. Awakening of cheerful feelings on arrival in the countryside
2. Scene by the brook
3. Merry gathering of country folk
4. Thunder, Storm Shepherd's song.
5. Cheerful and thankful feelings after the storm

Beethoven's completion of the composition was in 1808 and both the Fifth and Sixth Symphonies

premiered on December 22, 1808 at the Theater an der Wien, Vienna.

The first movement begins with placid, cheerful sounds depicting the composer's feelings as he arrives in the country. Repetitions of very short motifs perhaps indicate infinite patterns in nature.

In the second movement, listen to the woodwind instruments imitating bird calls: nightingale (flute), quail (oboe), and cuckoo (2 clarinets).

The third movement, a scherzo in 3/4 time depicts the country folk dancing and reveling. The third movement goes straight into the fourth movement. (Segue).

Movement four is the depiction of a violent thunderstorm including the representation of raindrops, thunder, lightning, high winds and sheets of rain. The storm eventually subsides with a seamless transition into the final movement. (Segue).

The final movement in 6/8 time represents the shepherds' song of thanksgiving.

Passages from the Sixth Symphony can be heard in the following films: Fantasia (1940), The White Seal (1986) and "Immortal Beloved" (1994).

Enjoy listening to the Symphony No. 6, in F Major, op. 68, "Pastoral Symphony."

## ~ Coda ~

**Great works are performed not by strength but by perseverance.**

Samuel Johnson