

Meet the Orchestra

As a community orchestra, our members come from all walks of life, and have a wide variety of skills and interests. So that we can share this fascinating diversity with you, we've asked our members to tell a bit about themselves.

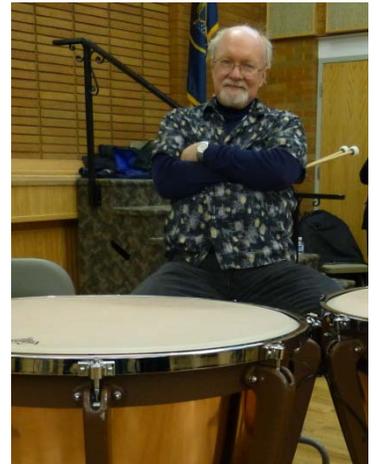
Marian Florence, violin. I began my violin studies at the age of 4, caving to the peer pressure of all my friends at the Japanese pre-school I attended in Berkeley, CA. At age 12, I spent a year at St. Mary's Music School in Edinburgh, Scotland then continued my violin studies through high school. In college, I majored in Middle Eastern Studies but spent many hours a week playing in chamber groups, pit orchestras for musicals and plays, experimental music ensembles, and the Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra, with whom I toured Europe for a summer.



After college, I was a Fulbright scholar in Syria where I gave concerts in Damascus and also in Amman, Jordan, leaving my formal Fulbright proposal to study Arabic nationalist literature behind in order to play music with my Syrian friends. I returned from the Middle East to work in Washington, DC and Philadelphia, PA as a foreign agent for the Government of Dubai. My job was to promote commerce and tourism, so I got to show people around the Free Trade Zone and take them on camels to "ski" the sand dunes. I did not advise Tom Cruise to jump off the tallest hotel. I hit the glass ceiling there, went to work for an art school in Philadelphia and married my favorite artist, Nathan Florence.

We moved together to Scotland and Italy for a year so that Nathan could paint, then returned in 2001 to Salt Lake City where I managed Olympic Family accreditation for the 2002 Olympics. I arranged access for local and international VIPs, including the International Olympic Committee (IOC), the International Sports Federations, the Bush White House, Rocky Anderson's city government, etc. I recognized Kristi Yamaguchi and the Bare Naked Ladies when they came for their access passes, but did not recognize Bill Johnson (to my husband's chagrin). Ten years later, I am happily ensconced in Salt Lake City with a house and two kids. I help to manage Alianza Academy (a new charter school in Magna and West Valley City), teach Arabic privately, and play violin whenever I can.

Ken Breinholt, timpani/percussion. I grew up in a musical family. My father was a big band leader in the 30s and 40s and my mother was a singer. They made sure that I was exposed to music at a very early age. They would turn on a classical radio station for me to listen to when they tucked me in to bed and also made sure that I got a healthy dose of live music. Thus began my lifelong addiction to music. After a few vain attempts at playing piano, my father brought home a clarinet when I was 8 years old. I played clarinet till braces came along. That's when I moved to drums. I played timpani and percussion from jr. high through college. I had the opportunity to perform alongside my father with the Westminster Symphony under Kenneth Kuchler, and also in a summer orchestra at the University of Utah under Harold Wolf, the concertmaster of the Utah Symphony. I was a legacy jazz major at the University of Utah. I started playing professionally when I was 16 years old and made a fairly good living around Salt Lake playing Jazz and Rock n' Roll in clubs. I moved to Chicago where I played anything I could to make a living. I played in jazz groups, show bands, toured with a country band, played in the house band at the Playboy Club in Chicago, and did a modest amount of studio work. Some of my fondest memories are playing with Howard Levy, Steve Goodman and Jethro Burns, and playing with Ike Cole. I returned to Salt Lake in 1985 and joined Salt Lake Symphony in 1987. Having not played in an orchestra for 20 years, I had forgotten what a thrill it is. Performing with Salt Lake Symphony has been one of the highlights of my life. I've been with them for so long that they are starting to feel like family. I have also performed with Utah Symphony and Sandy Symphony. Even though I don't make my living making music, I still play a few jazz gigs.



My other interests in life are cooking, hiking, reading, photography and spending way too many hours on line looking up whatever happens to cross my mind. I am currently semi-retired. I work half of the year selling Medicare insurance and the other half with my other pursuits and am looking for many fruitful years with Salt Lake Symphony.



