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# My OSO STORY

*A collection of essays  
in celebration  
of the OSO's  
Diamond  
Anniversary  
Season*

2019 / 2020



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In celebration of the Okanagan Symphony Orchestra's (OSO) 60th anniversary, we kicked off a series of essays designed to reflect the many personal perspectives of those connected to, and touched by, the OSO over the years. Musicians, patrons, board members, volunteers, staff, teachers, students, donors and sponsors are all people who, in so many different ways, have made the OSO what it is today.

These stories have been shared throughout the season with our newsletter audience and through social media. Instructions to each writer were "How has the OSO touched your life and/or what value has it brought you?"

What we envisioned to be a light-hearted and cheery series has turned out to be one that is heart-warming, profoundly moving and humbling. The stories reflected in this collection tell of lives changed, the strength of this community, and the power of music to move, heal and inspire. We don't take them lightly, and are enormously grateful for the sentiments expressed.

To all of these writers, and the many, many others they represent, thank you for all that you do for the OSO. We couldn't do it without you.

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## 1 AUGUST 2019

I've been a resident in Penticton for more than 60 years and the OSO has always been a very important part of the Okanagan music scene for me personally.

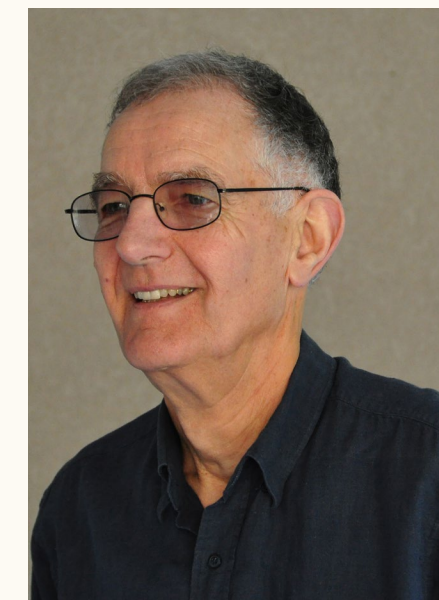
From its somewhat humble beginnings, the OSO has evolved into a major orchestra. There were, of course many "ups and downs" along the way, to be sure. Fortunately, there were also many enthusiastic volunteers who always realized the potential and great value of the orchestra and could see the future.

As a composer, the orchestra has certainly been a source of inspiration and support for me. Over the years, several of my compositions have been performed by the OSO and for that I am extremely grateful.

Special thanks must go to our current Music Director Rosemary Thomson — she has raised the overall level of the OSO to a new standard. On this special occasion of the 60th anniversary and in the years to come, we need to show our appreciation to the orchestra members, the staff and volunteers by attending concerts and continue to support the OSO financially.

## Ernst Schneider

*Composer and Supporter,  
A Great Friend to the OSO*



*a very important  
part of the Okanagan  
music scene*

# Karmen Doucette

OSO Principal Bassoonist



PHOTO CREDIT: CAMILLIA COURTS PHOTOGRAPHY

I was living in Calgary when I began playing with the Okanagan Symphony Orchestra in 2010. From the very first rehearsal, I knew that this orchestra was unique. The caliber of the musicians rivaled any of the “big city” orchestras I’d played with and the people were so warm and welcoming.

Over the following year and a half, I was growing tired of my monthly commute across the Rockies, and decided to move to the Okanagan. When, 6 weeks after I arrived, I met the man who would become my husband, I knew that I was here to stay.

It’s been almost seven years since I moved to the Okanagan and my love for this community and my orchestra family continues to grow.

I often hear from audience members that “watching the orchestra feels magical” when they see all the parts and people moving together. As a player, I can tell you that there is a distinctive energy on stage that I haven’t experienced in any other orchestra, and it makes my “job” feel like a pretty great place to be. The wide range of repertoire we perform throughout the year keeps me on top of my game as a musician, and means that there’s something for everyone in the audience.

I’m so grateful for the generous support we receive from our audiences and sponsors throughout the Valley. It allows us to reach out to the community and introduce people of all ages to the music we’re so passionate about. It’s truly an honour to be a member of the OSO as we enter our 60th anniversary season, and I look forward to sharing music with you for many years to come.

allows us to reach out to the community and introduce people of all ages to the music we’re so passionate about

My wife and I arrived in Kelowna in April 2016, excited to explore our new home city. From a music perspective, we are old school rock & roll music fans and listen to a little country now and then... after all we did come from Calgary.

After a short time here, some new friends invited us to attend the symphony with them. Although we love music we were definitely a little nervous about sitting through an entire evening of classical music and almost declined the invitation. We are so glad that we didn’t... WOW! talk about instant expansion of our music repertoire.

We absolutely loved the show. It helped that the conductor was engaging, entertaining and explained what to expect with just about every piece of music; and we could see the passion of the musicians. It was a visual experience as well as an auditory one.

We’ve been back to see the OSO a few times each year since but this year we are committing to a ticket subscription for the entire season. We don’t want to take the chance of missing out on a concert that we want to see because it is sold out.

We will always love rock & roll but we are very happy to say that the Okanagan Symphony is now part of our Okanagan traditions.

It was a visual experience as well as an auditory one

# Tom Kohl

with his wife, Brenda Mahoney  
OSO Fans



# Tracey Read

Former OSO Board President



When I began thinking about retiring and moving from Calgary to... where?... a major consideration was access to a certain level of culture, be that art, or music or theatre. I started looking at Kelowna and thought... a city that has a symphony orchestra is a city that could work for me. I eventually moved here and joined the OSO's board of directors.

During the five years that I volunteered, I was lucky to experience the entire vibrant life of the orchestra, from planning the seasons to concert nights. I met the outstanding guest artists who grace our stages — in no small part due to the commanding presence of our Maestra, Rosemary Thomson.

Maestra Thomson's encyclopedic knowledge is astonishing. She has an unerring sense of just which classic and innovative pieces will go together to create memorable experiences. Her exuberant personality draws the best out of each and every one of our wonderful musicians. Her vision with regard to the role the OSO needs to play in the community is, well, visionary. The programs she creates to engage everyone from 3-year-olds and on are phenomenal.

I'm looking forward to continuing to support the Symphony and watching (and listening) as it attains ever-greater heights, inspiring us all during its 60th year and beyond.

*Her vision with regard to the role the OSO needs to play in the community is, well, visionary*

# Nikki Attwell

OSO Marketing Assistant and Music Librarian



As a music lover, I've been a fan and subscriber of the Okanagan Symphony Orchestra (OSO) since my husband and I moved from Ontario to the Okanagan 15 years ago. Shortly after our arrival, I served on the OSO board.

In the fall of 2017, I was hired as the music librarian. It's my job to find the appropriate source of the printed music for every piece the orchestra plays at every concert, make sure it arrives in time, and is returned from whence it came when the concert is over. (Did you know we have over 700 titles in our own music library, but that each season many other titles are rented, borrowed, purchased, or downloaded from music supply sites? But that's another story...)

It's common for people involved in arts and non-profit organizations to wear many different hats. In the OSO, I've got quite a collection. In 2018 my role expanded to the administrative team and I am now responsible for assistance with marketing and development as well as some of the Symphony's graphic design and typesetting needs. (Think of me when you are reading the house program at a concert this season — yep, I will have designed it.)

And even though I don't play an orchestral instrument or sing, I have actually performed on two occasions with the OSO! If you attended the Christmas Special concert in 2011 or 2017 you might remember the Okanagan Handbell Chorus "ringing in the season" with great joy and enthusiasm. I was part of that group, and for we handbell musicians, it was the musical opportunity of a lifetime — challenging and a little bit scary to be performing with a professional orchestra, but so exciting, and more fun than it should be legal to have. Those are experiences I will never forget, and I am so grateful to Rosemary Thomson and the OSO for the opportunity.

I'm continually awed by the breadth and diversity of Rosemary's programming — from the classical masterpieces that have stood the test of centuries of time, to edgy and profoundly moving performances from the likes of spoken word artist Shane Koyczan and Inuit contemporary vocalist Tanya Tagaq.

The OSO is a treasure in the Okanagan that should never be taken for granted, and I am grateful to be a part of it — whether from the audience, the administrative office, or occasionally, bells in hand, even from the stage!

*continually awed by the breadth and diversity of Rosemary's programming*

## Annette LaGrange

Secretary, Board of Directors  
Okanagan Symphony Society,  
with her husband, Ray



While patrons of the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra, my husband and I were delighted to hear that a favourite conductor and musician was leaving the orchestra. That musician, Rosemary Thomson, was to become the energetic, creative, and artistically brilliant musical director of the Okanagan Symphony Orchestra. We were moving to Kelowna and our daughter-in-law, Olivia Walsh, would be a cellist for the OSO. Clearly, the OSO was meant to be an important part of our lives.

Although I appreciated the concerts and was intrigued by how the magic was made, I had not considered being instrumental in making it happen until I was invited to join the Okanagan Symphony Society Board.

