

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.

John Steiner, violin. : I have been exposed to serious music since I was born. Some of my earliest memories are of awakening early in the morning to the sound of piano lessons given by my mother; or one of my sisters practicing. My parents both sang with the Tabernacle Choir. During my first years of grade school I discovered an old violin played by my late grandfather, started taking lessons, and spent the next years mostly doing my favorite thing: practicing. I had a very excellent teacher, Art Peterson. The year I graduated from high school, he encouraged me to audition with the Utah Symphony as an educational experience. Unexpectedly, I won a position, but had important commitments that I had made. One was with the U.S. Army, and the other was to fill a mission for the LDS Church. Then I married my high school sweetheart, Patricia. I auditioned again and won a position with the Utah Symphony under Maurice Abravanel. Our first son was born while I was in Thessaloniki, Greece on tour. I didn't meet him until he was two weeks old. A few years later I finished my studies at the University of Utah in music and pre-dentistry, then went to the University of Oregon where I received a degree in Dentistry in 1971. Since then I practiced dentistry full time until my retirement in 2010.



I have played with many groups over the years, including orchestras, ballets, operas, and media, and I have had a lot of fun occasionally conducting. I have been a member of the Salt Lake Symphony since the nineteen-seventies and was honored to serve as Concertmaster for several years until 1994. It still continues to be my favorite avocation. I have a very active and happy family life with my wife Pat, five children and twenty-two grandchildren. Besides music I enjoy several hobbies including radio control aviation, trap shooting, exploring, gardening, and studying.



Louise Mathews, viola. I am a Philadelphia native, and greatly appreciate the cultural and historical heritage of my birthplace. I began piano lessons at 7, inspired by my mother who studied piano and voice, sang in amateur operettas, and was a faithful church choir member for over 70 years. Around the same age, I was fascinated by maps, inspired by a metal trashcan with a sort of Mercator projection of the world. I was the navigator on family trips; I never got lost. But I figured that since the whole world had been discovered, there was no more need for mapmakers.

In 8th grade, I wanted to play viola so that I could be in the school orchestra. Since my younger sister was playing my father's old violin, I initially I taught myself the basics. I then studied with Evelyn Jacobs and went on to earn a Bachelor's in Music Education from the Eastman School, studying with Francis Tursi. After teaching for a year, I returned to Philly, & studied with Evelyn, Max Aronoff, and Albert Filosa. Mr. Aronoff recommended me for a job in Bogotá, and I spent 4 years with the Orquesta Sinfonica de Colombia. This was a great opportunity to learn Spanish and live in another culture, while playing a new program every week, including a lot of opera.

I returned to the USA for grad school at the U of Iowa, studying with William Preucil Sr and playing in Cedar Rapids Symphony. I then was hired by the Knoxville (TN) Symphony, and stayed there for 12 years. The "core" orchestra played masterworks, chamber orchestra, pops, ballet, opera, and string quartet school concerts. After 9 years in the orchestra, I decided to make a career change and turned to maps; I went to the U of Tennessee to earn B.A. and M.S. degrees in geography, still playing in the orchestra. Interestingly, my graduate advisor was a good violinist who spent some time between degrees blowing up potential avalanches in Big Cottonwood Canyon, and playing with an orchestra in SLC. In 1995, I was hired by the USDA Aerial Photography Field Office in West Valley, where I am a cartographer/GIS Specialist. Our office administers the National Agriculture Imagery Program; you may have seen some of "our" imagery on Google Earth. (This is funded by tax money, and in the public domain.) The old metal trashcan now sits in my office, and I can see the world's countries as they were in the 1950s. I also earned a GIS certificate from the U in 2002 – the same year I was an Olympic volunteer. The Salt Lake Symphony allows me to continue playing great orchestral works with a conductor who has a very positive attitude about the music, the orchestra, and life in general.

Aside from music, I spend time swimming laps, cross country skiing, ice skating, playing Swedish fiddle music, reading, and knitting very badly. I devote a good deal of time to my practice of Nichiren Shoshu Buddhism. And I know that it's cold outside when I have a "three cat night," and my little feline friends take over the bed.



