



# **Cleveland Orchestra Members** **Who Call Beachwood “Home”**

By June Scharf

Every year, Carnegie Hall in New York celebrates the launch of its new season with a spectacular black-tie gala featuring electrifying performances by some of the greatest musicians in the world. In October, the venerated venue shined its spotlights on Music Director Franz Welser-Möst and The Cleveland Orchestra. This was the third time The Cleveland Orchestra launched Carnegie Hall’s season, and the 226th time that musicians performed on this famous stage in the orchestra’s 101-year history. Discerning audience members responded to the splendor and perfection of the concert with thundering applause and standing ovations.

*The New York Times* has called The Cleveland Orchestra “America’s most brilliant orchestra,” “virtually flawless,” and “one of the finest ensembles in the country (if not the world)”; and *The Wall Street Journal* has referred to the Orchestra as “magnificent.”

Contributing to the orchestra’s collective sensation are a handful of Beachwood residents. They dwell here for many reasons, including its proximity to Severance Hall, but also for its superior city services and other exceptional qualities.

To learn more about each member who resides here, the following captures some inside takes on their passion for their instruments, and what life is like traveling the world to play beautiful music.

## MARK ATHERTON | Bass

### Why the bass?

I always loved the sound of bass instruments. I started playing string bass in 4th grade, but didn't expect to pursue it professionally. I wasn't sure what I wanted to do, but after my first year of college, I realized music was "calling" me.

### Thoughts about frequent travel?

Our tours build camaraderie within the orchestra because they provide opportunities for us to spend time together on the road compared to when we are at home. We might go hiking on a free day, for example, or enjoy a post-concert dinner with members of our section.

### Stand-out performance from recent memory?

Some of the most meaningful performances have been when the orchestra string section plays a string quartet transcription (which adds the bass) such as Beethoven's "Grosse Fuge" and Schubert's "Death and the Maiden." They are very inspiring and challenging at the same time.

### Unexpected fact about you?

I'm a big sports fan. American football has always been one of my favorites to watch, as I played football in high school. In recent years, though, I've enjoyed watching soccer on TV (especially my favorite team, Liverpool), and have been able to attend some games in Europe when the orchestra is on tour.



## LISA BOYKO | Viola

### Why the viola?

I started the viola in middle school, after playing the piano for several years. An early experience in an all-city orchestra sparked a love of orchestral music, which fueled my dreams and hard work through conservatory and beyond. I have always liked the viola because of its mellow sound and supportive role in the orchestra. The viola part in an orchestral score usually supplies harmony and rhythm, although we certainly enjoy playing the melody now and then!

### Stand-out memories of recent performances?

Opening the Carnegie Hall season this past October with iconic soloists Anne-

Sophie Mutter, Lynn Harrell, and Yefim Bronfman. Also, a Severance Hall performance of Beethoven's 7th Symphony with a young, new-on-the-scene conductor from Finland, Klaus Makela. Audience members confirmed what we all felt – this was one of the best concerts we'd ever experienced.

### Secret to success?

Do everything you can to develop your abilities early on. It's very important to have a good teacher who will insist on a high standard of playing and show you how to play the instrument well. This is something you must be able to maintain on your own as you compete for opportunities at both

the conservatory and professional levels. Also, seek out as many experiences of playing and learning great music as you can: participate in your school orchestra, local youth orchestra, or chamber music program; or attend a summer music festival.

### Why live in Beachwood?

My husband and I love our modern home and spacious yard in Beachwood. We have quick access to the freeway, but the commute to Severance Hall is still only 20-25 minutes. We appreciate the excellent services Beachwood provides, as well as our proximity to the Shaker Blvd. median parks and bike paths. We also like being close to the JCC.

## LYNNE RAMSEY | Principal Viola, First Assistant



### Why the viola and why the Cleveland Orchestra?

I started playing violin in Hong Kong when I was eight. We moved back to California when I was 11, and I played in the school orchestra. I got tired of playing the same

tune all the time and asked the conductor for other options. He suggested viola because there weren't any at the time. It was just a bit bigger, was lower in pitch, and had a different clef to read.

I was hooked. I really enjoy being an inner voice where I can support the upper and lower voices.

The Cleveland Orchestra is like no other orchestra. All members are incredible musicians in their own right, plus they all have amazing work ethics so the starting point for rehearsals is just a matter of interpretation.

### Unexpected fact about you?

I own a horse. When the orchestra goes on tour, I find places to ride and meet other horsey people from other countries. Sometimes I am accompanied by some of my horsey colleagues.