My involvement is rewarding. I am mesmerized by how Maestra Thomson rehearses the orchestra and then makes the magic happen at concerts. We never miss Maestra Thomson's free pre-concert talks that enrich our concert experience with stories about the music and the composers. I also have the opportunity to chat with many of our outstanding guest artists who appreciate playing with this unique orchestra. Several of them return to perform or support us in other ways.

As a lifelong educator, I appreciate the educational opportunities that the symphony provides. Our young musicians cherish their Okanagan Symphony Youth Orchestra. At programs for the little ones, I watch with delight the unique ways children engage with the music, the musicians, and the instruments. At some point, these children and youth will become our enthusiastic patrons.

But serving on the Board has also been stressful and demanding at times. There is so much to do to assure that our OSO thrives. Although most of us know the importance of music in our lives, we may not appreciate that we are important for making the music happen. I can no longer take for granted that the OSO will thrive without our contributions, whether they are financial, gifts of time, or being faithful patrons.

I am so grateful for the opportunity to support the orchestra I love, one that offers a repertoire appealing to different audiences, that makes the most of our talented musicians, and that is in tune with our community.

our young musicians cherish  
their Okanagan Symphony  
Youth Orchestra

As a real estate agent, I work with a lot with people moving to Kelowna and who ask me quite often about the Arts. It's exciting to be able to tell them that we not only have a very vibrant arts scene in Kelowna but also a world-class symphony orchestra.

I've lived in Kelowna for almost seven years and generally attend two or three concerts a year but had never attended 'Concert in the Cellar', an annual fundraiser in support of the Okanagan Symphony Orchestra (OSO). That changed this year when a friend invited me to attend. I really didn't know what to expect but thought it would be a perfect setting to meet other people who love music and food and wine and support the OSO.

It was a beautiful evening and much more than I had anticipated. We were welcomed to Tantalus with their exceptional Old Vines Brut paired with tasty appetizers. Guests also sipped delightful Rosé, soft cherry blossom in colour and rich in flavour. An enjoyable "mix and mingle" reception unfolded in the Tasting Room and patio overlooking the vineyards and Okanagan Lake.

Energy and excitement was growing as we waited to move downstairs to the wine cellar for the dinner and concert. The guest artists, trumpeter Jens Lindemann and pianist Kristian Alexandra, took us to new musical heights as we enjoyed a wonderful four-course dinner paired perfectly with Tantalus wines.

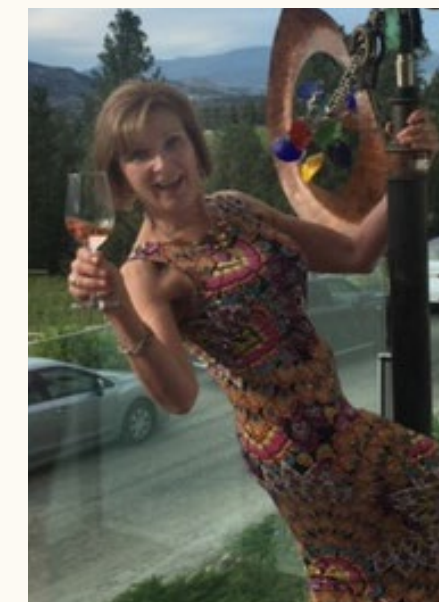
Sharing this special evening with friends made it all the more enjoyable. It was a feast for the senses and the intensity and energy that enveloped the 'cellar' was magical.

Truly a unique experience, one that I plan to repeat and one that has inspired me to continue to support the OSO!

not only a very vibrant arts  
scene but also a  
world-class  
symphony orchestra

## Sharon Maslen

Stone Sisters RE/MAX  
OSO Ambassador



## Gayle Lunn

OSO Marketing Consultant,  
with partner Eric Cranfield



My partner Eric and I arrived in Kelowna from southern Ontario in 2016. Like many others who have brought their jobs with them to the Okanagan, we were simply hoping to enjoy a more balanced lifestyle. We also wanted to find meaningful ways to contribute to our new community. What we've received in return has been so much more than we expected.

For the past two seasons, I've been supporting the OSO's marketing and promotional activity. As part of my role, I have the ongoing pleasure of meeting with members of the media, guest artists, sponsors, teachers, community groups and local businesses. So, while I might hover at the back of the venues during performances, I still get a 360 degree view of all the OSO does!

The thing that continues to strike me most is how strongly people feel a connection to the OSO. Those relationships are often driven by all the things that the OSO is doing on a daily basis, off the stage. These are the activities that the general public probably doesn't hear enough about.

In the past year alone, Rosemary Thomson and the OSO have raised awareness for mental health and support services, missing and murdered indigenous women, the role of women in business, and accessibility for the arts. Thousands of students each year get to experience the OSO's educational programs, developing lifelong listening and teamwork skills in the process.

As I watch the region continue to grow by leaps and bounds, I'm not only grateful for the OSO's contributions to the community, but to my life on a personal level. My activities with the symphony have connected me on a regular basis to so many wonderful people who are now inspiring my life both personally and professionally.

Definitely more than we expected.

I'm so happy we have chosen Kelowna as a place to live and work. And I'm excited to see how the OSO will continue to evolve through the support of all of us who are lucky enough to call the Okanagan 'home'.

*connected me to so many wonderful people who are now inspiring my life both personally and professionally*

## Olivia Walsh

OSO Cellist



As a freelance cellist in a large city, I was unsure of what to expect when I moved from Edmonton to Kelowna in 2006. Our daughter was 2 years old, and I was looking to connect with community both personally and professionally. I was delighted to learn that Okanagan Symphony was holding an open dress rehearsal, and that children were welcome. It was a date! I had no idea what this group of players would soon mean to me. I began playing with the OSO in 2007.

I often explain the orchestra in terms of a large family gathering. Our Maestra, Rosemary Thomson, sits at the head of the table as the matriarch. She, along with our dedicated board, staff and wonderful volunteers, plan an incredibly diverse meal. Each instrument section is a branch of the family. There is always an extra seat at the table for our guest artists, who we embrace and quickly become part of the extended family.

We all share a passion for our instrument, and the tradition behind it. We have different experiences and ideas, however, the common goal of producing an excellent and tasteful product is never compromised. We share the joys of life through music; we also take into account the history, the politics around it, and how it marks our current times.

Like all families, we celebrate each other's milestones, as well as grieve and honour members who are no longer with us. The best thing about this celebration is that it comes with an open-ended invitation to everyone in the community to join us. There is nothing better than connecting with an audience member and sharing our favourite part of the meal... I mean \*concert\*.

Little did I know that joining the orchestra would mean becoming part of a wonderful, eclectic extended family. I have been lucky enough to have my mother-in-law, Annette LaGrange, on the board as well as share the stage with some of the best soloists of today.

I invite you to join the OSO family in whatever capacity you can. I can promise that you will come away feeling nourished in your soul!

*We share the joys of life through music, we also take into account the history, the politics around it, and how it marks our current times*

# Trish Picherack

OSO Board of Directors



My love of music has been lifelong. I recall listening to my parents' recordings of Mario Lanza and Leonard Bernstein conducting the New York Philharmonic. Neither of my parents were musicians but both had a fondness for music. I loved to sing and dance, and I continue to sing in the Naramata Choir.

Symphonic music is so rich and deep and graceful. It is a place of comfort, peace and sheer joy. I love to see the orchestra as much as listen to the music: the musicians' and conductors' look of concentration; their nimble and passionate motions bring the music to life.

Since moving to the Okanagan six years ago I have enjoyed the Okanagan Symphony and was especially delighted to see music director Rosemary Thomson, with whom I was familiar as the conductor of the Calgary Philharmonic Chorus. The repertoire and breadth of the Orchestra is very impressive. Not only does the Okanagan boast a very professional and talented orchestra but they play in the three main centres in the Valley, including Penticton — close to my home.

I was also thrilled to learn that the Symphony Society has numerous other programs such as the Okanagan Symphony Youth Orchestra and a range of programs for children and the public to make music more accessible beyond its concerts.

Last year I was invited to join the Board of the Okanagan Symphony Orchestra Society. I was motivated by my desire to support the availability of orchestral music — classical and otherwise — in our communities, and by what I understand about the positive effects of music on health and the brain, and our emotional and psychological well-being and quality of life of people young and old.

As a member of the Board I am proud of our accomplishments artistically and as an organization. Keeping a relatively small regional orchestra going is a challenge but very worthwhile endeavor and I am delighted to be a part of the process in this 60th anniversary season.

I applaud all the brilliant and dedicated people who give so much to this organization in a variety of ways for the love of music.

*a range of programs for children and the public to make music more accessible beyond its concerts*

# Audrey (Tannant) Patterson

OSO Principal Trumpet



PHOTO CREDIT: JENNIFER GAUTHIER

As my 17th Season with the OSO begins, I'm struck by how many friends, colleagues, donors, managers, young musicians, and audience members have been brought into my life as a result of my tenure with the OSO. My life has been immeasurably enriched.

