

FOCUS ON EDUCATION

By Campbell MacDonald

Thank you for joining us for another issue of *Our Players' Voice*! In this edition, we highlight our roles as educators in our community, and our participation in hundreds of small ensemble performances at schools across Northeast Indiana each year.

Before joining the Fort Wayne Philharmonic, I had never performed for an elementary school audience. To say that I was nervous when I first stood in front of a gymnasium full of cross-legged youngsters is an understatement. In those initial performances, I would watch our colleague, bassoonist Dennis Fick, interact with listeners and answer questions. He always remained confident and comfortable in that setting.

I asked Dennis how he was able to bring such composure to these



The Musicians' Woodwind Quintet rocked the Plaza on August 11th!

performances, and he said, "This is most likely the first time that this audience has seen our instruments in person, and this is most likely the first concert of this kind that they have ever attended. This opportunity to present our gift of music to them is very special." Dennis' words helped to clear my mind, and

moved me to focus on creating a memorable and enjoyable experience for every young person in attendance at our performances. It is a great privilege for us to introduce our music to thousands of schoolchildren every year, and we look forward to doing so again as soon as possible.

FORT WAYNE STUDENTS IN SUPPORT OF MUSICIANS

By Diane Dickson

The Musicians of the Fort Wayne Philharmonic received an incredible outpouring of support from members of our community during the prolonged furlough this past year. From signing letters of support to joining them at informational pickets and attending the May

Day rally, it became clear that many people love and value our orchestra. The Philharmonic musicians are grateful for your support! They would also like to give a special thanks to a group of university music students who made an extraordinary effort to support them during this crisis.

Fort Wayne Students in Support of Musicians (FWSSM) was formed last spring by Purdue

University music students who were frustrated with the instability of the Philharmonic musicians' situation and the negative impact it could have on the community.

Andrew Prawat, a clarinet performance major, joined the group because he was upset with how the Philharmonic musicians were being treated. "It is hard enough to be a musician as it is, but to add the extra hurdle of

pulling the rug out from under the musicians and cutting their livelihood ...is a precedent that isn't acceptable," he said. "I wanted to make sure it wouldn't happen."

Jacob Forte, a trombone performance major, felt they "had a direct stake in the outcome of the situation. Since our Purdue professors are members of the Philharmonic, we were concerned our teachers would leave Fort Wayne," he said.

They sprang into action. Jacob said they had less than a month to organize before the semester ended, when people would "fall off the grid for our summer break." They appealed to members of other student organizations to bring together all of "the great people that cared so much about what was happening." A committee was formed to create a group independent from Purdue University. Fort Wayne Students in Support of Musicians was born!

The group intended to support the Philharmonic musicians financially. To that end, FWSSM started a GoFundMe campaign to raise funds. In a May Facebook posting the group stated, "In a time when it's popular for employers to take advantage of their hired musicians, the act of providing financial aid can help keep these artists thriving in our community...and ensuring that a musician in need is able to keep the lights on and put food on the table."

In addition to financial support, members of FWSSM joined the Philharmonic musicians with their informational pickets and

participated in the May Day Rally to Restore Music.

Like many of our supporters, members of FWSSM were glad the temporary agreement reached in May enabled the Philharmonic musicians to bring orchestral music back to our community. However, the future of concert performances and musicians' livelihoods after the agreement expires is still a concern.



Jacob Forte of Fort Wayne Students in Support of Musicians

Jacob wonders what goals the Philharmonic will embrace. He said, "It should be the main goal of the Philharmonic administration to get their performers out in the community as much as possible. They should prioritize their resources to support all aspects of orchestral performance and chamber music, making it as accessible to the community as possible. They need to involve as many members of the community as possible to help with this vision."

Andrew Prawat knows the one-year agreement reached in May expires in August of next year. He hopes the public will be aware of the issues at that negotiation. He fears the

Philharmonic management will want to cut concert performances and won't be willing to restore the length of the winter season. He stressed the importance of talking to friends and family members about supporting the musicians at that time. "Any bits of solidarity and awareness mean something," he said. "It all matters, and always counts for something. Even if you can't help the musicians financially, you can still spread the word."

In the meantime, the members of FWSSM have turned their energies toward a new project. Recognizing the importance of providing music performance opportunities to children who can't afford lessons, they have started a free lessons initiative called Fostering Future Musicians. You can learn more about it at the group's website, www.FWSSM.Wordpress.com, or contact them at FWSSM.organization@gmail.com. The group welcomes new members, and information about joining FWSSM can be found at www.facebook.com/FWSSM.