Kathie Clayton, viola. I can't remember a time when there wasn't classical music in our home. When I was a child, KWHO radio was on all the time. I loved the theme music used for some of the programming – *Meditation from Thais*, *Don Juan*, among others. My mother (Helen Clayton) was a former violinist with the Salt Lake Symphony, so it was natural for me to pick it up. I studied violin privately, but switched to viola when I was 18. I played in the Mormon Youth Symphony for eleven years. When Jay Welch started the Salt Lake Repertory Orchestra in the mid 70's I played in that orchestra. Eventually the group evolved into the Salt Lake Symphony and I was a member on and off for a number of years. I played with the Mormon Symphony for six years and now am permanently with the Salt Lake Symphony. I am a jack-of-all-trades, master of none. I play the violin, fiddle, viola,

mandolin and bowed psaltery. Though I never attended college, I was fortunate enough to rub shoulders with many great musicians. I met Shinichi Suzuki in 1968 in Pendleton, Oregon at a Suzuki workshop; and have played under the batons of both Howard Hanson and Yehudi Menuhin. I have been lucky enough to attend concerts over the years where there were such great masters as Arthur Rubenstein, Gina Bachauer, Mstislav Rostropovich, Gregor Piatigorsky, Isaac Stern, Yehudi Menuhin, and Jascha Heifetz, just to name a few.

In 1994 I was introduced to the world of fiddling and I love it! It was hard making the transition from sitting with music in front of me to playing by ear again. I won the Utah State Fiddle Contest in my division in 2006, and I've gone to the nationals in Weiser, Idaho three times. I have also judged numerous state and local fiddle contests. I have a friend in LaVerkin, Utah who, along with her husband, book-learned to make musical instruments – fiddles, mandolins, hammered dulcimers - and for Christmas (in February) she surprised me with a new viola! It had its world premier playing the Beethoven 9th Symphony in March of this year.

I have worked in law enforcement on the civilian side for the past twenty-three years. I spent twelve years as a secretary/transcriptionist in both the Juvenile and Detective divisions of the Salt Lake County Sheriff's Office. I currently work in the Salt Lake County Jail as a medical records technician. I've lived in Holladay for the past twenty-seven years. In my spare time I enjoy solving cryptograms and I love to read. I have two cats, Daisy and Onslow.

Craig McKennon, trumpet. I grew up about 30 miles north of Dallas, Texas on a farm where we had 15 cows and a horse. Mom used to call the cows in to eat by blowing an old bull's horn. My older brother and I would take turns blowing the horn to see if we could do it as well as Mom. My brother then took up the trumpet, and I would try to play his horn when he wasn't looking. I started taking trumpet lessons when I was 11. My dog used to howl when I would practice. My family then moved to Illinois where my band director also played the trumpet and introduced me once to Adolph (Bud) Herseth, Principal Trumpet in the Chicago Symphony. I had no idea how important he was in the symphony world or else I would have been much more nervous meeting him! My family moved back to Texas, and my brother and I started taking lessons from Mack Guderian, 2nd Trumpet in the Dallas Symphony. He was a real task master and would yell at my brother and me if he thought that we had not practiced enough that week. A couple of years later, I took lessons from Merlin Jenkins who was 1st trumpet in the Fort Worth Opera. He really taught me a lot about different styles of music, and how to transpose into different musical keys which is required in orchestral trumpet playing. While I was in high school I was a member of the Fort Worth Youth Orchestra which was a lot of fun. We toured Europe for a month one summer; this trip was a real eye opener for me coming from a small town in rural Texas.



I went to the University of Texas at Austin where I majored in Business Finance. While I was at UT, I was in the Longhorn Band where I made several dear friends with whom I still keep in touch. I am a member of the Longhorn Alumni Band and come back to Austin as often as I can to their annual reunion where they march at one of the football games. It is still a tremendous thrill to hear those drums start their cadence and to march into the UT stadium playing *Texas Fight* in front of 100,000 screaming fans! I've been in the Salt Lake Symphony since 1994 and thoroughly enjoy it. I can't imagine my life not being in the orchestra. I am very fortunate to play next to Geoff Stevens who is a conservatory trained trumpet player from England. I have learned a great deal sitting next to Geoff and have made a great friend in the process. My family and friends poke fun at me for being a "trumpet geek" who doesn't know much about popular music, but I can talk trumpet trivia for hours. I am very fortunate to have an understanding wife (Amy) and 4 kids (Erin, Kelbie, Kevin, and Scott) who do not complain too much when I practice. They only wish I would play fewer scales and more songs that actually have a melody!