In October of 2003, I set out to audition for the Principal Trumpet position. I walked into a room full of 11 male candidates, and I knew that my chances depended equally on my performance, and on the willingness of the panel of OSO musicians to accept a 24-year-old woman for the job.

I was honoured to be welcomed with open arms. I was officially given the position in February of 2004 — after performing Tchaikovsky's *5th Symphony*. I will never forget maestro Doug Sanford walking through the orchestra during the applause to shake my hand. What a moment.

The following 16 years with the OSO have brought me more personally and professionally than I can articulate. My section of Trumpets, Trombones, Tuba, and French Horns (yes, they're all mine) have become my 'bruncles' (brother-uncles), as I call them. Trusted advisors through and through.

Colleagues have become friends, and some even closer to family. My son, Braxton, born in 2016, has more 'Aunties' and 'Uncles' than I ever did. There's something about watching my friend-family fall in love with and care for my child that brings tears to my eyes every time.

Musically, I've had many highlights, including being featured in two concerti — Haydn in 2006 and Vivaldi's duet with Jens Lindemann in 2018 — and several front-of-the-stage duos with vocalists. Watching my sister cry in the front row in Penticton while clutching a stranger next to her during one of my solo performances was incredible.

My favourite thing to do in the orchestra is to REALLY nail a performance. To feel the joy and purpose and excitement of collaborating with incredible professionals to achieve something greater than ourselves. <sigh> It is amazing.

Through every life experience — love, loss, injury, marriage, motherhood — the OSO has been a constant source of inspiration and stability.

My original plan in 2004 was to stay for two years with the OSO and move on in my career. Sixteen years later I can say that the community, the relationships, the mentorship, the camaraderie, and the sheer power of the musical experience has kept me here, and will keep me driving up the Coquihalla for years to come.

*the joy and purpose and excitement of collaborating with incredible professionals*

# Angela Mckerlich

*OSYO parent and player,  
with her son, Micah*



**H**ow lucky are we to have music in our lives? My mom said, when I was a child growing up in Winnipeg, I would spend hours and hours singing along with records and she could see music brought me an incredible amount of JOY.

I was so fortunate as a child to have opportunities to sing and travel many parts of the world with the Winnipeg Mennonite Children's Choir (Helen Litz), study flute with the dear Albert Horch (WSO), sing in the Masterworks Choir at Trinity Western University (Wes Janzen) and Okanagan Festival Singers (Leroy Wiens). All of these musical leaders had such a positive influence on my life and poured what I call "musical love" on me in my earlier years including many opportunities to perform with various orchestras.

My husband and I have two boys and enjoy providing them opportunities to learn and perform music and attend OSO concerts throughout the year as a family. Through the school's connection with Dennis Colpitts, my older son, Micah Mckerlich, was introduced to the Okanagan Symphony Youth Orchestra. He started playing bassoon with the OSYO in 2018 under the direction of Dennis Colpitts, Rosemary Thomson and further mentorship, his bassoon teacher Karmen Doucette. Words cannot even express the amount of passion, caring and education they give to these kids! These musical leaders have an incredible positive influence and provide unique experiences to children that are rare to find. It is a huge investment of time and effort to ensure the next generation is invested in the benefits of music in our community. I cannot thank each of them enough and encourage all the musical leaders out there to continue the effort and the cause!

The positive benefit of music in my life has been incredible. It brings me JOY. It brings my family JOY. This is something I want to continue to support in our community so that the next generation continues to have this incredible benefit!

*these musical leaders have an incredible positive influence and provide unique experiences to children that are rare to find*

# Carol Postle

*OSO Subscriber*



**A**s I relaxed comfortably at the October concert of the Okanagan Symphony Orchestra, I thought how lucky we are to live in this beautiful city with the resplendent autumn colours around us. Not only can we enjoy the visual beauty here, but we can also, with little effort, listen in person to the glorious live music from our own symphony orchestra.

At this 60th anniversary opening concert, we hear the magnificent strains of Dvorak's cello concerto from a world-class young cellist. Next is the exciting interplay of instruments throughout Rimsky-Korsakov's *Scheherazade* where melody travels throughout the orchestra from the OSO's talented concert master to flute to horn to oboe. It is a visual, as well as auditory, delight.

I so appreciate the OSO's enthusiastic music director. From the opening chords of "O Canada," Rosemary Thomson spellbinds with her warmth, sincerity, and humour as she details the upcoming music and even the fundraising cruise!

Music has always been important to me. My early days in the Kelowna High School included band, orchestra, and choir. My teaching career in three different provinces included years of elementary music students. My retirement years now include five amateur music ensembles!

There is a large leap from amateur ensemble to the professional orchestra. The hours of training and practice make it all look easy but from an amateur who works hard at my own music, I recognize the tremendous dedication professional orchestra requires. I am very grateful for such beauty and inspiration from the hardworking music director and players of the Okanagan Symphony Orchestra. Thank you!

*very grateful for such beauty and inspiration from the hardworking music director and players of the Okanagan Symphony Orchestra*

## Sherry Guhl

Music Teacher



*"Music gives a soul to the universe, wings to the mind, flight to the imagination and life to everything." — Plato*

*warm  
your heart,  
inspire  
your soul,  
ignite your  
imagination*

So, you're moving to the Okanagan?" friends would ask, with just a tinge of jealousy in their voices. Our transition to Kelowna from Edmonton began about three years ago.

Little did we realize at the time that this valley would have much more to offer than we had ever envisioned. Magical lake vistas, bountiful wineries and a plethora of outdoor pursuits were in store for us, we knew. We soon discovered that we would be adding live symphonic music performed by the Okanagan Symphony Orchestra, to that list. How exciting to not have to give up what we had always enjoyed in a big city setting!

Music had always been a part of my life, from those early piano lessons to later achieving a degree in piano, to going on to the University of Alberta to become an elementary teacher and school music specialist.

One of my primary goals was to introduce my students, ages five to eleven, to the orchestra and help them develop an understanding of and appreciation for symphonic music. Annual field trips to the Edmonton Symphony's education concerts were awe-inspiring and memorable, for both the students and myself. Their priceless reactions and spellbound attention to the performances were well worth the logistical nightmare of transporting 250 students downtown on aging yellow school buses! Imagine my delight when I learned that the Okanagan Symphony also offers educational concerts for students, and musical story times for preschoolers. Thank you, OSO, for making these valuable opportunities available in a smaller city like Kelowna.

Having attended numerous OSO concerts over the last few years, I am struck by the cohesiveness of the players, their level of skill, interpretation and musicianship, and by the amazing leadership provided by Maestra Rosemary Thomson. Her depth of skill and knowledge, genuine enthusiasm and ability to relate to audiences are just some of the reasons why she is well loved and respected by both the members of the orchestra and the patrons. The behind the scenes team as well as many volunteers ensure that each performance comes together seamlessly. The guest artists who have performed with the OSO have inspired and amazed audiences. In particular, it was a complete joy to listen to Bryan Cheng, the young cellist who brought down the house only a few weeks ago.

Why should someone attend an OSO concert? It's very much like wine tasting, really. You will be treated to a variety of colours, flavours and textures. Sometimes you may need to further develop your palette in order to truly appreciate fine music. How is the clarity? What about the finish? Has it been properly aged and blended? Music, like wine, appeals to a variety of tastes. Don't judge with only your first sip. Music, like wine, is best enjoyed with friends. The warm welcome you will receive from the OSO family makes one sense that you are immediately among friends.

Experiencing the Okanagan Symphony Orchestra's musical tasting flight will warm your heart, inspire your soul and ignite your imagination.

As a retired symphony musician, I took an immediate interest in the Okanagan Symphony when we moved to Vernon in 1997. What I saw and heard was a group of talented and dedicated musicians in a small orchestra performing great music with passion. As time went on, I came to realize that living in the Okanagan Valley is not where one would expect to find musicians of this caliber, but here they were, playing their hearts out to the enjoyment of enthusiastic audiences up and down the valley.

It was not long before I became involved with the Vernon Committee, an active group of local citizens who have dedicated much time and energy into promoting the orchestra. As the years went by I became more involved with this group of volunteers. We have always been passionate about our musicians, and have gone to no ends to keep them happy.

Over time the orchestra evolved, some good years and some not so good, but the dedication of the players was obvious — they wanted to make music. With the arrival of Rosemary Thomson in the fall of 2007 came a breath of fresh air to the music scene in the Okanagan Valley. Due to her enthusiasm and passion, the orchestra has grown in size and maturity. Every concert seems to be the best ever, with outstanding soloists and ingenious programming.

For a number of years I was privileged to be able to help out in the Youth Symphony of the Okanagan led by Imant Raminsh, then in the Okanagan Symphony Youth Orchestra under Rosemary Thomson and Dennis Colpitts, co-conductors. Here I had the opportunity to watch our youngest musicians advance from the back row to the front over several years, and some have gone on to play with the adults in the Okanagan Symphony. To see these young musicians' dedication and passion in this organization is to totally restore faith in our future generations.

