



The Topeka Symphony Society
P.O. Box 2206
Topeka, Kansas 66601-2206

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Organization
U.S. Postage
PAID
Permit No. 272
Topeka, Ks.

**PLAYER PORTRAITS
SPECIAL EDITION**

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"Allegro" is published by the Topeka Symphony Society.

The Topeka Symphony is presented in part by the Kansas Arts Commission, a state agency; the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency; and Washburn University. The Topeka Symphony is grateful to Washburn University for the use of rehearsal space.



MEET YOUR ORCHESTRA!

at
"Musical Musings with Mozart & Mahler"
Sunday, March 26
7:00-9:00 p.m.
White Concert Hall

Attend the TSO rehearsal, listen to remarks by Dr. Strickler, and enjoy munchies with members of the Orchestra
RSVP to the TSO office 785-232-2032

- March 30 — Clarinet Master Class with David Shifrin
- April 1 — Musical Titans—Mozart and Mahler
- April 22 -- Cirque Symphonique
- April 22 — 2006-2007 Season Tickets go on sale

Annual Meeting Notice

*The Annual meeting of the
Topeka Symphony Society*

will be held at

7:00 p.m. April 18, 2006

Room 204

Petro Allied Health Center

Washburn University Campus

"...there is no need to travel to Chicago, New York, or London to hear great classical music played live...music aficionados who have attended concerts all over the world say the Topeka Symphony is as good as the best." Topeka Capital Journal September 23, 2005 (Read more at www.cjonline.com)

**PLAYER PORTRAITS
SPECIAL EDITION**



Music for Northeast Kansas

Volume 47, Issue 3

Topeka Symphony Orchestra

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

March 2006

**Don't miss
the final
2 concerts!**

**Musical Titans
April 1**

**Cirque Symphonique
April 22**

WE ARE EXCITED TO PRESENT THIS SPECIAL ALLEGRO! DAVID AZWELL, VIOLINIST IN THE TSO FOR 30 YEARS, HAS COLLECTED THESE "PLAYER PORTRAITS". THANK YOU, DAVID, FOR DONATING YOUR TIME AND EXPERTISE TO PRODUCE THIS AND FUTURE "PLAYER PORTRAITS" EDITIONS.

WHAT WOULD YOU LIKE TO KNOW ABOUT YOUR TSO MUSICIANS? LET'S START WITH DAVID!

David Azwell has been playing the **violin** since the third grade. David plays for the pleasure of playing in the Symphony. His educational background is in American Literature, Speech and Journalism at Bethany College, Lindsborg, Kansas and Pittsburg State University, Pittsburg, Kansas. For about ten years, David didn't play on a regular basis and eventually joined the TSO when Jack Harriman became conductor. Mr. Harriman had conducted the Youth Symphony in Kansas City of which David was a member during his high school days. David took early retirement in May of 2005, writes a weekly **travel** column for the Osage County Herald and is a certified **barbecue judge**. He has been married for 41 years and has two sons, four grandchildren, two cats and a dog.


Jim Mosher was born and raised in Iowa. Jim plays the **oboe** and **English horn** in the TSO and Topeka Woodwind Quintet. He is a founding member of the Castle & Cross Consort, Topeka's **unique** early music ensemble. Jim plays solo harp and is working toward building a clientele for his Healing Harp Center. Jim was a music performance major at Pittsburg State University. He has since gone on to receive a master's and doctorate degree in **Metaphysics**. Since 1987, Jim has worked many of the public service desks at the Topeka and Shawnee County Public Library. Jim is active in the Pagan/Wiccan community and serves as liaison to the Interfaith Council of Topeka. He received his third degree initiation in 2004 and serves as High Priest for the MoonShadow Coven of Topeka. He is also co-owner of the Enchanted Willow Alchemy Shoppe, a metaphysical store located in the historic Greer House.

Rhonda Benson Ford was born on an Air Force base in Germany and has been playing the **flute** since age eleven. She has been second flutist with the TSO since 2003 and has played with several orchestras in Missouri, Kansas, Illinois, Texas, Arkansas and internationally. Currently she is Adjunct Instructor of Flute at Park University and previously served on the faculties of Missouri Western State College and Kansas City Kansas Community College. She is a published **author**, has been featured on Mississippi Public Radio and has participated in several master classes. Dr. Ford received her Doctor of Musical Arts Degree in Flute Performance and Pedagogy from the University of Southern Mississippi in 2005. Previously, she had earned her bachelor's degree in music education from Central Arkansas University in 1988 and her master's degree in flute performance from Illinois State University in 1992. Dr. Ford is married, has a Pekingese dog named **Snoopy** and likes to watch movies, attend concerts and shop.