Their aspirations don't end there. Jacob, now the President of FWSSM, says they are considering the establishment of similar chapters in other parts of the country. He says they have heard from friends and colleagues outside of Fort Wayne and Indiana who saw what the group was doing and expressed interest in forming like-minded groups. "There is no way of predicting how this might look in the future," he said. "But one thing is certain, there are a great many students that recognize they have a larger stake in the success and security of their musical community than they may have realized." *(Continued on Page 5)*

CINDY GREIDER

Interviewed by Dessie Arnold

This month, I interviewed the Philharmonic's Second Clarinetist, Cindy Greider. Cindy has been a member of the Fort Wayne Philharmonic since 1987 and retired from the Phil just a few days ago. In addition to playing in the Phil, Cindy has been a teacher of students of all levels and ages – from very young children in the first Kindermusik program in Fort Wayne, through college students and adults at IPFW (now PFW) including annual Clarinet(/Flute) Day programs that are open to anyone in the community. I will let her tell her story.

As a young child, I had three LPs that I played over and over again. They were the narrated stories of *Cinderella* with the ballet music by Sergei Prokofiev, *Sleeping Beauty* with the ballet music by Pyotr I. Tchaikovsky, and *Hansel and Gretel* with the music by Engelbert Humperdinck. I was 3 or 4 at the time. Of course, I didn't realize until many years later that the music that went along with the childhood stories were famous musical masterpieces! These particular classical pieces hold a very special place in my heart.

I came from a somewhat musical family. My father played violin by ear even though he did not read music. My mother played an occasional hymn on the piano. All three of my older brothers played the trumpet in the Elmhurst band and jazz band. My eldest brother was Drum Major of the Elmhurst Trojan Marching

Band. Music was just a natural part of my home life.

My parents took me to a musical at the Scottish Rite Auditorium. I heard an instrument sound coming from the pit; and my dad said he thought it was a clarinet; (I actually think it was an oboe!) but that was how I became interested in the clarinet. Besides clarinet, I also studied piano and alto saxophone.

By the time I was a junior in high school, I had decided that I wanted to play Second Clarinet in the Fort Wayne Philharmonic Orchestra. That was my goal,



even when I was studying for my Master's Degree and Artist Diploma at The Cleveland Institute of Music. Luckily, the year I was finishing the Artist Diploma, there was a Second Clarinet audition in Fort Wayne! Ronald Ondrejka was the conductor at the time. Larry Passin was the Principal Clarinetist. I won the audition, and that is how I got the position. My mother told me she thought it would be a very "hard" life. In some ways, she was very wise.

Sitting next to an incredible Principal Clarinet player has

always been a great inspiration for me. (Larry Passin, Jim Sparrow, Jonathan Gunn, and Campbell MacDonald have all been Principal Clarinet players during Cindy's tenure with the Phil).

I work on music that I want to play all the time; however I will say that the year of COVID-19 was especially nice in that way. I ordered a lot of clarinet music that I had never seen before and spent many hours and days practicing and sight-reading.

The best part of performing is sharing my love of music with the audience. Also, I love being in the center of the orchestra and being surrounded by the various instrumental sounds. I like playing in small ensembles, chamber orchestra, and the full orchestra equally well. I actually have always really enjoyed the quintet educational shows for the children in the schools.

I asked Cindy what she does to unwind.

Well, I would say I don't really "unwind" much! But I love to take walks around a small lake that is near my home. I also enjoy reading and gardening. I always held other part-time jobs during orchestra seasons; so there was not much free time for hobbies.

I always have at least one dog, preferably two, as members of my family. As of yet, I have not had any dog that enjoyed staying in the room while I practiced! They always run out as soon as I pick the clarinet up! I don't even have to play a note.

During my off time, the classical music I listen to is mostly clarinet stuff, and of course, any music that we are preparing to play in the Phil. I love any music by Copland, Dvorak, and Elgar because there is often a tinge of common folk melodies in their style. I love to play Mahler and Shostakovich because the clarinet parts are fun, and the music is so meaningful.

Do you listen to music of other genres?

I love any music by John Denver! I listen to country music on the car radio. I also enjoy jazz and Southern Gospel!

I asked Cindy about the Kindermusik program:

I was the Co-founder and Director of Kindermusik of Fort Wayne from 1996 to 2009. Kindermusik is an International Music and Movement Program for children age newborn to six years with family involvement. As a musician, I feel that the program helps maintain a natural sense of steady beat in a young child, which helps them if they start playing an instrument later on. Most two- or three-year-old children are very attracted to music and, of course, movement! It is also fun to share music with the child and their parents, making it a musical family from the beginning!