*Every concert seems to be the best ever, with outstanding soloists and ingenious programming*

## Harriet Foltinek

Dedicated OSO Volunteer



# Rachima Stewart

Music Lover



“After silence, that which comes nearest to expressing the inexpressible is music.” — Aldous Huxley

All my life, music has been a strong presence. My parents were both musicians and I grew up with the “sounds” of practicing, the pressure of performance, making an income and the delightful outcome (hopefully) of a concert, opera or recital.

With my own children, being a large family, we had a variety of instruments, voice lessons and choirs happening among school activities and sports. A number of my kids’ teachers were members of the OSO or in choirs who were active in concerts and performances with OSO. A wonderful gift of being a parent!

Moving ahead to the empty nest, I have attended many symphony events and evenings; from watching the selection of our wonderful conductor, Rosemary; seeing new musicians sitting in their chairs and seeing some retire. I am certain that one day I will win one of the raffles, as the OSO is one of our “charities” in our home.

Professionally, I am in the field with people with diverse abilities. Last winter, during the Christmas season, we discovered that one of our participants knows many of the old carols and though having almost no verbal skills was able to let us know he loved the music. It was apparent that “K” had been brought up not only hearing old carols (“Lo, How a Rose E’re Blooming” being one of them) but had classical music in his being.

I began taking K to the symphony and recitals in Kelowna. K by all indications was very much at home at Kelowna Community Theatre (listening intently, not giving any indication re wanting to leave, closing his eyes and letting himself be carried by the music.). I am so grateful to have discovered this and am grateful for K letting me know his passion. Thank you to the OSO for giving us the gift of live music.

“If you are fortunate enough to have opportunity, it is your duty to make sure other people have those opportunities as well.” — K. Harris

*Thank you to the OSO for giving us the gift of live music*

# Alexandra (Allie) Paproski

Singer, Hugger, Therapist, Celebrator, Naramata Resident and OSO Groupie



Blessed with a move to the glorious Okanagan Valley eight years ago, I never, in one million or more years, imagined the most magical surprise that would be gifted to my heart. I had lived and travelled in big cities my entire life, witnessing the majesty of some of the most spectacular symphony orchestras. When I walked into the Cleland Theatre in Penticton for my first Okanagan Symphony Orchestra (OSO) performance, I was astounded by what I saw, heard and loved.

The bold, bright and beloved Musical Director was, herself, giving an educational talk? (Far from the expected diva sitting in her private dressing room waiting to be called). The staging was casual, intimate and yet professional. The young and vibrant orchestral humans played as if they had been waiting for me alone, forever. Their energy was joyous, shiny and so alive. (Not the pomp and circumstance of the opulence I was used to).

At intermission the lobby was filled with chatty musicians actually speaking to patrons alongside warm and helpful staff. Then came the heart shift for me, the sound of quiet whispering by a school aged child; the clapping sans shame at the “wrong” (actually perfect) time in the piece and the standing thunderous applause by the most adoring and celebratory audience I had ever been present to. I was instantly and lovingly charmed.

Today, my season tickets allow me sacred time with dear friends and a necessary personal pause in this mad world. My small financial gifts allow young musicians to be a part of the breath giving OSYO ensemble necessary for our future. My role on the Board of Directors allows newfound insight, perspective and enormous regard for the exhaustive hours, talent and patience it takes to govern a symphony orchestra.

Just when I thought it could not get any better, as a proud member of the OSO Chorus... learning, rehearsing and performing Verdi’s *Requiem* with over 200 fabulous people... was musically the closest experience to actually touching a higher power. It was exhilarating beyond words. The privilege no “big city” amateur songstress would ever (never) have the thrill to experience (see #symphonyselfie).

I see it. I hear it. I love it.

To all of the extraordinarily selfless people I have met at the OSO, thank you all for gently taking me by the hand and walking me home.

*It was exhilarating beyond words*

## Martin Krátký

OSO Cellist



Coming to the Interior of BC in August 2009, I was so fortunate to begin teaching right away in three cities. During my weekly travels I was awed by this semi-arid, wild landscape.

Of course, a musician new to an area is always hungry for work, so I was really overjoyed to begin subbing with the OSO. Right away I was struck by the dignity and healthy pride manifested by longer-serving members. Through the tenure of several music directors, they had built a mature kind of cradle in which we could relax and do our best. It was wonderfully ennobling to be part of such a group. I came to see that the cradle that holds and releases our music onstage is a many-handed creation — board members, administration, many volunteers, donors, and audience supporters added their own warp and weft to this resilient structure.

In 2012, the dear John Wells retired, and after an audition I was honoured to win his second chair seat. Despite being pretty shy in an administrative sense, I wanted to do my part, and served as the player's committee chair for a couple of seasons. Attending board meetings, the enormous dedication and generosity of those present became obvious, including then-president Graham Burns and executive director Scott Wilson.

For me, Rosemary's creative programming has been a consistent thrill; each program, and the season itself, an artfully arranged tapestry. In any other orchestra, repeating standard rep can become a dull chore. Here, fellow musicians summon the will and the warmth to bring each and every work to life. As a master orator, Rose's introductions are nourishment enough, gracefully unfolding threads of connection, returning our awareness in the most refreshing way to the essential texture and substance of the music.

Being in the cello section is like sporting the ultimately reliable warm sweater when it's chilly — with relaxed yet very skilled colleagues. Beyond the words, smiles, yes, frowns of worry at times, the intimacy of creating synchronous sound and gesture is so profound. I've also been blessed with wonderful stand partners, including the late Audrey King. While some found her experience and nonchalance intimidating at first, I found her unassuming excellence comfortable and reassuring — perhaps our shared Toronto pedigree.

Finally, as a teacher, I'm so grateful for such a robust program as the OSYO — it gives students a reason to work, and a way to pool their passion and skills together in painting a canvas much broader than their solitary music practice offers. Diversity strengthens the harmonic fabric, as the weave is reinforced from many directions. The glow of connecting socially and musically will indelibly dye their future careers and lives with warm tones.

In the fall of 1977, my wife Becky and I arrived in Vernon full of optimism and hope of beginning a new life in the Okanagan. I had in my hand a freshly-minted teaching certificate from the University of Victoria, and what I had understood to be a firm and enthusiastic promise of a teaching position in District 23. The position however turned out to be an illusion but Becky and I decided to stay and carve our own place in the life of the community.

That first autumn, I was introduced to the Okanagan Symphony Orchestra (OSO) and offered to play as a volunteer violinist. The following season two positions opened up — those of choral director and principal second violin. I applied and was accepted for both.

Now many years later, I look back at the great number of people I have known and the places, events and music I have experienced.

As choral director, I prepared standards such as Handel's *Messiah*, Mozart's *Requiem*, Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, Beethoven's *Mass in C*, and Bruckner's *Te Deum*, and introduced audiences to less familiar but now well-known works such as Orff's *Carmina Burana* and Stravinsky's *Symphony of Psalms*.

As a violinist, I had the wonderful opportunity to work closely with Music Directors Leonard Camplin, Doug Sanford and Rosemary Thomson as well as inspiring guest conductors such as Pierre Simard, Glen Fast and Nurham Arman.

As a composer, I was gratified to have the OSO perform a number of my works such as the tone poem 'And the Great Day That Dawns', *Missa Brevis*, my violin concerto, and most significantly, *Quaternity*, specially commissioned from me, with texts by my wife Becky, for the OSO's 50th anniversary.

At one particular nadir in the OSO's history, I had the privilege of bringing together professional and community players as the temporary Orchestra Okanagan to offer an entirely volunteer free-by-donation concert to the community. The programme culminated with Schubert's *Unfinished Symphony* with the idea that it symbolized the renewal of the OSO.

In 1989 under the initial aegis of the OSO, I founded the Youth Symphony of the Okanagan (now the known as the OSYO) and guided it through its first 23 years.

Perhaps the most light-hearted moment in my OSO memory has to be the rather spectacular and revealing costume malfunction of not one but two of the principals in a concert production of *Carmen* in Salmon Arm.

My time with the OSO has been greatly enriched by the many people I made music with and for — my stand partners and section members, other orchestra players, choral singers, soloists, conductors and last but far from least, you, the OSO audience and supporters.

Thank you so very much and here's to another 60 years!

## Imant Raminsh, C.M.

Retired OSO violinist, composer, and founder of Youth Symphony of the Okanagan



greatly enriched by the many people I made music with and for

# Dominique Bernath

OSO Principal Timpanist



**T**he Best Half of My Life...'  
22 years. That's how old I was when I began my position with the Okanagan Symphony Orchestra as Principal Timpanist. 22 years. That's how long I've been proudly performing with this formidable ensemble.

It was supposed to be a 'stepping stone' orchestra for my 22-year-old self. The regional gig to prepare my repertoire—CV before winning a major metropolitan position in an orchestra somewhere glamorous in the world. It's amazing what plans you have for yourself, then what actually happens turns out to be more important than anything you could've ever imagined...

