

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.

Mary Anne Peterson, violin. I grew up in Duluth, Minnesota, the granddaughter of Swede/Finn immigrants. My first memories of music were when I was two years old and our piano was being tuned. I surprised my parents by playing the same song the tuner had just played. I took piano lessons, and then in fourth grade I started to learn the violin. I studied with violist David Holland and violinist Diane Balko at the College of St. Scholastica in Duluth, then transferred to the University of Minnesota and studied with Richard Adams, graduating in Music Education. However, after going through student teaching, I realized I had absolutely no interest in becoming a teacher in the school system.

After a particularly frigid winter, my former husband and I decided we didn't want to live in Minnesota anymore. We visited Utah and I fell in love with the Wasatch Mountains. After moving here, my plan was to build up a private teaching studio. But nobody knew who I was, and it was hard to find private students. Needing a job, I started working in the shipping department of a clothing company. I hated the job. I rode my bike there most days, and one morning I got hit by a car and landed on my back. I had a whiplash injury and quit the job. I am now secretary/office manager at First United Methodist Church.

It took several years before I was able to play the violin long enough to think about joining an orchestra. I learned about the Salt Lake Symphony and auditioned in the fall of 1983. I am now principal second violin, and I also work behind the scenes as orchestra librarian. It's my job to make sure all the music on the program is given out to the orchestra members. So, I have delusions of grandeur – if it weren't for the work I do, you wouldn't be hearing anything tonight! I also teach private violin, viola and piano lessons, and teach string classes after school at Sandy Elementary School. I enjoy playing Swedish folk music at festivals. It has been a real connection with my heritage to play these songs, some of which I remember from my childhood.

Music has always been the focus of my life, not only music from voice and instruments, but also the music in nature – bird songs, sounds of wind and water. Spending time outdoors in solitude is a source of strength to me, and I recognize the importance of quiet in my life. I have created a quiet, green, peaceful retreat in my yard where I spend most of my time. I share my house with my many cats, and enjoy gardening, hiking, knitting, crochet, sewing, doing cross stitch, cooking, wine and liqueur making, and spending time with my son and daughter and my 2 granddaughters.



Geoff Stevens, trumpet. Born and raised in the far north-east of England, near Newcastle upon Tyne, my first love of the trumpet came as a child, playing old 78 rpm recordings of Harry James (relentlessly—according to my parents) on a "wind-up" gramophone player. It was some years later that I had the opportunity to learn an instrument. I took quite well to the trumpet, with the kind of enthusiasm reserved only for teenagers on a quest, and eventually studied with the late Bernard Brown at the Guildhall School of Music in London. I worked as a freelance trumpet player and teacher for many years, playing regularly in the UK, and occasionally in other parts of Europe, primarily with the Northern Sinfonia of England, and guest performing with regional and national groups (often as they sojourned in the wild and untamed north of England), including: Scottish Opera; Scottish Chamber Orchestra; Royal Ballet, London Festival Ballet; Royal Opera Company, English National Opera North, Royal Shakespeare Company, Oxford Pro Musica and others. I've had the honor of playing for a number of prestigious conductors including Sir Charles Groves, Sir Neville Marriner, Sir Richard Hickox, Sir Charles Mackerras, Rudolf Schwartz, Norman Delmar and Vernon Handley.

My musical activities have not always been so "classical". Nurturing a childhood exposure to jazz, I was a founding member of a Dixieland band in high school and my first professional work as a teenager was playing in dance bands at local night clubs—requiring me to join the British Musicians' Union at the tender age of seventeen. I taught brass instruments in a number of local schools as a "Peripatetic" teacher (it's from a Latin term meaning to "walk around" since one travelled from school to school to do this work), and conducted local area youth orchestras and concert bands in part of the same system from which I had received my first trumpet lessons. I finally realized that, to be really successful in this career, hard work was not enough—one had to also possess a modicum of talent! Thus, in 1991, after returning to school for a while, I retired from full-time trumpet playing, moved to the USA and took a "respectable" day job in the IT industry.

