



Springfield Symphony Orchestra

## Springfield Symphony Youth Orchestras' 75<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Newsletter August 2018

Dear SSYO families, Alumni and supporters, I am so excited to join the staff at Springfield Symphony as the new Education Director. I have been involved with this amazing organization for fifteen years. I started playing oboe with SSO as a substitute in 2003 and am always honored to have the opportunity to join them. My three daughters all played in SYS and it was one of the few extracurricular activities they all did together – they have some great shared memories! As a teacher, many of my oboe students played in the SSYO orchestras. I am so excited to help this amazing local resource grow and flourish. We have some exciting plans for this year. Two alumni, Carson Marshall and Andrew Cooper will join us as soloists on the first two concerts, and for the Season Finale, we invite ALL ALUMNI of SSYO to join us for reunion events the week of May 13-19.

**All alumni are invited to join the SSYO on stage for a special performance on May 19.** I look forward to meeting or reuniting with all of you this year! Please contact me to get on the mailing list for the reunion! Sincerely, Kirsten Lipkens, Education Director

Please see the whole season at: <http://www.springfieldsymphony.org/outreach/youth-orchestras/>

**In this first newsletter, we feature three alums that have gone on to study music performance and are just beginning their professional careers. It is our hope that we will start to hear from all of the many wonderful alumni that have played with SSYO. Send us your news, stories from your days in SSYO groups, wedding and baby announcements and career news (musical or non-musical!) [klipkens@springfieldsymphony.org](mailto:klipkens@springfieldsymphony.org) or attention: Kirsten Lipkens, 1441 Main Street, Suite 121, Springfield, MA 01103**



Violinist Carson Marshall writes: I have always looked back on my time with the SSYO as incredibly formative. It was my first exposure to orchestral playing, and that feeling of working toward a common goal. It was Johnathan and Marsha's skillful instruction and encouragement (mostly patience) that helped me to go on to pursue music in my life. I recall one of the first concerts, sitting last stand second violins, coming off stage with a big smile on my face and telling my mom "this is what I want to do for the rest of my life!" I'm so grateful for the

opportunity to come back and play with this orchestra again.

Carson aims to inspire audiences with generous and passionate performances in both formal and unconventional concert settings. Originally from Western Massachusetts, from a young age Carson joined his father doing outreach presentations, recently giving side-by-side presentations for school children on what life is like as a professional musician. It was this early exposure to outreach that sparked Carson's passion for teaching. While participating in the Aspen Music festival in 2012-15 he was involved with the P.A.L.S program, which gives lessons to young students in the Roaring Fork River Valley. In 2016 he participated in the MERIT program at Music Academy of The West where he mentored young students in a nine day intensive chamber music and private lesson program, giving master classes and weekly coaching's. Carson also recently gave a performance with the KINETIC ensemble, which invited young members of the Houston community to

participate in a side-by-side performance. In addition, Carson is a violin coach for the Houston Youth Symphony.

As a performer, in 2012 he was invited to perform on the PBS radio show "From the Top" and is a recipient of the Jack Kent Cooke young artist award. In 2011 He performed Ein Heldenleben as concertmaster with the World Youth Symphony Orchestra, and is a recipient of the Interlochen Center for the Arts, *Maddy Award*. In the summer of 2012 he attended Greenwood music camp, and in 2013-15 he attended the Aspen Music festival and was a member of the Aspen Chamber Symphony. In 2016 Carson attended the Music Academy of the West where he studied with Kathleen Winkler, Jorja Fleezanis and Glenn Dicterow. In 2017 he served as Co-Concertmaster of the National Repertory Orchestra. Carson is an avid Fly-Fisherman and tea enthusiast, and is currently pursuing a MM at Rice University, studying with Paul Kantor.

*Carson will join the SYO on 11/18/18 at 3pm at Belchertown High School Auditorium, playing Mendelssohn's Violin Concerto.*



Dear SSYO (WMYO) Friends,

**It feels like such a long time since I saw you all and made music with you! For those of you who don't know me, my name is Alexia Ciciretti and I was in YPP from 2002-2005 and YPS from 2005-2006. (I know the names of the orchestras have changed over the years: YPP is now SYS, YPS is now SYO, and WYMO is now SSYO.)**

**My life has been filled with music for as long as I can remember, and after my time in WYMO, I continued my musical journey. For the last three years of high school, I attended New England Conservatory pre-college division in Boston on the weekends. I took private lessons, played chamber music, took theory class, and played in orchestra. I received my undergraduate degree from Oberlin**

Conservatory of Music in Cello Performance and my master's degree from Eastman School of Music in Cello Performance and Literature. For the past three years, I have been playing with the New World Symphony in Miami Beach, Florida. New World Symphony (whose musical director is Michael Tilson Thomas) is an orchestral academy that helps its musicians hone their orchestral playing skills while preparing them for lives as professional musicians. I have had a fantastic experience at New World! The repertoire I have learned, the collaboration with other musicians in the orchestra, and the mentorship I have received from conductors and guest musicians, have all contributed to my becoming a better musician.