I came to the Okanagan Symphony in 1997 while still in the 'audition circuit' and the longer I played with the OSO, the less I felt the need to audition elsewhere. I had found an ensemble that I loved, could contribute to, and that accepted me as I was. This would prove to be invaluable for me a musician...

In 2002, I developed a type of performance anxiety. It wasn't talked about much then, but now in the era of mental health awareness, I feel more comfortable sharing my story. In the middle of a performance of Bruckner's *Symphony No. 4* under our then-conductor Douglas Sanford, I developed an arm tremor during a soft roll on my timpani. It was a total shock, completely unexpected, and very debilitating when trying to control my mallets. Fight or flight, and I had no choice but to fight. After all, it was a performance. The first of four that weekend. Since that night, I've had a block in my soft playing that I've been working extremely hard to overcome — sometimes with glorious results, others not so much. My point? In any other professional orchestra, I could have been put at risk of losing my position to any player who didn't have this block. In the Okanagan Symphony, I was embraced by my colleagues, cared for by our patrons, and encouraged by both of my music directors. This is our orchestra community in a nutshell.

Several years ago, I had a serious repeat of this anxiety with soft, exposed timpani playing during our rehearsals for Sibelius' *Violin Concerto*. I remember calling our conductor, Rosemary Thomson, the night before the dress rehearsal, asking her to find another player. I didn't believe I could pull off three performances. But she wouldn't give up on me. She talked me down from my proverbial ledge and told me that I wasn't giving up, and provided me with some ideas on how to get through it. They worked. And I still use them today.

Am I over this block? No. Will I ever be? Hard to say. But here's what I find easy to say — the Okanagan Symphony Orchestra has given me the best 22 years of my life. I have grown so much as a musician, conquered musical mountains, gained victories over anxiety, and been supported and loved by my fellow musicians, leaders and community members. I will be giving back to this orchestra everything that I have for as long as they let me. I'm so very grateful.

*will be giving back to this orchestra everything that I have for as long as they let me*

# Barbara Ennis

OSO Subscriber,  
with her husband, James Anderson



**I** joyfully moved to the Okanagan in 2009. Early days living in Kelowna, I was fortunate enough to encounter a group of ladies who were regular OSO subscribers. I had been a regular fan of the Symphony while I lived in Calgary, so it was a natural fit for me to join this group.

From my first concert, I was completely enthralled with the OSO. What a joyful experience and what amazing talent in this orchestra as well as the extraordinary talent of our wonderful youth orchestra. I was completely spellbound, and have been since that very first time.

If that wasn't enough, we also have the amazing Rosemary Thomson as Music Director. The passion that Rosemary brings to the stage is partly what keeps me coming back. This Maestra is so joyous and upbeat that I look forward to her stories every single time she takes to the stage and brings me along on her journey.

Congratulations, OSO, on this extraordinary milestone. We are so very blessed to have you in our fold. Sixty years young, and more to come! I plan to be a subscriber for many seasons going forward. You bring joy to my heart.

*What a joyful experience and what amazing talent in this orchestra, as well as the extraordinary talent of our wonderful youth orchestra*

## Colleen Duff

OSO Fan, with her husband, Jim



My husband, Jim, and I relocated to Vernon from Calgary in the fall of 2011. As we settled into our new home and surroundings, we were keen to find out what the community had to offer in the way of new experiences and things unique to the Okanagan Valley.

It wasn't long before we discovered the beauty and magic of the OSO. Over the past eight years, we have enjoyed many of their concerts and other events. Our favorite is their Christmas concert, which we look forward to each year — we love the spirit of the season that automatically comes with this annual performance. It has become a holiday tradition for us!

As someone who is legally blind and cannot see the details of the stage like the instruments, expressions on the faces of the musicians or the passion with which they play, I am *truly blessed* to be able *to feel, hear and enjoy* all of this through the music they play for their audiences.

In addition, I've had the good fortune to have met and become friends with Denis Letourneau & Susan Schaffer who are both extremely talented violinists with the OSO. This has created a very special place in my heart for the Okanagan Symphony Orchestra.

Thank you to each and every one of the musicians, sponsors, volunteers and patrons who support this fabulous Symphony... how very lucky all of us are to have such a talented group of people, bringing us amazing entertainment in our very own beautiful Okanagan backyard!

*I am truly blessed to be able to feel, hear and enjoy all of this through the music they play for their audiences*

My love for singing is so strong that I say I came out of the womb singing. My mother sang lullabies at bedtime, and I sang everywhere we went, in the car, at the playground, in stores. To the point where she had to establish a family rule of "no singing at the dinner table" so we would finish the food on our plates.

My school and church placed equal value on singing and so I learned a large repertoire of songs growing up. We sang in the classroom, in assemblies and in choirs. I love the discipline of a choir. Everyone in rows, blending and harmonizing, and following the dynamics from the conductor. In university I studied musicology, taking all the music options in my humanities degree. I also took great advantage of Student ticket pricing at the box office which cultivated my love for the arts and the symphony.

The amount of collaboration required to produce symphonic music is astounding. Not only what happens onstage, but all of the backstage and behind the scenes work blends together to create this amazing production of sound. When we moved to Armstrong in 2007 and started attending the Symphony at the Vernon Performing Arts Centre, I marvelled at what this community had achieved together. Raising funds to build this beautiful theatre space, enticing world calibre musicians to move or travel here to play, drawing benefactors, and sponsors to support it all financially so tickets could be affordable for members of the community.

The philanthropy of the organization itself impresses me too: The Youth Orchestra, the Choir rehearsals, which are like voice lessons every week, the Schools program, the volunteer Board of Directors. It's been my pleasure to both support and participate in the Okanagan Symphony Orchestra these past 12 years, and I hope our collaboration continues for many more.

*the amount of collaboration required to produce symphonic music is astounding*

## Rev. Wendy Adams

OSO Sponsor, Singer and Music Lover



**Karen Fort**  
OSO Volunteer



Shortly after arriving in Penticton in 2002, my husband and I discovered the Okanagan Symphony Orchestra. I instantly knew that I wanted to become involved with the volunteer opportunities associated with this unique group of fine musicians, who, in those days, performed in four venues, including Salmon Arm. Right away, local Board member Anne Rabbitte responded to my interest, and invited me to sit on the local committee. Back then, the four communities had autonomous volunteer organizations that were very active, and that had their own budgets. Therefore, local fund-raising was very important. In Penticton, there was a very large group of active volunteers.

Anne's superior organizational skills kept us all active in promoting the OSO through garden parties, garden tours, assisting at performances, and selling raffle tickets for a motorcycle displayed in the mall. Also, at that time, there was a very well attended Symphony Supporters group that gathered at monthly luncheons. Local OSO musicians, community musical groups, and talented youth musicians entertained us, and the Board representative updated us on OSO matters and needs. Eventually this group was able to make an annual donation to the OSO from the proceeds that came from each event.

From this committee work, I learned first hand the financial challenges of sustaining an orchestra, and the importance of subscriptions, donations and volunteer service. Many of my first connections into my new community came through my work doing publicity for the OSO. I visited the people at Shaw Cable and the Penticton Herald, and, along with others, delivered posters to many local merchants and facilities.

The arrival of Rosemary Thomson as maestra was a very welcome and exciting event for us all. Her superior musical programming and leadership have brought the orchestra to constantly increasing levels of delight, and soul enrichment for us all. She is an educator par excellence, and has brought the gift of fine music to a large valley community. Through a Telus grant, she was able to send groups of OSO musicians to Penticton, Kelowna and Vernon to deliver monthly presentations on the various instrument groups in the orchestra. As a volunteer, I assisted the large audience of not only children and their parents, but also seniors and disabled members of the community. Our library auditorium was always packed!

Rosemary also initiated the annual concerts for local schools. These are wonderful events that entertain and instruct the volunteers as much as the children and their teachers!

Rosemary is a treasure beyond measure. I, along with hundreds of others, claim to be her "Number One Fan"! And... to all the fine musicians in the orchestra, I say loudly, "Encore!"

*I learned first hand the financial challenges of sustaining an orchestra*

**Kira Shiner**

Oboist and Soloist for OSO  
Diamond Anniversary  
performances, February 7-9, 2020



One of my earliest memories of attending an OSO concert was when I was around 9 years old. My parents took my sister and I to see the OSO's annual Christmas concert. I remember my sister saying to my dad that she wanted to play the "big instrument in the back that's sticking out of the orchestra" (aka the bassoon). Flash forward six years, and I started oboe lessons with the OSO's second oboist, Juanita Gomes. I could write a whole essay on how she's impacted my life, but I should probably keep this to one story. Let's just say she is someone who played a VERY important role in my musical life, for which I will always be grateful.