Not wishing to completely remove myself from the world of orchestral trumpet playing, in 1993 I received an invitation to play with the Salt Lake Symphony and they've been unable to get rid of me ever since!

Nancy Toone, flute/piccolo. I am a native of Utah, and a former President and long standing board member of the Utah Flute Association. I'm also a well known teacher, adjudicator and performer both in and out of the state, and have been a flute instructor at Weber State University, Utah State University, and BYU –Idaho.

I have a broad background in music performance, having been the flutist in musical theater productions at Promised Valley Playhouse, and the Salt Lake Repertory Theater, and for several years as a performer with the Renaissance Chamber Ensemble. I was a member of the former "Mormon Symphony", first as the piccolo player, and then spent my last 4 years there as the principle flutist. I was often featured as a soloist with that orchestra.

After leaving the Mormon Symphony, I joined the flute section of the Salt Lake Symphony where I am currently the Assistant Principal flutist. I have also been a sub for the Utah Symphony. I've freelanced for various recording studios, recording CDs, movies and videos and especially have enjoyed playing in the back up orchestra for country singer Michael Martin Murphy. (Who knew there was any other kind of music besides orchestral?)

I have maintained a large Suzuki Flute Studio for many years, teaching students from age 4 to 55. My students have won many competitions including the Utah State Fair, 2nd Place in the National MTNA Junior Woodwind Competition, Utah Flute Association Scholarship Competition, Concerto Night and the State UMTA Concerto Competitions. They have also often been selected to perform with the National Flute Association High School Flute Choir. I have taught regularly for the Intermountain Suzuki Institute, and the Desert Suzuki Institute in Las Vegas. I was asked to present a Pedagogy session and direct a Junior Master Class at the 2003 National Flute Association Convention held in Las Vegas, directed the Utah Youth Flute Choir at the NFA convention in Kansas City in 2008, and won the honor of being a Convention Performer, premiering 2 new works at the 2012 NFA Convention in Las Vegas.

I am married to Scott Toone, my number 1 supporter. Together we have 4 children, and reside in Centerville. In addition to music, I enjoy reading and traveling- usually having to do the first about the second!



Elizabeth Palmer, violin. As a child, my home was always full of music. One of my earliest, sweetest memories is listening to my father's rich baritone voice and my mother playing the piano. I began piano lessons at age 5, but couldn't resist the sounds of the violin! My parents gave in to my demands for lessons and the violin has been part of my life ever since. (And one can never be too grateful for parents who let their daughter practice till the wee hours of the morning, because she procrastinated by playing baseball with the neighbor boys all afternoon...) Teachers during these formative years included my sister, Jan Litster (also a SL Symphony violinist), Jack Ashton, and Dr. David Shand.

The violin has brought me in touch with many wonderful people, most importantly, my husband Dave. We met at the U of U, where we both graduated, then moved to Boston and Philadelphia for Dave's medical training, and where I was able to pursue violin studies with Aza Rayhksaum of the Boston Symphony and David Arben, Associate Concertmaster (retired) of the Philadelphia Orch. While living in Pennsylvania, I taught at Lebanon Valley College and performed many solo recitals in the Harrisburg, Philadelphia and Washington, D.C. areas.

This little violin of mine has also allowed me to solo with a number of orchestras, do lots of free-lance work, and substitute with the Utah Symphony. I was also a founding member of the C & B Chamber Players, who performed extensively throughout the East Coast. For the past 18 years I conducted the Cottonwood Heights Choir and Orchestra's production of Handel's "Messiah" - whew!

I've been privileged to play in the SL Symphony for 20 years - concertmaster for 18 years! And it's been a delight to be a founding member of the Orchestra at Temple Square and perform with my husband Dave, who sings in the Tabernacle Choir. We have 5 children and 5 grandchildren, a couple of whom have successful performing careers of their own. My claim to fame now is being able to sit in concert halls and opera theaters around the country and the world and listen to them perform! If you can't find me in the concert hall, I'll be outside digging in the dirt, as gardening is a favorite hobby of mine.