Ryan Van Liere, bassoon. I began my music studies at the age of 12 while living in North Carolina. I started on the clarinet and was the only boy who played the instrument in my junior high. Therefore, I was ridiculed...such a cruel world. I was playing in my local community band when another member of the clarinet section mentioned that he also played the bassoon. I thought that instrument sounded cool and no one could possibly make fun of me for playing that, right? So in the summer before my 9th grade year, I came to Utah to visit my father who gave me a job demolishing old office space in the Judge Building downtown. I saved up to buy my very own bassoon since the one at the school was dreadful. I returned to North Carolina, bought my first bassoon, and began taking lessons from Lori Tiberio of the Charlotte Symphony. By the time I was a sophomore I was principal bassoon of the Charlotte Symphony Youth Orchestra.

We moved to Utah when I was a junior in High School and my last two years of high school were spent taking lessons from Roger Hicks and playing in the Granite Youth Symphony, the American West Symphony, and last, but not least, second bassoon in the Salt Lake Symphony. I was a featured soloist with the Utah Symphony in their annual Salute to Youth concert conducted by Joseph Silverstein. I left Utah to pursue a Bachelor of Music Degree from the Eastman School of Music, then went to the Royal Scottish Academy of Music and Drama in Glasgow, Scotland where I received my Masters Degree. I rejoined the Salt Lake Symphony as principal bassoon for the 2010-11 season. I can also be found playing for Salt Lake's newest professional wind ensemble, the Utah Wind Symphony, the Maplewood Bassoon Quartet and the Wi-Five Wind Quintet. I also frequently perform in the orchestra for the Salt Lake Choral Artists, and am a substitute member for the Utah Symphony.

By day, I am a Systems Analyst for ADP in their Health and Welfare benefits department. I live in Midvale with my wife and soul mate Leza (we met because I overheard her saying she loved beer and Buffalo wings, and the rest is history) and our elderly Dalmatian mutt, Spike. In addition to music, I enjoy aviation and am currently training to receive my Private Pilot License. I hope to build my own Vans RV-9A or RV-10 someday (www.vansaircraft.com). I also like cooking, throwing parties, wine and scotch tasting, a good cigar, traveling (especially to Vegas several times per year), hiking, films, and I am an avid fan of strength training.



Richard Fox, cello. After beginning university studies with the help of a music scholarship at BYU, I served a two year LDS mission, married, changed majors, and completed pre-law and law school at the University of Utah. My professional career began as a solo law practitioner in a small town in Wyoming. An offer to become an Assistant Utah Attorney General lured me back to Utah. After representing the state of Utah, I joined the enforcement division of the U. S. Securities and Exchange Commission. An investment banking firm then recruited me to be house counsel in their municipal securities division. With the varied experience I had gained, I joined two other attorneys in private practice, forming a law firm in which I specialized in corporate and municipal law. In 1986, the public finance section of our law firm became the Utah office of a national firm, Ballard and Spahr. Other former partners later joined us to form additional sections in our local office.

As a bond attorney, I represented the Salt Lake Redevelopment Agency in a successful Utah Supreme Court case which was then used to finance many projects, including the restoration of the historic Capitol Theater. I also represented Salt Lake County in a challenge of a bond issue approved by the voters to finance the restoration of the City and County building. Our firm also represented the underwriter of the bonds which financed the restoration of the Columbus School, and we were involved with the legal work for many bond issues for the University of Utah. During my legal career I continued to play the cello, sometimes with some of our six children. But my work schedule did not allow me to perform with any group that rehearsed on weekday evenings.

After retiring, my wife and I served two years as directors of the LDS historic sites in upstate New York. On our return to Salt Lake in 2004, I joined the cello section of the Salt Lake Symphony and also became a member of its board of directors. It has been a pleasure to be a small part of a remarkable organization which, under the direction of an outstanding conductor, performs some of the greatest music ever composed, in addition to good music of living composers. It is pleasant to witness the enthusiastic appreciation of our audiences, young and old, when they attend our concerts. At a time when many symphony orchestras are experiencing difficult financial challenges it is reassuring to know that the Salt Lake Symphony is solvent and has sufficient support to survive well into the foreseeable future.