### Advice for a budding violist?

Practice! Practice! Practice! Practice makes permanent but perfect practice makes perfect.

This is not a career for the faint of heart. It requires a lot of dedication, persistence, and slow practice. Something I always told myself when I was on the audition circuit was, "If I don't feel like practicing one day, someone else will push through and will take the job from me."

Initially, I didn't have the confidence to believe I could make it in an orchestra. In 1969, there were very few women in orchestras. Thankfully that has changed. My mom found a teacher, Ramon Scavelli, who influenced and supported me so profoundly. Up to that point, I enjoyed playing, but knowing that Ramon believed in me made all the difference.

### Why live in Beachwood?

It's close to everything. The Beachwood parks are conveniently located, and my neighbors are awesome. My children loved the pool when they were growing up, too.

## Performances • Severance Hall • Winter Season

### Bronfman Plays Mozart

#### • Thursday, January 9 • 7:30 pm

Franz Welser-Most, conductor  
Yefim Bronfman, piano  
Dvorak – Symphony No. 4  
Mozart – Piano Concerto No. 24  
Janacek – Sinfonietta

#### • Friday, January 10 • 11 am

Same program as January 9, minus  
Dvorak/Symphony No. 4

#### • Friday, January 10 • 8 pm

Same program as January 9

#### • Saturday, January 11 • 8 pm

Same program as January 9

### Shadows, Seas and Sorcerers

#### • Thursday, January 30 • 7:30 pm

Franz Welser-Most, conductor  
Program: Prokofiev - Symphony No. 6  
Bridge – The Sea  
Dukas – The Sorcerer's Apprentice

#### • Saturday, February 1, 8 PM

Same as January 30

### The Bernstein Beat

#### • Sunday, February 2, 2 PM

Vinay Parameswaran, conductor

### Sibelius First Symphony

#### • Thursday, February 6, 7:30 PM

Susanna Malkki, conductor  
Leila Josefowicz, violin  
Sibelius – En Saga  
Knussen – Violin Concerto  
Sibelius – Symphony No. 1

It's a lot of hard work, but if you really enjoy doing something and have the motivation, perseverance, determination, and focus, you can accomplish a lot!"

– Michael Sachs  
Principal Trumpet

The Orchestra is also scheduled to perform Amadeus Live, Beethoven and Mozart, Symphonie Fantastique, Bruckner, Mendelssohn's Second Symphony, and Schubert's Great Symphony.

For complete information,  
visit [www.clevelandorchestra.com](http://www.clevelandorchestra.com).

## MICHAEL SACHS | Principal Trumpet

### Why the trumpet?

I've always loved that the trumpet can really express the spectrum of emotions, from the very powerful and heroic to the very lyrical and intimate. I also always liked that the trumpet is vastly versatile and can be in just about any musical setting: from classical, to jazz, rock, and everything in between.

### Advice to others who fantasize about playing the trumpet professionally?

Have fun! I got into this because I just loved to play the trumpet. My parents weren't musicians but, thanks to my mom, there was a lot of music playing in our house when I was growing up. I didn't intend to pursue this as a career choice, it just kind of happened. It's a lot of hard work, but if you really enjoy doing something and have the motivation, perseverance, determination, and focus, you can accomplish a lot!

### Professional journey leading to the Cleveland Orchestra?

In Santa Monica, California, where I grew up, music programs in the schools were very strong, starting in elementary school. By the time I got to high school, I was part of an 80-piece orchestra performing large standard repertoire. I also played in the marching band,

wind ensemble, jazz band, and a rock band. When it came time to decide on college, my parents really wanted me to get a broad education and steered me more toward a non-music degree. With that, I ended up going to UCLA and getting a B.A. in history. I think my father, who ran an advertising agency, had the idea that I'd eventually take over his business.

During this time, I was taking lessons and playing in a couple of high-level orchestras in Los Angeles, basically playing more than any music major without the academics. I also performed in two summer festivals – at Tanglewood in western Massachusetts, and at the Aspen Music Festival.

Since I was always playing trumpet, studying, and performing, I felt that if I didn't pursue a career in music, I would always regret it. Luckily, after graduating UCLA, I was accepted to study at the Julliard School of Music in New York where I started over as a freshman. At the start of my third year in New York, I won a position with the Houston Symphony, where I stayed for two seasons before getting my position with the Cleveland Orchestra.

### Stand-out performance in recent memory?

The October performance when we played Mahler's Fifth Symphony at Carnegie Hall. Carnegie is my Super Bowl and World Series all



wrapped into one. My parents and entire family are originally from New York, and we have many friends and colleagues there. Plus, the history of that space, with all of the great artists who have performed there over the past 125 years, is palpable from the moment you walk on stage.

