

# Sustaining Notes

The Newsletter for Symphonie Jeunesse Youth Orchestra for Strings

Vol. 2  
No. 7  
July 5,  
2021

## SJO News

We hope everyone is enjoying the 4th of July weekend! We cannot yet disclose specifics, but we are reuniting this summer. SJO will launch Season 13 with a registration event as soon as we are cleared to do so. Please watch this space! And, if you know of any serious string players (ages 12 to 22) who would be interested in joining SJO, please have them contact Mrs. Tacchia at (951) 203-0759 or email her at [mbernardel@gmail.com](mailto:mbernardel@gmail.com).

SJO wishes to acknowledge our omission of honoring Juneteenth in our last issue. Along with Independence Day, these holidays commemorate both freedom and the advancement of human rights. This July we also celebrate the birthdays of Mrs. Myerchin on the 9th, Alejandro D. on the 25th, and Chani G. on the 26th.

In this publication of Sustaining Notes, we continue catching up with some of our very special alumni. We hope you enjoy reading about them. Happy Summer, everyone!

## Vivo Vocabulary

**Alla** ~ (It.) in the manner, style of.

**A capella** ~ (It.) without musical accompaniment.

**Allegro con spirito** ~ (It.) lively, with spirit.

**Descant** ~ a decorative musical accompaniment (often improvised) added above a basic melody.

**Leading tone** ~ seventh note of the diatonic scale.

## **Mrs. T.'s Listening List**

A wonderful cellist friend of mine was inspired to produce a musical project as a gift to frontline workers during the pandemic year. The video of her project can be seen on YouTube. The site is: Cello Mania "A Salute to the Frontline Workers".

The video is conducted by cellist, Arlette Cardenes, whom some of you may remember as a cello coach at an SJO Workshop a few years ago. I would like you to listen/watch her musical tribute to medical personnel

who gave so much of themselves to helping comfort and save people during a very difficult pandemic year.

The cellists in the video as well as the conductor gave their time freely to make this project. Please take some time to hear them. Thank you.

## Where Are They Now?

*Featuring Four Former SJO Members*

### **Miranda Stuart, Viola**

Hi everyone! I played viola with SJO seasons 2 through 7. I can't believe it's already been six years since leaving and I miss everyone so much! After graduating from Cajon High School in 2015, I became a first-generation college student at the University of Santa Cruz, California (Go Banana Slugs!) Don't worry if you are thinking about college but you don't know what you want to study. I changed my major over five times and still graduated within four years! I ended up falling in love with Sociology and I minored in Latin American and Latino Studies. At school I worked as a Residential Assistant for students living on campus and at the Orientation Office where I spent summers welcoming new students.

I also co-founded UCSC's first ever poetry collective for students of color, Poetically PoC. I really recommend checking out clubs and activities at university or even locally, there's bound to be something that fits your interests perfectly. Since graduating, I've been in pursuit of securing a job as an academic advisor in higher education. My most recent life update is that I'm moving to Arizona this July with my wonderful partner! In the meantime, I still pick up my viola whenever I start to reminisce about Circinus or Carpe Diem. I'm also trying to learn the electric bass, so if anyone has any tips, let me know.

If I can give any advice, it would be to really cherish the time you have with Mrs. Tacchia and SJO to play music. Life can get hectic and time can get away from you, but music can help ground you and give you genuine time to care for yourself and your art. If you have any questions about school or music or just want to catch up, feel free to message me at (909) 963-6672.

### **Natasha Ann Mariano, Violin**

I played violin during my several years in Symphonie Jeunesse beginning Season 2. Recently, I was given the opportunity to become an NIH PREP Scholar at University of California, Davis (UCD) and am starting my program by the time this newsletter is released. I am excited to be doing genomic research on human specific neurodevelopmental diseases while also building upon my skills as a geneticist and data scientist.

I received my Bachelor's in Genetics and Genomics in the spring of 2019 at UCD. After my undergraduate career, I was a full-time lab technician and volunteered as a bioinformatics intern at the same institution. This gave me laboratory experience, exposure to the biological applications of programming, and allowed me to build relations with my peers.

Ultimately, it made me realize my interest in programming and fortified my passion for genomic research. Soon I hope to pursue a PhD in the field of genomics and bioinformatics, which combines my interest in computer science and biology.

My advice: Explore your passions and surround yourself with people who encourage your goals and dreams. My experience with Symphonie Jeunesse, college, and my research labs have been instrumental to my growth. They have given me lifelong friends and supportive mentors, and I sincerely wish you get to have similar enriching experiences during your years in SJO and beyond.

### **Lily Voon, Violin**

Hi, SJO members of 2021! I am a proud former student of Mrs. Tacchia. After auditioning and attending the very first rehearsal, I knew this was going to be a safe space for me and others like me who needed an outlet to just be and to feel - and it was. Under the direction of Mrs. "T", I could leave my worries aside and just play my violin.

