

To round off our week of Bassoonist Celebrations, we've got Mia!



Could you tell me a little bit about yourself?

I am a mom to a teenage son and three enormous, goofball cats. I play the bassoon, contrabassoon, and a little bit of everything else. This was possible because I was fortunate enough to have an amazingly gifted and motivating music teacher in elementary school who let me go to all her classes, for all the instruments. It was because of her that I knew I wanted to be a musician, and a teacher. I especially love working with students who struggle to learn despite possessing high intelligence. Having done spectacularly poorly in high school myself, becoming a teacher was a natural plan because I understood what it is like to be smart, yet feel stupid. I now have a BA in music and education, a teaching credential, and a Master of Arts in Teaching from Notre Dame de Namur University, and nothing makes me happier than helping other students figure

out how they learn, and to see them find success in the classroom.

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

I've always been attracted to things that are unusual, eclectic, and uniquely creative. The bassoon is definitely unique, but when I discovered the contrabassoon my heart skipped a beat. I just knew this gorgeous instrument with its 18 feet of coiled wood tubing that could play the lowest notes in the orchestra was my future. I purchased a contrabassoon before I'd ever played one, which led to the awkward moment when I first removed it from the case and couldn't figure out where my fingers were supposed to go. After a brief moment of panic, I turned the instrument right side up and the rest is history.

Just to be clear, the term "contrabassoon" does not mean that I'm against the bassoon. Rather, it refers to the double bassoon, which is twice the length of a typical bassoon, and sounds a full octave lower. The contrabassoon isn't the most beautiful sounding thing you're ever going to hear, but I still love it. My teenage son has unceremoniously said the contrabassoon is like the dash of salt in a cake. In other words, you will know something is missing if it's not there. But taken on its own, it'll make your eyes water!

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

I love everything about the Rogue Valley Symphony: the people, the music, the Rogue Valley itself. This group of musicians seems to get better every year. I joined the symphony at the same time Martin became its new conductor, and it has been an amazing journey watching him grow the orchestra into something very, very special. There is something magical that goes beyond the notes when this group of musicians and friends get together to make music. Being a part of this, smack in the center of the orchestra with the instrument that I love, immersed in the incredible sounds that are happening around me - it is indescribable. There is nothing in the world like it, and I am aware every day just how blessed I am.

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

Hobbies? I'm supposed to have hobbies?

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

As much as I love the bassoon and contrabassoon, they weren't my first choice. I was in the fourth grade when I told my parents that I was joining the school band and I was going to play the trombone. There was a long, awkward pause. My parents stared at me in silent horror, and then my dad carefully explained that he couldn't have his daughter play the trombone because trombone players have 'funny lips'. Apparently if I played the trombone I would never learn to kiss properly and I would never so I would never get married. (Things were different in the '70's) I still have a soft spot for the trombone ... but I took up the bassoon.