

Jenifer Carstensen, French Horn

Next in our horn section spotlights for this month, our principal horn, Jenifer Carstensen!



Could you tell me a little bit about yourself?

I grew up in the Hudson Valley in New York, went to college in the Shenandoah Valley in Virginia, worked as a Music Therapist in Sonoma, California and then found my way to Ashland, Oregon where it has been my honor to be the Middle School Band Director since 2004.

What brought or inspired you to pursue horn? If you'd like to share one of your favorite pieces of music as well, I'd like to know!

I began playing trumpet in the 4th grade but it wasn't the instrument for me. I could hear the other students playing actual songs while I struggled to make any notes sound good. The band teacher talked to us all one day about how some of us might get to switch to the French Horn in 5th grade. Even

though I had no idea what that instrument was at the time, I eagerly raised my hand in the hopes that she might pick me.

Being a band teacher now myself, I sense that she may have had some strong reservations about letting me switch - seeing as how I was not doing very well on the trumpet and the horn is notoriously more difficult. Luckily for me, she didn't let that stop her from giving me a horn for the summer break. As soon as I started to play it, I knew that this was the instrument for me. I loved how it sounded, how it felt to hold onto it, how it looked and how I felt when I was playing it!

What do you enjoy most about being with the Rogue Valley Symphony?

Playing music with all of the fabulous musicians with whom I share the stage every season! I admire them all so much - even if it isn't their main career, they have made music a top priority in their lives and are committed to making wonderful music together for our community. We are teachers, doctors, nurses, contractors, office managers, postal workers, students, mechanics, care-takers, builders of bikes, etc.; and we are the Rogue Valley Symphony!

What do you do when you're not playing music i.e. what are your hobbies or interests?

When I am not playing music, I am focused on my family. I have two active & energetic sons; and we have two high-spirited dogs. We are a family of 14 legs! I also enjoy using my own 2 legs for activities like the Mt. Ashland Hill Climb.

Finally, one unusual fact, story, or tidbit about you or your instrument?

I am an identical twin. My sister is 8-minutes older than me. She is an amazing yoga teacher in Portland, OR.