Carnegie Hall is a very special place and I'm lucky to have had many opportunities to perform there, dating back to when I was a student. This particular Mahler symphony has a huge trumpet part, one that I started by myself in an extended passage. I've performed most of the Mahler symphonies at Carnegie Hall, but this was my first time with No. 5. It's a piece I've always wanted to play there, and finally getting that chance meant to world to me.



## SAE SHIRAGAMI | Violin

### What are some of the challenges associated with playing in an orchestra?

As members, we don't have choices in musical pieces, conductors, or concert schedules. We must try to do our best under all circumstances, which can sometimes be frustrating.

### Any hobbies?

Cooking and baking. I enjoy seeing the results. There is no end to practicing music; it can always get better or be different. I suppose that goes for everything else as well, so I must just enjoy eating good foods immediately.

### Why live in Beachwood?

Mitchell's Ice Cream and well-maintained roads! Friendly and caring policemen and firemen. Great dogs (and owners) and, of course, Barkwood, although I don't have my own dog now.

### Stand-out recent performance memory?

Beethoven 7th with Klaus Makela. The young conductor stepped in at the last minute for that concert and did a beautiful job. So many audience members came up to me and said how excited they were to hear it. Also, an older colleague who must have played the piece hundreds of times said that was the best Beethoven 7th she's played in her career, which meant a lot.

## MARTIN FLOWERMAN | Bass | Retired in 2011

### Life after the orchestra?

I miss making great music and being onstage with the orchestra, but life is less hectic now, so I feel some relief. The orchestra is near and dear to my heart, and I miss the camaraderie.



### Why the bass?

I had a love for the bass shortly after I was born because my father was a professional bassist. He was the principal bass for the New York City Ballet's orchestra. As a tiny tot, I heard him practicing all of the time and I loved the sound of it. The role of the bass is to support other instruments. I always found playing lower notes to be very satisfying. The bass also had lots of solos and I enjoyed that.

### Any wild, unexpected experiences?

On a couple of occasions, we played through wicked weather at Blossom Music Center. As the storms blew in, the lights went out, but the orchestra continued to play in the dark and we finished together without looking at the music. Everyone was so great that all music was well rehearsed and well memorized. We never flinched; we just kept playing.

Our instruments were flown in on a separate plane, and on several occasions, arrived at the performance venue extremely late. During a delay in Tokyo, the audience was being seated while the stagehands were setting up the stage with our instruments. We started 30 minutes late. It was a white-knuckle situation.

Before each tour, we pack up our instruments, drop them off at Severance Hall, and hope everything arrives intact. Most of the time, it does; but sometimes, our instruments sat outside in the freezing cold, and were then brought inside where the air is warm and dry. As a consequence, a crack might be discovered, or the seam of an instrument may open up from the temperature changes.

### Stand-out performances?

I'll never forget when conductor Leonard Bernstein came to Cleveland in 1970 to conduct a benefit concert at Blossom. He just couldn't get over the Cleveland Orchestra. We were razor sharp after a long tour. In the middle of a Mahler Symphony rehearsal, he stopped and said, "This orchestra is so great, so (expletive) great!" I was so inspired by him, I wanted to jump out of my chair! He was an absolute genius. I got to speak with him – he was so approachable. He wore his heart on his sleeve all the time.

### Are you approachable?

Yes. If someone is truly interested in music and wants to consult with me, I can be reached at [mbmurn@roadrunner.com](mailto:mbmurn@roadrunner.com).

## Orchestra Members' Tips for Budding Musicians

- Take daily lessons - *Shirgami*
- Give it all to the present moment – *Shirgami*
- Enjoy the music – *Shirgami*
- Do all that you can to develop abilities early in life – *Boyko*
- Engage a good teacher who will insist on high standards of playing – *Boyko*
- Seek out as many experiences as you can for learning and playing great music – *Boyko*
- Participate in your school orchestra, local youth orchestra or chamber music program or attend a summer music festival – *Boyko*
- Practice (a lot). – *Atherton*
- Practice makes permanent and perfect practice makes perfect – *Ramsey*
- Take seriously what your teacher tells you, and gradually learn to teach yourself (that is, enjoy figuring things out and improving in your own practice). – *Atherton*
- While it's great that the family is supportive of their child's music lessons, under no circumstance should they coerce or bribe their child to practice. It should not feel like a chore, but rather come from within. – *Flowerman*
- Most of all, have fun! – *Sachs*