Eventually, I found myself in a "meet and greet" room with Maestra Rosemary Thomson and Maestro Dennis Colpitts to see if I could play in the OSYO (the OSO's youth orchestra). My sister was also there to join on flute, but then the story of how she "wanted" to play bassoon came up and I could see from the mischievous grins on Rose and Dennis' faces that she was going to play bassoon in the OSYO even though she had never even touched one before. For the next few years, we were known as the "double reed sisters" of the OSYO.

I spent three years in the OSYO and those times have become some of my fondest memories. I always learned so much during the side-by-side concerts with the OSO and will always be grateful for the numerous performance opportunities that Rose and Dennis granted me.

The members of the OSO will always be people I look up to, not only because they are all very talented, but because they show immense care for the music and for one another. Even today, I still get the same incredible support from everyone in the OSO as I did when I was in the OSYO five years ago. They are the greatest colleagues anyone could ask for and I cannot wait to share the stage with them again during the OSO's Diamond Anniversary concert!

*I will always look up to the members of the OSO, not only because they are all very talented, but because they show immense care for the music and for one another*

## Jana Luksts

Pianist, OSYO alumna, and soloist for OSO Diamond Anniversary performances, February 7–9, 2020



rowing up in the Okanagan, I was incredibly lucky to have the OSO play a role in my musical education across multiple instruments.

My first introduction to the OSO was through my inimitable piano teacher, Elizabeth Wocks, who played French horn with the symphony. It was always special to see my teacher on stage! When I began taking violin lessons, my teacher, Ken Stromberg, often played with the OSO as well. Both of my wonderful teachers encouraged me to take part in the OSYO, conducted by Imant Raminsh at the time, where I had the opportunity to encounter some orchestral masterworks on the violin — like Beethoven's *Fifth Symphony*.

As a teenager, I was a member of Candesca, directed by Alexandra Babbel, and we had the opportunity to sing Mozart's *Requiem* with the OSO — what an unforgettable and powerful experience!

As a listener, I was able to see many impressive concertos from the audience. Most memorably, a dazzling performance of Tchaikovsky's *Piano Concerto No. 1*, performed by Ian Parker. It was the first time I had ever heard it live!

Now, it's so exciting to have the honour of joining the OSO with Ernst Schneider's *Concerto for Piano and Orchestra*. The OSO has played a role in so many facets of my musical education — violin, voice, and now piano. And for that, I will always be deeply grateful. Thank you, OSO!

*the OSO has played a role in so many facets of my musical education, and for that I will always be deeply grateful*

My first experience playing with the OSO began when I was around 14. I started to play the violin five years prior and I am so grateful that my first violin teacher, Bev Martens, provided me with the knowledge, technique and nurturing that led me to loving and pursuing violin.

One of the first concerts I played with the OSO included the piece *Scheherazade*. I still remember the hours of practicing the section violin part at home. I wasn't alone in my preparation though, as my sister Colleen was also playing violin in that concert. Practicing together was always a highlight of my upbringing. We were fortunate to begin playing in the OSYO (then known as the YSO) a few years prior and continue playing throughout high school.

Through the exceptional teachings and mentorship from conductor Imant Raminsh, we were familiar with what to expect when playing with an orchestra. Nevertheless, I knew that my first time playing with the OSO was a significant moment and opportunity.

From the moment we walked through the stage doors, I remember feeling immediately welcome. Although we were really only kids (my sister was probably around 11 at the time?!), I felt supported and encouraged. From the first downbeat, I knew that this was going to be something extremely special and pertinent for my path in music.

Inspired by the leadership from conductor Rosemary Thomson and the beautiful solos from Concertmaster Denis Letourneau, whom my sister and I later had the privilege to study with, I remember coming home in awe and wanted to keep practicing my part.

Ultimately, the OSO provided me with the initial experiences that inspired me to become an orchestral musician. The OSO also began teaching me the skills of how to be a professional at a young age because of the responsibility that comes with learning your part, being prepared and navigating through rehearsals. Having the extraordinary opportunity to be mentored by Sylvie Lange and Heinz Boshart throughout this time as well provided me with lifelong knowledge about chamber and orchestral playing.

A few years later, my sister and I had the opportunity to perform Bach's *Double Violin Concerto* with the OSO. It was indescribably special to perform with my sister. The culmination of support and love from an orchestra that provided us with so much wealth in musical experiences throughout our formative years, is something I will always remember. Because of everyone in the OSO, my teen years were filled with so much incredible music making, nurturing, love, and community that felt like a family!

## Alicia Venables

Violinist, OSYO alumna, and soloist for OSO Diamond Anniversary performances, February 7–9, 2020



*experiences that inspired me to become an orchestral musician*

# Nicholas Denton-Protsock

Cellist, composer, OSYO alumni, and soloist for OSO Diamond Anniversary performances, February 7–9, 2020



My story with the Okanagan Symphony Orchestra began as a community member cellist, when I was about 14 years old. The almost four years of rehearsals and concerts that followed as an understudy with the orchestra, greatly aided my musical and professional training. They played an important part in facilitating my acceptance into institutes such as the National Youth Orchestra of Canada, and eventually the San Francisco Conservatory of Music. In this regard, part of what I have been able to accomplish thus far as a cellist and composer can be directly attributed to the opportunities I had to work with the OSO in my teenage years.

The music community in the Okanagan was, and continues to be just that — a community. It was a place where I felt valued as an individual, and was reciprocally expected to put forth my best efforts in contributing back to the projects I participated in. It fostered a collaborative attitude I would not have acquired if I had begun my training in a large city — and for this, I am eternally grateful.

That's why I am very excited to once again be sharing the stage with the OSO in its 60th season, along with the Okanagan Symphony Youth Orchestra, and so many of my mentors and friends, including my cello teacher, Morna Howie, Maestra Rosemary Thomson, and all the other musicians I grew up performing alongside.

*I felt valued as an individual, and was reciprocally expected to put forth my best efforts in contributing back to the projects I participated in*

# Catherine Dawson

Long-time OSO supporter, volunteer and patron



Forty-one years ago, just before we moved to Vernon, my husband, Les, said "I would like to play the violin again." Despite having no knowledge of what that entailed, I said "good idea." I also made a casual remark about wanting to ride horses again and teach our four children. I received a similar response. Thus, were the two main themes of our new lifestyle in the Okanagan agreed upon.

The OSO was largely comprised of community players at that time and after a few months of lessons, Imant Raminsh invited Les to join the second violin section. From that beginning our commitment grew to involve me as well as two of our children. At one time our son John, aged 19, was stage manager and drove the raffle prize of a fancy Mercedes up and down the valley! He also played in the viola section for a number of concerts. His younger brother was the sole youth cello when a Suzuki group performed at a concert. At age twelve he was happy to do this, once he was assured that his picture would not be in the local paper. Twelve year old jocks are not supposed to be interested in classical music.

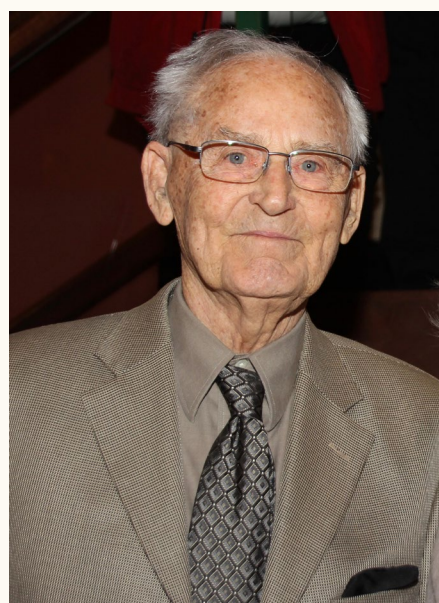
About 1997, a new coordinator of the Vernon committee was needed and I assumed that role. By now I was totally "hooked on the classics" and was very involved since my husband was playing in the orchestra as well as being the Society Treasurer. The Committee members helped with many fund raising events both locally and valley wide. We also worked hard in many ways to raise the profile of the OSO, which was growing in stature as the years went by. These activities involved meeting many musicians and OSO supporters, all of whom were interesting musical people and some became our good friends.

As the economic situation of the OSO worsened, it became necessary to approach individual supporters looking for much more than the donation of a raffle prize. That is a task that I never thought I would be able to do, but for the OSO anything is possible. Once again, the generosity of local people was very heart warming. One supporter would pledge a significant sum of money with the provision that we raise an equal amount from the community — which we did several times.

On a more personal note, I was amazed by the music the first time *Carmina Burana* was programmed. When it was presented again, I was accepted into the chorus. It was the thrill of a lifetime to be singing both *Carmina Burana* and the *Messiah* later that year. The orchestra and all who are involved with it have educated me and my family and enriched our lives immeasurably.

*the thrill of a lifetime*

Leonard  
Camplin,  
C.D., F.T.C.L.,  
A.R.C.M., L.G.S.M.  
Conductor Laureate, Okanagan  
Symphony Society



Congratulations to the Okanagan Symphony Society celebrating its Diamond Anniversary Season.