I know that studies have shown that children who study music are mentally equipped to be better students in all subjects, including math and science. Do you know if this early training in

Kindermusik has been shown to be helpful to students later on in other subjects?

I am not sure about other subjects. I know that Kindermusik graduates and their families have a love for music that will be a lifetime enjoyment. As an example, one of my Kindermusik graduates always comes to Philharmonic Masterworks concerts with his father, and they sit in the front row of the balcony! The child loves music by Beethoven and Mussorgsky because he first heard the music in a Kindermusik class. I will miss waving to them from the stage.

Tell me about your Clarinet Day programs:

The very first Clarinet Day was with David Shifrin. He came to Fort Wayne to play the Mozart *Clarinet Concerto* with us. He was scheduled to give a masterclass on the afternoon of the dress rehearsal. There was a snow storm that day, so they cancelled his connecting flight from Detroit. He rented a car and drove through the snow in order to get to the university for the masterclass. He was a bit late, but we were all astounded that he arrived at all. The dress rehearsal at the Embassy was open to all of the clarinetists who attended the Clarinet Day. Shifrin's performance was amazing, and I got to visit with him at dinner after the show. It was very memorable for me.

The Clarinet Days evolved into Clarinet/Flute Days. One of the most memorable events was when Jennifer Gunn (piccolo in Chicago Symphony) and

Jonathan Gunn (Professor at Butler School of Music-The University of Texas at Austin), both former principal players in the Phil, came back to Fort Wayne together to give masterclasses and a joint recital. It was so good to see them both again and to hear how amazing they sound!

You were in the Phil for a long time - what was your favorite piece that you played with the Phil?

My absolute favorite piece is Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade*. I always enjoy playing the Second Clarinet part on that piece.

What is next for you now that you won't be playing in the Phil?

I have a certification as a Montessori Early Childhood Teacher. I plan to be a classroom teaching assistant at Southwest Montessori Academy. I just finished a weeklong Music and Art Camp at the school. It was great fun sharing music with young children once more. Also, in the back of my mind, is an idea brewing about starting an adult clarinet ensemble in the community. We'll see what happens.

Is there anything else that you would like to share?

I will forever be a part of the Fort Wayne Philharmonic; just on the other side of the stage! I am looking forward to hearing the music from a different perspective; in the audience! I love you all!

**LOCAL TEACHER
REFLECTS ON
MUSICIANS' SCHOOL
PROGRAMS**

Interviewed by Alexandra
Tsilibes

Nichole Matyas is the Music Teacher at Lafayette Meadows Elementary School in Southwest Allen County Schools. She holds a degree in Music Education from Bowling Green State University. In her 14 years of teaching, she has taught everything from high school marching band to elementary choirs. August being Back to School, I recently asked her these questions.

How have you observed the Musicians making a difference when they perform programs in the schools?

After the students observe a performance, they are VERY excited to talk about the cool instruments they have seen.



Nichole Matyas, Music Educator in Fort Wayne

They are always eager to tell us which instrument they are going to play when they are old enough. The instruments are presented in an entertaining way that keeps their interest. This presentation is HUGE in reinforcing my instrument families unit. I am pleasantly surprised when a student recites a fact that they learned during the presentation.

What impact do the Musicians have on the students?

The audience exhibits genuine excitement after the performance. They love the opportunity to participate and conduct. The impact is significant and will be something they talk about for years to come.

What impact do the Musicians performing for school students have on the community?

These students are the future musicians of our community. These performances excite them about music and the different instruments. Many of them go on to perform in the Homestead Marching Band or the Homestead Show Choir. Beyond that, many of them continue in music, even if not professionally. It also helps with the music appreciation as they may become supporters of the arts in our community in their adult lives.

FORT WAYNE STUDENTS

(Continued from Page 2)

The group stands ready to help the Philharmonic musicians again if needed. Andrew said it “was an honor” to help the Philharmonic musicians. He says he and his fellow music students “have always looked up to them. This was an opportunity to give back.”

And we look up to you, musicians of FWSSM. We take inspiration from your response to an unfortunate situation and transforming it into a commitment of community service and activism.



The Philharmonic ensemble program provides hundreds of performances annually in schools and health care facilities across Northeast Indiana.

Our Players' Voice is published by the Fort Wayne Philharmonic Players' Association. Our writers include Diane Dickson, retired Philharmonic oboist, Dessie Arnold, retired Philharmonic violinist, Campbell MacDonald, Principal Clarinetist, and Alexandra Tsilibes, violinist. For more information, visit our website at www.fwpmusicians.com. Follow us on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#), and [Twitter](#).