I love orchestral playing with all my heart and want it to be a big part of my professional life. However, I have also had the opportunity to explore other musical pursuits. While at school, I developed an interest in playing contemporary music. This has led me to attend programs such as Lucerne Festival Academy in Switzerland, where an emphasis is placed on contemporary music and collaboration. I have also had the opportunity to perform a great deal of chamber music, both at New World and at summer festivals such as Banff Arts Centre, Lake George Music Festival, Spoleto Festival USA, Bowdoin International Music Festival, Aspen Music Festival and School, and Orford Music Academy. Another avenue of music I have explored has been baroque music and period performance. I received a minor in Historical Performance while at Oberlin, specializing in viola da gamba. Playing viola da gamba chamber music (consort music) is a truly unique experience! Historical performance involves a different set of challenges than performing classical or contemporary music, but I love the musical style. When I attended Spoleto Festival USA, I played continuo on a US premiere of a Vivaldi opera called *Farnace*. I was performing on my normal cello (not a viola da gamba), yet I had to play in a baroque style. It was an amazing learning experience that I hope to repeat again soon. For the past several years, while in Miami, I have also performed with the group Flamenco Sephardit, which combines Flamenco dance music with traditional Ladino (Sephardic Jewish) music. In addition to annual performances in Miami, in 2016 we performed a concert in Venice, Italy in a festival celebrating the 500th anniversary of the Jewish Ghetto in Venice. Another very unique opportunity I had this past year, was being selected by a movie producer to be the lead in a short film featuring a cellist and her relationship with her ill father. The movie was shown at the Cannes Film Festival and other film festivals.

I plan to combine all my musical passions into a career of diverse, fulfilling music making and am open to landing anywhere in the world to make that happen. No matter where I go, I will always remember my roots in Western Massachusetts and WMYO. Sunday afternoons/evenings were some of my favorite times of the week! My mom, Louise Backer, used to be the orchestra manager for WMYO. I would always drive to rehearsals with her, get there before the other musicians and help set up the rooms with the stagehands. I remember setting up the snack tables and chatting with Marsha Hassett (YPP conductor) and Patrick Smith (YPS conductor) before rehearsals, and waiting in anticipation for the other musicians to arrive so we could start rehearsing. I remember listening longingly to YPS when I was still in YPP, thinking they were the coolest, most talented musicians around (my older sister, Rebecca Ciciretti, played cello in YPS), and waiting impatiently until I grew old enough to join them. I remember the tour we took to Vermont and Montreal in 2006, and the excitement of traveling to a new place to share the music we rehearsed with a new audience. Being around other young people who loved music and took

time out of their lives to be in an orchestra made me feel like I was part of something special.

I would like to thank everyone who has been a part of WMYO (now SSYO) through the years for creating such an amazing environment for young musicians. I cannot wait to see what all of you have been doing throughout the years and please be in touch!

-Best, Alexa



Andrew Cooper (SYS Fall 2005-2008 and SYO 2008-2013) writes: I began playing in the SSYO orchestras in 2005, first in the Young People's Philharmonia (now known as Springfield Youth Sinfonia) and then in Springfield Youth Orchestra in 2008. During the 2010-11 season, my sister Rebecca (a trumpet player in SYO) and I won the annual concerto competition and performed Aaron Copland's *Quiet City* for English horn and Trumpet with the SYO at Springfield Symphony Hall.

Upon leaving SSYO and graduating from Northampton High School in 2013, I went to the University of Michigan to pursue a Bachelor of Music degree in Oboe Performance with Dr. Nancy Ambrose King. While at UM, I played in the school's Symphony Orchestra, Symphony Band (including on the Symphony Band's CD *Poetics*), and Opera as well as countless small chamber groups. In 2015, I traveled to Dusseldorf Germany to compete in the Aeolus International Competition for Wind Instruments, where I was the only American oboist selected to compete and in 2017 I competed at the Barbirolli International Oboe Competition on the Isle of Man (UK).

After graduating *summa cum laude* and as a James B. Angell Scholar from the University of Michigan in 2017, I moved to Chicago where I began a Master of Music degree at DePaul University, studying with former Principal oboist of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Alex Klein. In the Fall of 2017, I began a two year position in the Civic Orchestra of Chicago, the training orchestra of the Chicago Symphony. The Civic Orchestra works regularly with the musicians and conductors of the Chicago Symphony as well as other distinguished musicians including Yo Yo Ma, who is the Creative Consultant for the CSO organization.

In October 2017, I won the 2<sup>nd</sup> Oboe and English horn position with the Southwest Michigan Symphony Orchestra.

Although I keep myself busy with graduate school, Civic Orchestra, SW Michigan Symphony, and freelancing, when I am not playing oboe (or making reeds!) I enjoy cooking, reading, and exploring the great city of Chicago. *Andrew will join the SYO on 2/10/19 as their guest soloist.*

### **Support the SSYO**

**Please consider giving a donation of \$75.00 to help support this special organization that you were once a part of. Your gift will help us maintain our scholarship fund, production costs, music rental and instrument repair.**

<http://www.springfieldsymphony.org/support-us/how-to-donate/>