

We're celebrating National Viola Day with our principal viola, Michael!



Could you tell me a little bit about yourself?

I am 33 years old and have been playing the viola for 22 years now. I was primarily self taught until I began my undergraduate studies at SOU in 2010, where I studied under former RVSO principal violists Pat Berlet and Kimberly Fitch. I am an avid animal lover (I ESPECIALLY LOVE CATS <3) and I will just about stop anything that I am doing to look at someone's fur baby pictures.

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

Fantasia had a lot to do with my introduction and obsession with classical music, and I began to further educate myself about orchestras via the public library. The mellower timbre of

the viola really attracted me, and when I finally got a chance to actually play an instrument in the 6th grade, I leapt on the opportunity to at least try the viola, and I loved it instantly, and the rest just speaks for itself I guess.

As for one of my favorite pieces of music, I would definitely have to say Paul Hindemith's Kammermusik No. 5 is a top contender. In a sense, it is Hindemith's first viola concerto, and there is just so much energy and tension and frenetic drive in every movement that just resonates with me. It might be a tad tough to digest at first, but it's that quirky German Expressionist atonality that we have come to love that makes Hindemith so special. Of course, everybody needs variety, so I constantly spice it up with City Girls, Saucy Santana, Doja Cat, and similar artists to ground myself.

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

What I love most about being in the Rogue Valley Symphony is working with my friends and esteemed colleagues to create these rapturous moments where we are all zoned in. The satisfaction that it brings defies description. I have had the privilege of watching my fellow musicians grow and improve as musicians under the direction of Maestro Majkut, and seeing how far we have come as an ensemble, and realizing just how far we can go is also another reason why I love being a part of this wonderful orchestra. Maestro Majkut's selections always push me to expand my understanding of the music, and I would not be half the musician I am without this ensemble.

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

When I am not playing music, or teaching music, or practicing, I can usually be found at home being constantly delighted by my sweet kitty Leo. I'm also an avid gamer, and usually spend my evenings playing World of Warcraft with my brother and/or my husband. But honestly, I spend a significant amount of time watching my cat be adorable.

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

So the funny thing is, yes I am OBSESSED with cats. However, I am technically allergic to them; I just simply

refuse to let it stop me. Sure, my arms periodically start itching like crazy, and the simplest scratch or poke feels like my skin is on fire for a bit, and sometimes I start sneezing uncontrollably, but that is all nothing compared to the satisfaction I get when I see my kitty be happy. As my husband would put it, my sense of self-preservation is remarkably low haha.