Scott Bradley, **bass trombonist**, has been a member of the TSO for 22 years. Scott has a bachelor's degree in music education from Hope College in **Holland**, Michigan and a master's degree in low brass performance from Emporia State University. Scott has taught instrumental music in the public schools for 25 years. He currently is teaching at Rock Creek High School where his son is a senior.



J.D. Parr has been the principal *clarinet* since 1989. He has performed with the Lawrence Chamber Orchestra and the Lawrence City Band since 1979. J.D. holds degrees from Washburn University, Michigan State University and Kansas University. He is Associate Professor of Music at Baker University in Baldwin City where he teaches woodwinds, theory, music education and directs the *Jazz* Ensemble. During summers, J.D. teaches and performs at Blue Lake Fine Arts Camp near Muskegon, Michigan, where he's been a soloist with the Festival Band and Orchestra frequently. He conducted Marshall's Civic Band in Topeka from 1985-2000. J.D. leads the Czechland *Polka* Band, founded at Washburn University in 1971, which still performs at weddings, anniversary parties and old-fashioned dances. J.D. is married and has two daughters. (so what does J.D. stand for?)



Bob Keckeison is principal *percussionist* and this season marks his 16th year with the TSO. Bob performs with Marshall's Civic Band, North Topeka Community Band, pit orchestras for Topeka Civic Theatre and Metropolitan Ballet, Kansas Silent Film Festival and other groups. Bob holds bachelor's and master's degrees in history from Wichita State University. Bob played with the Wichita Symphony and has played percussion for over 40 years. In June of 2005, Bob and Dr. Marvin Faulwell, organist for the Kansas *Silent* Film Festival, released a DVD of the **1929** Lon Chaney film, *Phantom of the Opera*. This new score was developed, written, and performed by Bob and Dr. Faulwell. Bob has been Museum Director for the Kansas State Historical Society since 1982 and regularly volunteers for KTWU. He is married and has a son and daughter.

Tomas Korcinski has been a *cellist* with the TSO since 2001. Tomas was born in Vilnius, *Lithuania* and began studying music when he was five years old. Tomas has an extensive educational background starting at the Balys Dvarionas Music School and Fifth Secondary schools for 10 years. He attended Chopin Music Academy in Warsaw from 1995-97; Lithuanian Music Academy in Vilnius from 1997-2001; and received his master's degree from the University of Kansas in 2004. He has competed in and won several music *competitions* along the way. Tomas currently studies with TSO principal cellist, Steven Elisha, at Washburn University and is a member of the Wichita State Opera Symphony Orchestra.

Did you know?
Over half of the TSO musicians live outside the Topeka area!

Frank Sidorfsky has played *bass clarinet* in the TSO for 12 years. He has also played various members of the clarinet family for 65 years. Frank received his bachelor's degree in music education from Emporia State University; he received his master's and doctorate from the Eastman School of Music with clarinet as his major instrument. Frank served in the *Navy* for 4 years and taught in the public schools of Flint, Michigan for 3 years and at James Madison University for 5 years. Frank achieved *professor emeritus* status at Kansas State University after teaching 34 years. Frank is married and has 2 sons, 1 grandchild and another on the way. He enjoys taking care of 2 cats and feeding the birds outside his kitchen window.

Playing for 5 seasons with the TSO, **Allan** Comstock is principal *bassoon*. A native of Salem, Oregon, Allan began playing the bassoon when he was 13.

He has performed in numerous orchestras and chamber ensembles in Oregon, New York, Illinois, Tennessee and Kansas. He is a member of the *Flint Hills* Trio, the ESU Chamber Players and the Mid-America Woodwind Quintet. Allan is Associate Professor of Double Reeds and Coordinator of Music History at Emporia State University. He holds degrees in bassoon performance from the Eastman School of Music, Western Illinois University and University of Memphis. Allan is married and has six cats. His hobbies include photography, backpacking and collecting *orchids*.