I was a member of SJO for three short years from 2008 until 2010 when I graduated from San

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Gorgonio High School. I went to UC San Diego and received my degree in Interdisciplinary & the Arts with a minor in music. From there, I took an interest in the recording arts, live mixing, and sound designing for local theatres. In 2014, the SJO members took a field trip down to San Diego to do a recording session with me. It was such an amazing experience, and it was wonderful to see how much the youth orchestra has grown since I first started. I enjoyed working with audio and seeing firsthand how sound can bring out so many emotions in people. I eventually became an assistant supervisor for an amusement park in entertainment for show operators.

At 30 years old, I decided to make another life change when COVID-19 left many people in the entertainment industry without a job. As a person who also loves being outside with nature, I wanted to one day work with sustainable and renewable energy. Therefore, I decided I wanted to be an electrician. In March 2021, I got accepted to a 5-year apprenticeship program to be an Inside Wireman. I am very blessed for the opportunity and to have the health and ability to keep learning new things every day.

My advice to my younger self (and even now) is to try to always be present; be nice to yourself and it is okay to take a mental break from the things you love to do, because they will always be there when you're ready. Find the beauty in the little things and inspire yourself daily. Thank you for your time in reading a little bit about me!

## **Thandiwe Sukuta, Violin**

I was a part of SJO from 2011-2014. I played violin, and occasionally piano. The lessons I learned being a part of such an incredible community are invaluable. Not only did we learn exciting music from the film soundtracks of "Brave" or "Jurassic Park," but we also learned how to be a team player. We learned how to blend sounds, when to play a little softer so a melodic line could come out in the cello section, and how fun it is to cheer on the different soloists. We became a family.

Music is one of the few rare things that connects everyone in this world. No matter what language you speak, what corner

of the earth you're from, you understand music. The way music can spark joy, the way music can convey sadness or pain, the way music marks a celebratory moment in someone's life, it reminds us to not take ourselves so seriously, and to enjoy the unspoken beauty around us. Eighth notes and sixteenth notes buzzing in the air, rhythmic drums beating in our chests and echoing in our hearts are all part of the unspoken beauty we have the privilege to enjoy. That beauty is something that I gained during my time in SJO, and it's completely irreplaceable.

I was fortunate to have had a music scholarship and graduated from University of Redlands in 2019 with my degree in Piano Performance and Education. I had a passion for music that I wanted to continue in college, and I also found a passion for teaching that fulfilled my soul. I started teaching piano, I began playing piano for the university youth choir, for local high school choirs and for church choirs. During my last semester of college, I had to leave school for an intensive back surgery and had titanium rods put in my back. I was on bed rest for a year healing before I came back to graduate. During that time, I reflected on what I want to do with my life and what impact I want to make in this world. When I realized how much I love working with kids, I decided I wanted to open a Montessori school. I went to work at a Montessori school after graduating college, and I fell in love with the culture.

Today, I'm working at a marketing firm learning business tactics that I'll need to open a successful school. I still play my violin and the piano because it'll be a part of me forever. The beauty of coming from a background like SJO prepared me for different obstacles I would face in life. Most importantly, it gave me my passion for community building, and my love for creativity.

I'd like to leave you with some advice: once you've played in the wonderful SJO, you'll forever be changed for the better. Enjoy every single moment in the orchestra and soak up as much knowledge as you can. Be grateful

for the people around you - family, friends and mentors. Reach out and ask for help if you want to learn more from those around you. The tremendous amount of love, respect and admiration that I have for Mrs. T. lives on in me, because she helped spark my love for community and music.

No matter what you want to do in this world, SJO has given you an invisible badge of honor that you'll carry with you for the rest of your life, and it'll remind you that you can be anything you set your mind to if you find your love and passion for it.

## **Accent On Former Students**

I love that each of you as young girls played in SJO at the same time. Lily, you were a foundation member when the orchestra was small ~ only 12 members. By Season 2, Miranda and Natasha, you had joined us and by Season 3, Thandiwe, (pronounced Tawn-du-way) you were on board.

Miranda, I think you were playing on a 13-inch viola because you were so young. You mentioned "Circinus" and "Carpe Diem" and for those of you who were not there, those were two of our absolute favorite pieces! Lily, you forgot to mention that you wrote a wonderful composition for SJO which we played and recorded at your university's recording studio when you invited us. I think the title was "SJO." Natasha Ann, you studied hard and practiced violin a lot and it was such a delight to see you at weekly rehearsals. Thandiwe, I always loved when Mr. Tacchia moved over on the piano bench and invited you to put your violin down to come and play some of the piano parts.

I hold such special memories with each of you and for that, I thank you. I wish the four of you all the best! Please stay in touch with us and thank you for allowing us to feature you! ~ Mrs. Tacchia

## **~ Coda ~**

**"And so with the sunshine and the great bursts of leaves growing on the trees, just as things grow in fast movies, I had that familiar conviction that life was beginning over again with the summer."**

~ F. Scott Fitzgerald,  
*The Great Gatsby, 1925*