

## 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.**

**Gary Merrell, clarinet.** I began playing the clarinet at age ten after an arduous year of piano lessons. In contrast to the piano, the clarinet offered the welcome relief of only having to play one note at a time. My first clarinet was an old second- or third-hand metal instrument that bore little resemblance (in either sound or appearance) to a fine musical instrument. After a year of learning the basics and obtaining a better quality instrument, I played regularly in school bands and orchestras through high school. Following high school, I attended the University of Utah on a music scholarship and studied clarinet with Martin Zwick. That is when I really began to appreciate the clarinet's smooth lyrical sound and to experience great orchestral works firsthand.

During my first year at the university, I had the opportunity to play one season with the Salt Lake Symphony, then known as the Salt Lake Repertory Orchestra, under its founder, Jay Welch, who was also my music theory professor. After that first season, I seriously considered pursuing a career in music, but after much consideration I made the difficult decision to change majors and eventually graduated with degrees in physics and math. I was able to rejoin the Salt Lake Symphony in 1996 and have always appreciated the opportunity it provides for some of us non-professional musicians to join forces with professionals and be part of a fine orchestra.

I am currently employed by URS Corporation in the field of radiation physics and provide consulting services to private clients and Department of Energy nuclear facilities. In my spare time, I like to hike, read, and keep abreast of the latest discoveries in particle physics and astronomy. I live in Draper with my wife, Lorrie, where I am the live-in science and math tutor for our children. I'm currently brushing up on calculus, high school chemistry, fractions, and long division.



**Max Mueller, violin.** I grew up in Zurich, Switzerland, and started to play the violin when I was five years old. My first teacher was an immigrant from Czechoslovakia, and I had lessons with him twice a week. My mother helped me to memorize the flashcards he prepared. After some years, I went to the Music Conservatory of Zurich, and took lessons there until I was 17. I played in a youth orchestra, and also played string quartets. I also completed a four-year mechanic apprenticeship.

After military service and an LDS mission in Austria, I studied engineering and graduated in 1959. During that time I also had lessons with the concertmaster of the local symphony, Mr. Stehle, who was my finest teacher. I used his method later with my own students. In 1962, I immigrated to the USA and in 1965 I married Barbara Parrish, an English teacher and also a gifted pianist and singer. We have five children, two daughters who play the piano and three sons who are string players. Over the years, I played in orchestras, string quartets, did choral conducting, violin and viola teaching and travelled all over the world as an engineer. After my first wife passed away in 2000, I married Margaret Van Orman in 2002, a professional and gifted piano teacher. In 2009, I adopted her daughter who is a fine pianist and was a Sterling Scholar for music in High School.

**Allen McCandless, violin.** My father's old violin sat in disrepair at the bottom of a trunk in great grandma's house for many years. Catching my attention at the age of nine or ten, the old violin was removed from the scruffy black leather case, strung with new strings and became my first instrument. After learning to play on Dad's old violin, I received a new violin from my parents in 1968 and still use this instrument in the Symphony. Over the next 47 years, hours of practicing, music lessons from demanding teachers, performances, orchestras, quartets, lectures, competitions, classes, and did not diminish by love for classical music.

I was fortunate to study violin with members of the Utah Symphony from Junior High School all the way through my college years at the University of Utah. Then the demands of a full-time profession and a young family required time away from the violin and from taking part in great music. My musical skills were diminishing and I wanted a recommitment to music. So . . . back to practicing and an audition for the Salt Lake Symphony in 1998. Being a participant in a full orchestra with its magnificent tones, sounds, music and dedicated fellow musicians is very rewarding. It is also rewarding to bring a variety of music to others who enjoy experiencing the works of the master composers. I enjoy a wide range of music; however, impressionistic music is my favorite, with Debussy and Ravel being on top of my list.

My profession is in urban planning. I currently serve as the planning/environmental director for the Salt Lake City International Airport, South Valley Regional Airport, and Tooele Valley Airport. My favorite leisure activity is riding dirt motorcycles and road motorcycles (last count there were seven in my garage!). I have experienced many great riding adventures with my family throughout the West. I have been affectionately referred to as the dirt bikin' fiddler. Boating and outdoor exploration adventures with my wife and four children are also favorite activities, and I've recently become interested in watercolor painting. Unable to be away from music for too long, I sometimes take my Dad's old violin camping, carefully remove it from the old leather case, and break out a few fiddlin' songs around the camp fire.



**Jon Kahananui, violin and viola.** I was first exposed to classical music when I was five. I would always pull out one of the old vinyl recordings of Zino Francescatti performing Tchaikovsky's *Violin Concerto* with the Philadelphia Orchestra and Eugene Ormandy. I am an avid performer, playing in several amateur orchestras, including the Salt Lake Symphony, the American West Symphony, and the Paradigm Chamber Orchestra. I am also a Mentor for the Utah Youth Symphony Orchestras and Ensembles. I love sitting on both sides of the equation, as a listener and as a performer. In addition to symphonic music, I

also enjoy chamber music and new music.

I'm also a prolific Abstract Artist; my pastimes are reading up on Abstract Artists, such as Hans Hofman, Jackson Pollack, and Lee Krasner. By which, have also had an impact and inspiration for my work.

In my spare time, other than practicing four hours a day and my artwork, I like running, roller-hockey with friends, and being a bum at Seven Peaks most summers. I enjoy free Iceberg strawberry shakes with proof of purchase, especially on my birthday since it is the Shake of the Month in November.



Blue Black, Yellow and White  
2004, acrylic on canvas