



The Topeka Symphony Society
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Possible address change?
Don't forget to let us know!

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PLAYER PORTRAITS
SPECIAL EDITION



Music for Northeast Kansas

Volume 49, Issue 4

Topeka Symphony Orchestra

John Wesley Strickler, Ph.D., Music Director and Conductor

March 2008

Music in Motion
2007-2008

All concerts in White Concert Hall

**FINAL TWO CONCERTS
OF THE SEASON!**

"I Love a Parade"

March 8, 2008-8pm

Discovery III

featuring

2008 Youth Talent Winner

Michelle Kim, Violin

"Molto Appassionata"

April 12, 2008-8pm

Masterworks IV

Kyung Eun Kim, Piano

You are reading the sixth and final issue of "Player Portraits". We hope that you have enjoyed reading about the musicians of your Topeka Symphony Orchestra in these thumbnail sketches and that you have learned how diverse we are as a group. From professional folks to retired laymen, the TSO is made up of people who have come together for one purpose and that is to make music!

In these "Player Portrait" Special Editions, we have introduced you to over 80 musicians and covered 1200 years of experience with the TSO. Special thanks to Dave Azwell and Molly Wisman for taking us on this journey. We will continue to highlight new orchestra members in our regular issues of Allegro!

Under the direction of TSO conductors Everett Fetter, Jack Herriman, and current Maestro John Strickler, we've grown into a musical entity that presents great music to you and all of Northeast Kansas. We hope that you have enjoyed these brief glimpses into the lives of the TSO and will continue to support the efforts of our organization.

**Celebrate 50 years of the
Topeka Symphony Youth Orchestra**

1957—2007

Youth Ensembles Concert

Sunday, March 9 — 2 pm

White Concert Hall

Were you in the Topeka Symphony Youth Orchestra?
We would love to hear from you before the concert on March 9!
Contact the TSO office: 785-232-2032 or tso@topekasymphony.org

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BE THERE APRIL 12!

Don't miss the last Pre-Concert Symphony Supper for 2007-2008

(Buffet open from 5:30 pm—6:30 pm)

and

The Maestro's Concert Preview "Words on Music"

ALSO

Be the first to hear about and sign up for the 2008-2009 TSO Season!

Contact us at: 785-232-2032 or tso@topekasymphony.org



This is **Julie** Stroud's first season with the Topeka Symphony, but she's a veteran player having performed in the Chattanooga Symphony and Opera and the Paducah (Kentucky) Symphony. Born in Des Moines, Julie took up the violin in 1975. She went on to earn her Bachelor of Music degree from the University of Tennessee at Chattanooga. Julie continued her musical training as she earned her M.A. in **violin** performance from Northern Iowa University. She has worked as a private teacher and a Suzuki specialist for 14 years. Julie started a webcam-based violin studio called **Violinnovation.net** which provides an alternative to the conventional way of offering violin lessons! Julie is married to Patrick and has a toddler, Eric and a cat, Purrsilla. Julie likes going to classic rock/blues concerts, gardening, cooking and playing informal chamber music.

Principal trombonist, **Neal C.** Purvis, has been a member of the Topeka Symphony (except for a couple of seasons) since 1988. Neal grew up in Lawrence where he was exposed to classical music at an early age by his father and has studied the **trombone** since the eighth grade. With a Bachelor's degree in Music Education from Kansas University in 1984, Neal went on to obtain a Master's of Music in Trombone Performance from North Texas State in 1986. This led to a teaching career as **band director** at USD 450 Shawnee Heights, since 1987. Neal and his wife enjoy attending professional orchestra concerts around the country including the New York Philharmonic, St. Louis Symphony, the Chicago Symphony and many others.

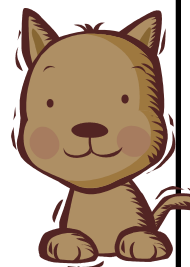
Almost half of TSO musicians were in a youth orchestra

At age 21, **Sarah** McQuere is a bright new addition to the first **violin** section of the Topeka Symphony. Born in Waco, Texas where she resided for eight years, Sarah then moved to Ypsilanti, Michigan for another eight year stay. Topeka has been her home since 2002 where she has been a violin performance major at Washburn University studying under TSO concertmaster, Dr. Larisa Elisha. Having studied the violin since the first grade, Sarah also is pursuing a minor in voice at WU where she sang the part of Cherebino in Washburn's production of "The Marriage of Figaro". Sarah won the string division of the Topeka Symphony **Youth Talent** Competition as a high school senior in 2004. In 2006, Sarah won the Washburn Concerto Competition. As a Washburn Senior, Sarah is in her second year with the TSO and is a member of the Washburn Fetter Honors String Quartet, Washburn Symphony and Washburn String Orchestra. When she has time, she likes to cook!

Starting out with the Suzuki method, **Mary Kay** Moore has been playing the violin since the first grade. She is a member of the TSO's second **violin** section and has played with the orchestra for about 25 years. She took a few breaks to have two children and finish her Bachelor of Science degree from Friends University. Mary Kay currently is employed at Wachovia Securities as a Senior Registered Account Administrator and has been there for 12 years. Married for 14 years, there are three beautiful granddaughters in her life and she regularly spoils them. The new addition to the family is Sophie, a miniature dachshund, who is "**spoiled rotten**". Mary Kay also enjoys gardening and boating on their pontoon boat.

Pet Portrait?