In the sixth season of the Okanagan Symphony Society (OSS), September 1964, becoming the third music director was a career highlight and extremely satisfying musically. I look back on those years with satisfaction.

My military career included Director of Music of the Royal Canadian Engineers Band (RCE) [Base Chilliwack], Canadian Forces Naden Band (CF Naden) [Victoria], and Canadian Forces Princess Patricia Light Infantry Band (PPCLI) [Calgary]. My non-military professional career appointments included Director of Music of the Vancouver Metropolitan (VMO) and Okanagan Symphony (OSO) Orchestras, as well as adjudicating at band festivals.

The OSO was augmented with players from the RCE Band and VMO, thus resulting in a raised level of performance. From 1966 to 1971 the two orchestras collaborated and played a series of concerts, which were performed before Vancouver and Okanagan audiences. They also recorded a live performance in two LP records.

In 1974 the Vancouver Radio Orchestra (John Avison, conductor) toured the Okanagan, appearing in concert with the OSO and myself as conductor, in Vernon and Penticton.

Later the OSS was able to hire resident professional musicians as well as having the continued support of community volunteer musicians.

The Okanagan Valley by 1977 was culturally rich with the population growth. Its symphony had not kept pace, and needed a full-time resident conductor and music director. Upon my retirement from the Canadian Forces in 1978, I accepted the appointment. My aim was to play quality performances, greater repertoire and more concerts particularly for public school audiences.

In 1979, the "Sinfonia" was formed from the resident professional musicians (featured as soloists). It was a touring chamber orchestra that performed in small communities and public schools. The "Sinfonia" toured to Revelstoke and the Kootenays, and its performances became the fifth concert for the OSO season.

Choirs involved children to adult, and featured major works of Mendelssohn's *Elijah*, Mozart's *Requiem*, Bizet's *Carmen* and Orff's *Carmina Burana*.

The OSO invited the Kiwanis Music Festival winner of the Okanagan Symphony Performance Class to perform as soloist with the orchestra in the upcoming season.

Encouraged by Canada Council grants for 'Canadian content' brought collaboration with composers and artists, a small sample of which included:

- a. Composers Michael Conway Baker, Imant Raminsh, Dale Reubart, Gordon McGhie and Ernest Schneider.

- b. Guest Artists: Musicians from within the orchestra, and artists from outside the valley including Fred Davis, narrator (television and radio personality – Front Page Challenge); Maureen Forrester, contralto; Gary Dahl, baritone; Ian Hampton, cello; Ann Cooper, soprano; Erica Northcott, soprano; Riki Turofsky, soprano; Kathleen Murison, contralto; Mary Lou Fallis, soprano & comedienne; Kevin Fitz-Gerald, piano; Dale Reubart, piano; Robert Silverman, piano; Liona Boyd, guitar; Anne Mortifee, singer-songwriter/ballet and film score composer; Shauna Rolston, cello; Nancy DiNovo, violin; Armand Ferland, clarinet & conductor; Guy Few, trumpet & piano; James Campbell, clarinet; Alain Trudel, trombone; and Harold Micay, guitar.
- c. International Guest Artist Camilla Wicks, violin.



**Special Events:**

- 1985 During the Silver Jubilee Concerts (spring 1985), *The Toy Symphony* included the founding members of the OSO: Eva Cleland, triangle; Josephine Karen, drum; Wilbur Hill, rattle; Barbara Smith, cuckoo; Jean Bulman, trumpet; and Elsa Fischer, quail.
- 1988 "...with a little help from your friends" the OSO "Sinfonia" held a concert at St. Andrew's Wesley Church in Vancouver to benefit the Vancouver Symphony Orchestra during a time of hardship.
- 1989 The OSO and the Canadian School of Ballet perform *The Nutcracker*
- 1992 Celebrating Vernon's 100th Anniversary, the OSO performs A Special Centennial Concert.

As the 1994–95 season closed, the OSS presented to me a bronze plaque that read "In Appreciation, Leonard Camplin, Conductor Laureate, for dedicated and inspired service as Music Director 1964–1995".

Sincere best wishes are extended to the Okanagan Symphony Society and orchestra under the conductorship of Rosemary Thomson celebrating the 60th Anniversary. It is gratifying noting the continued success. Audiences from the cities and surrounding areas are fortunate to have this musical entity in their midst — may it long continue.

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from the  
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long continue

## Patricia Baker

*OSO supporter, volunteer, patron, and OSYO parent*



I can't imagine winter without Okanagan Symphony Orchestra concerts. Our family moved to Canada from New Zealand in 2011, and since then the Okanagan Symphony has been an important part of our social and cultural network. Attending concerts was a natural extension of our children's study in violin/viola and piano, even if it meant them sleeping through the second half. We have all grown to love the comfort of attending a local, regular, symphony where we can put aside life's duties, and be transported, inspired, moved to tears, entertained, or transfixed by the language of music.

The magic of the symphony has moved beyond merely attending for us. At the age of six, Henry, our third child and a budding pianist, attended a music camp. As we sat and listened to the final string concert where 75 players played in unison, Henry turned to me and said, "Mum, I've got to learn the violin!" The impact of playing music together had struck him. Yes, he has studied violin and piano from that time on, and all four of our children play in the OSYO. Emily, our oldest, also plays violin in the OSO as a student.

The importance of a local symphony is especially apparent when raising children. Having professional musicians living in the community improves the quality and range of instruction available. It also makes learning music more relevant to life, as they have role models to inspire them in the pursuit of excellence.

The impact of these musicians has inspired our family to undertake charity projects for the OSO. Working with professional musicians to coach young Okanagan musicians in chamber groups, we hosted a fundraising event on the O'Rourke Family Estate, at which the young musicians were the feature entertainment. The professionals shared not only musicianship, but also technical and staging expertise with the youth, and the growth in these young musicians through this process was tangible.

I think it is fair to say I can't imagine life in the Okanagan without the Okanagan Symphony Orchestra!

*be transported, inspired, moved to tears, entertained, or transfixed by the language of music*

All the stories I have of the Okanagan Symphony Orchestra are fond ones! They begin around the time of the Okanagan Symphony's 50th anniversary season, when I was visiting dear friends, Sylvie Lange and Heinz Boshart. Sylvie was presenting me in recital in Kelowna, and while Heinz was coaching me in preparation for my conducting debut, he said, "I think you and Rosemary will love making music together! We need to arrange something."

And so it began! Our incredible musical journey began with Tchaikovsky's *Piano Concerto No. 1*, which established our lifelong and most cherished musical friendship. Over the last decade the OSO and I have shared the stages of the Okanagan Valley, performing my favourite concertos, from Gershwin's *Concerto in F* and *Rhapsody in Blue*, Beethoven's *Emperor Concerto*, and now perhaps the most prolific of all, Brahms *Piano Concerto No. 1*.

Besides the actual concerts, some of the most fun and memorable evenings were the musical soirées in the cellar, that took place at Tantalus Vineyards. I played some solos, some duets with Rosemary, even some trios with other guests, all with delicious wines in hand!

I also enjoyed viewing all the silent auction items, and found it quite amusing that I found myself to be one of the auction items! One year the auction item was to have me perform a private recital in a private home, catered and outfitted with all the most wonderful local wines. And the other time the auction item was to have the opportunity to conduct the OSO, with me at the piano at soloist. Both were fabulous experiences, one with Judy and Graham Burns, the other with Diane Aizen at the podium!

So how does it get any better? Music, friends, wine, I'm just thrilled to have this amazing friendship and look forward to more memorable stories, yet to come.

Happy 60th, my beloved OSO!

*established our lifelong and most cherished musical friendship*

## Ian Parker

*Guest soloist with OSO for Masterworks IV "OLD FRIENDS," March 6-8, 2020*



# Sarah McIntyre

Principal trumpet of the OSYO



My OSO story began at the age of 15 when I first joined the trumpet section of the OSYO. I had never been exposed to playing orchestral music before, and I had no idea how many doors this experience would open for me.

Halfway through my first year with the OSYO, I met the OSO's principal trumpet, Audrey Patterson, at a trumpet sectional. As soon as I did, I knew I had to study with her. She has changed my life both musically and personally, as she is now not only my teacher, but also a colleague and a friend. Through the laughs and the tears, the successes and the struggles, Audrey has been there for me. She is one of my biggest inspirations, and I am so proud to be following in her footsteps as the principal trumpet of the OSYO.

The OSYO and OSO have given me so many wonderful opportunities that I am so fortunate to have had at a young age. My favourite memory would have to be during 'Viva L'Italia'; the side-by-side concert with Jens Lindemann. I played in a masterclass for Jens, and afterwards, he asked me to play for his encore performance with him that night. This was the exact moment that solidified the fact that I wanted to pursue trumpet performance as a profession. Not only is that my favourite OSO memory, it was one of the best days of my life.