Reem Negati Sanders grew up in Wichita with five brothers and sisters, none of whom showed any interest in playing a musical instrument. Reem began studying the *viola* at age 9 and has played in the TSO for 6 years. She began private lessons at age 13, the same year she joined the Wichita Youth Orchestra, and continued through high school. Reem went on to major in viola performance and received her bachelor's degree from Kansas University. Reem is married and *teaches* private lessons in Topeka and Lawrence. She devotes time each month to *volunteer* work and helping her husband with his business. Spending time with family and friends is a favorite recreational activity.

Carla Stone is the *piccolo* player in the flute section. She began playing flute in the 4th grade under the tutelage of Vallie Kirk (former TSO flute principal). This is Carla's **41st year** in the Symphony. Carla is a lifelong resident of Topeka and graduated from Seaman High School. She then went on to graduate from Washburn University where she spent a semester in Copenhagen and a summer in Paris studying French. For over 30 years, Carla was self-employed, providing a desktop publishing service, and spent the last 6 years with Security Benefit in the legal department. She now enjoys unemployment! Carla has 2 children and was recently widowed. Her interests are antiques, gardening, and maintaining a **104** year old house built by her great-grandmother.

Wallace Proctor was born in Parsons, Kansas, but raised in Waco, Texas. **Wally** plays *double bass* and is bass principal. Wally attended Wichita State University as a music education major and completed a master's in music performance at Eastern Illinois University in 1974. He was the first string graduate assistant there. From 1974-76, he taught strings and was the orchestra director at Lake Park High School in the Chicago area. In 1976, he received a master's of divinity from Northern Seminary in Lombard, Illinois and became an ordained *minister* in the United Methodist Church. Wally currently serves at the Stilwell UMC in Southern Johnson County. He has been married for 34 years and has 3 children, 3 grandchildren, 4 dogs, 2 cats, and 3 horses. He enjoys fly fishing, *horses* and has a British sports car.

Craig Yorke retired from neurosurgical practice in Topeka in 2003. He plays *violin* and has been a member for two years. Craig played the violin throughout his *teenage* years, but then did not play regularly for about 35 years. He resumed playing after he retired and enjoys it more now than he did earlier. Happily married for 26 years, Craig has two sons who are in school in Pennsylvania and Massachusetts. His favorite hobby is playing *tennis*.

This
Allegro!
represents
225 years
of TSO
participation

You've heard of "*All in the Family*"...well, this is it!! Father, Bill Cooper, was a long-time tuba player in the TSO and a public school band director in Kansas for nearly 30 years. Bill (now deceased) played for all 3 TSO conductors. Two of his 4 children carry on the family tradition as band directors and TSO members: **Will** Cooper and **Katie** (Cooper) Grose are both principal players — Will on *trumpet* and Katie on *French horn*. At one point, all three were playing in the orchestra at the same time!! Katie is in her 17th year in the Symphony, 17th year as band director for the Jefferson West School District and has played French horn for 30 years. Will has been in the TSO for 20 years, has been band director at Baldwin City for 20 years and has played trumpet for 33 years. How's that for a dynamic duo? Both Will and Katie are married—Will for 22 years and Katie for 13 years. Will has 2 sons and Katie has 2 daughters. (Have you noticed the numbers game going on here?) Will swears (a lot) that Katie is clearly heads and tails above the rest of the family. No matter what, the TSO can always count on Will and Katie musically and for the *comic*

INTERNS AND ARCHIVES

For over 2 years the TSO has been fortunate to be a part of an Internship Program with Allen County Community College (ACCC). Jim Krueger, Humanities Instructor, approached the TSO about the possibility of students working in the office and receiving class credit. Of course we were thrilled! We put them to work immediately! In addition to office tasks, they have been organizing 60 years of concert programs, season brochures, newsletters, recordings, photographs, and news articles into catalogued archives and a database. Since the beginning of this partnership students have contributed over **400 hours** for the TSO. Almost all of the students have attended at least one concert — for many of them their first one

ever. One very *dedicated* student, **Tiffany** Swinney, continues to volunteer (receiving no class credit) while she finishes her education at Washburn University. Special thanks to Jim Krueger and Dean Bob Reavis, Dean of Outreach Education for this support!

TSO has had only 3 conductors during its 60 year history!
Everett Fetter, Jack Harriman, John Strickler