It seems the TSO has inspired the naming of a black Havanese male puppy according to audience member Doyle Comfort. Doyle tells us that in April 2007, he and his wife adopted the little puppy from a rescue shelter. At about the same time they attended John Strickler's pre-concert talk about **Dmitri** Shostakovich; how he had persevered under the oppressive Stalinist regime and was persona non grata at least twice in his life time. Doyle explains, "the Havanese breed was apparently persona (or Canis) non grata in Soviet dominated Cuba because only a handful escaped Cuba to the US in the early 1960's with their middle class owners. This 'handful' was subsequently interbred with **Havanese** that had traveled to Europe in the 1800's with upper class Europeans (Queen Victoria and Charles Dickens were reportedly fans of this lively little dog.)" He continues, "when we were trying to think of the perfect name for our new little boy...it hit us that naming him after this intrepid Soviet composer was an appropriate tribute to Shostakovich and was the perfect name for our own little '**survivor**'. And we owe that bit of inspiration to our excellent Topeka Symphony and its conductor, John Strickler."



Shannon Coffman is in her third season with the TSO's first violin section. She has been playing **violin** for over 10 years. She is a graduate of Shawnee Heights High School where she played in the orchestra under the direction of TSO cellist, Martha Barnhill. Shannon currently studies with TSO concertmaster, Dr. Larisa Elisha, and has taught some private lessons since she was a junior in high school. Shannon is a senior at Washburn University with plans to graduate this year with a Bachelor's degree in Music Performance. Shannon enjoys reading, playing computer games and walking on **nature trails**. Shannon plans to pursue a Master's degree in Music Therapy.

Having started in the public schools in Shawnee Mission, **Cori** Simmons has played the **viola** since the fourth grade. She joined the Topeka Symphony in the 2003-04 season and enjoys playing in the Symphony. Cori recently earned her Bachelor's degree in Music Education from the University of Kansas and is currently teaching **Elementary Strings** in the Kansas City, Kansas school district. In addition to the TSO, she has performed with the KU Symphony Orchestra and the Lawrence Chamber Orchestra over the past 6 years.

She's a native Hoosier from Indiana, but by high school **Tracy** Teague Tugman had lived in six states and Tokyo! Since 1991, Tracy has been a member of the TSO cello section and is the current lower strings representative. She originally studied the flute and piccolo in high school, but as a junior, she began playing the **cello**. Tracy is a graduate of Northern Colorado University at Greeley where she obtained a BA in Textiles and a minor in music. Following graduation, she has held a variety of creative jobs including being a mom (two "**amazing**" kids), theatre costume designer, custom dressmaker/tailor, private music teacher and for the last nine years she's been in the art gallery and framing business. Tracy has traveled most of the U.S. and 13 countries.

In 1969, **Molly** Wisman came to Washburn University from Wichita to study with Dr. Everett Fetter as a Freshman Music Major. She was awarded a Topeka Symphony scholarship and has been playing in the TSO First **Violin** section ever since. (You can do the math!) After receiving her degree in Music Performance, she worked at the Topeka Arts Council and then at the Kansas Arts Commission as a member of the ACACK (Association of Community Arts Councils of Kansas) staff. In addition to teaching and performing with the TSO, Molly has been a member of many chamber music groups and performed at a governor's inaugural and for First Lady Laura Bush. One of her most unusual "gigs" was performing in a string quartet at a poker game. Molly was Research Project Coordinator at The Menninger Clinic for 16 years and currently is Office Administrator in our own TSO office. Molly loves to travel and is very proud of her collection of **water bottles** from over 40 countries. Molly has two children, Sam who is a professional musician in the Kansas City area and Mindi who is a Social Worker in New Hampshire. Her husband Alan is co-owner of Einsteins Outdoor Outfitters and can frequently be seen helping out front at concerts and behind the scene in the office.

A Wichita native, **Nikki** Taylor started the viola in the Wichita school system in 1995 and has been playing ever since. Having played in many city and regional orchestras, Nikki earned the principal position in the All-State Orchestra her senior year. This is Nikki's first year in the TSO as a member of the viola section and says it has been a great experience! She's hoping to

play again next season. Nikki has studied **viola** at KU for four years with Peter Chun and will graduate in May with a BA in Music with a viola emphasis. Nikki plays in the Trio Lassu as well as with a string quartet that frequently performs in the Lawrence and Kansas City area. She also teaches private lessons. Nikki loves being outdoors and traveling. Music festivals occupy her time during the summers along with chamber music reading parties and she's into **hula hooping!**

This Allegro! represents 113 years of TSO participation

This is her first season with the Topeka Symphony, but **Kimberly** Marlin is no stranger to playing the violin or performing in orchestras (the Lincoln Symphony). A native of Omaha, Nebraska, Kimberly has studied the violin since age nine. Kimberly has earned three degrees during her education years. She has a Bachelor of Music from Drake University in **violin** performance; a Bachelor of Arts in Graphic Design from Drake and a Masters in Public Administration from the University of Hawaii. Currently a consultant for Southern Living at Home, Kimberly has been a graphic designer in Omaha, a Public Relations Director for Duchesne Academy in Omaha, a Public Policy Analyst for the City and County of Honolulu and a Musikgarten teacher in Honolulu. Married and a mother of a 2 1/2 year old daughter, Julia, Dr. and Mrs. Marlin are **expecting** their second child on July 1. Kimberly's hobbies include graphic design and soccer.

Visit www.topekasymphony.org "Library" for a complete set of Player Portraits
or
Contact Molly at 785-232-2032 or tso@topekasymphony.org for a set (While supplies last)