Despite the fact that I have arthritis in my hands, I will not let it stop me from playing. I have had amazing support from everyone in the OSYO and OSO. I could not be more grateful to have two wonderful conductors, Maestra Rosemary Thomson and Maestro Dennis Colpitts, who have always believed in me and pushed me to do my best. They have given me the opportunity to perform the Arutunian *Trumpet Concerto* with the OSYO in May, and it is a dream come true. I am forever grateful to every single person that has been a part of my OSO story thus far!

*it was one of the best days of my life*

# Myrna Coates

Retired music teacher



Okanagan Symphony Orchestra School Concerts: What a privilege it is for our students to attend such amazing performances!

The first time I took students to the Symphony, I asked one boy what he thought of it, and he said, "This is my first time, but it won't be my last." YES! I could not have asked for a better response.

Then a Grade 6 student ran up to me and said, "We have to play that song! We have to play that song!" We had just attended the 'Monster' show, and I expected he was speaking of "Monster Mash," a fun piece, but next to impossible for young players... but no. "We have to play that song — In the Hall!" YES! again.

I ordered the music for young bands, it became one of our favourites, and still is. That young student, now a young adult, has just returned to Princeton and has rejoined Princeton Community Band. I had the privilege of teaching band for 14 years, in Princeton, and what did the community band play at our last concert, along with the older students? "In the Hall of the Mountain King." The beginning students loved the imagery of Pier Gynt sneaking through the trolls' caves.

Over the years, Rosemary Thomson and OSO introduced my band students to such a variety of music. I was never sure what impact such exposure might have on my students. I had many 'hockey players' in band, and I was always pleased to hear their being impressed with student musicians of their own age who performed with the OSO.

Making the bus trip from Princeton to Penticton to attend the OSO school concerts was an all-day excursion, usually complemented with a visit to Tickleberry's ice cream parlour in Okanagan Falls on our return. Although this was a real treat that became a 'tradition', the students never mentioned that as being their most memorable experience of the day. It was always the music, or the musicians, or the stories Rosemary told, or the instruments, many of which they had never seen. On several visits, my very special friend, Lauris Davis, gave them a 'close-up' demonstration with her oboe.

One of my students, who did not continue in band when she moved to secondary school, when encountering me in the hallways, would often comment on the memorable trips we made to concerts. My hope is that she will seek out such performances in her adult life.

*what a privilege it is for our students to attend such amazing performances*

# John Whitehead

Concertmaster chair sponsor



I grew up in a house full of music. We had a music room full of instruments that my dad was able to play. In fact he was one of those natural musicians who could pick up any instrument and within a little while had figured out how to play it. We had a collection of keyboards, guitars, basses (both upright and electric), drums and various winds and brass. Although I didn't have the opportunity to learn to play an instrument as a child, I did sing in boys' church choirs in England, and learned music that way.

Music of all genres was around us growing up: classical, jazz and pop and definitely had an impact on us.

When my wife and I moved to the Okanagan Valley in 2004 we quickly connected with the OSO and became subscribers. We have had innumerable wonderful experiences being in the OSO audience over the past 15 years.

Teamwork and leadership abound within the OSO. As an executive and leadership coach I recognize how important it is to be present and watching. It is clear to see how Rosemary brings all players together as one unit. Each musician is present as they perform. Often, I just watch one or two musicians and marvel at their focus on timing and technique.

I am particularly pleased to be able to sponsor the Concertmaster Chair, a position that provides a unique leadership role by decoding what the conductor is looking for to the musicians. OSO concertmaster Rachel Kristenson does this by making decisions regarding bowing and other technical details of violin playing for the violins, and sometimes all of the string players and then to the orchestra as a whole. She is a joy to watch and hear.

*teamwork and leadership  
abound within the OSO*

# Rachel Kristenson

OSO Concertmaster

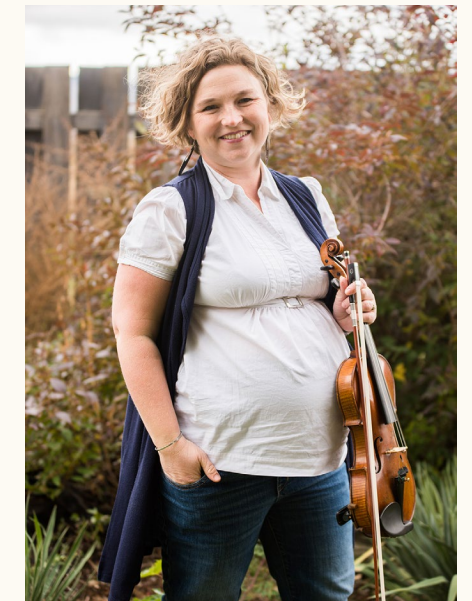


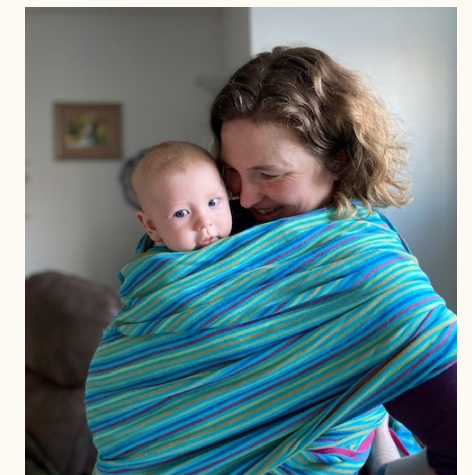
PHOTO CREDIT ALISHA KHAN PHOTOGRAPHY

I t was 2006, and I was just about to go into the orchestra pit with the Calgary Philharmonic Orchestra for an opera performance. Rose Thomson appeared in the hallway and said, "I'm a finalist for a job! With the Okanagan Symphony Orchestra!" This was the first time I'd ever heard of this beautiful orchestra.

Fast forward ten years, I was living in BC (after being in Nova Scotia and Alaska), had four kids, and got to sub as an extra player with the OSO in February of 2016. It was so wonderful to reconnect with Rose after so many years apart. Then I won the concertmaster audition in May 2016, and after a probationary period was offered the job in April of 2017. I was so excited to be part of the OSO family! Since then, I have played many beautiful pieces (including the famous solos from *Scheherazade*), met many people I call my best friends, grown as a musician, communicator, and leader, and had two more babies for a total of six children! I can't imagine a more supportive environment than the OSO to accomplish all of these milestones!

A large part of why the OSO is so special is because so many people are sharing their gifts in their areas of excellence. Rose is a brilliant conductor, musician, communicator, and human being. The members of the orchestra are not only fabulous musicians but also the kindest, purest, most authentic people I've ever been blessed to call friends. They consistently share their gifts of time, talent, and good humour with all of us! The members of the board and staff share gifts of creativity, hard work, and grit freely with us musicians and the wider OSO family to keep us doing what we know best. The donors, volunteers, patrons give so much as well. Without their gifts of treasure, time, and trust, the OSO would not be able to exist. I feel so blessed to add my gifts to this larger OSO experience, knowing that we're all in this together!

In this time of uncertainty and physical separation, the gift of live music has become even more important to me. Yes, we can turn on a screen or a speaker and be touched by a performance. But to sit beside another warm human being, breathing together, playing or watching together, having the same sound waves bouncing to my ears and to your ears... this cannot be replicated anywhere else than in a live musical experience. I miss my colleagues deeply, I grieve creating in-the-moment, fleeting, yet so fulfilling art with them, and I miss connecting with our audience in such a special way. I look forward to gathering together again to share our gifts with each other as soon as possible.



with Thule, baby #6

*grown as a musician,  
communicator, and leader*

# Anne Rabbitte

Former President OSO, Penticton Board Representative, and Volunteer



From its inception, fundraising for the OSO was a big part of each centre's activities. Arriving in Penticton in September 1990, I became very active as a volunteer, soon heading the local committee and fundraising activities. Many volunteers helped in numerous events, such as assisting at the local Bingo, where once I fell asleep one evening while "on duty." The Bingo staff thought it very funny, and sent me home! We had several Sunday Musical Afternoon Teas, held in the gardens of subscribers. Music, wine, and strawberry cream scones. What more could you want? Garden tours with music and afternoon tea were held for several years. Yard sales were held on the grounds of the Leir House. It was a lot of work, but a lot of fun.

Larger raffle fundraisers were organized out of Kelowna. Prizes were RVs and other vehicles, one being the first "Smart Car" in the valley. The trunk could hold four paper grocery bags or a set of golf clubs!

Most interesting of all were the "Fat Boy" Harley Davidson motorcycles. Each centre had the bike for about two weeks. In Penticton, we managed to have the bike displayed on the stage of Slack Alice's — the appropriately named and well-known night club in town. Four burley men, (bouncers), hoisted the bike on stage, and the "Show Girls" moved between the bike and the pole. This establishment was very busy Friday and Saturday nights, and we did very well selling our tickets there. The "Girls" helped with the selling, as did our OSO General Manager and some musicians who came from Kelowna to see what we were really doing.

Slack Alice's always held a Show and Shine event over Easter. Bikers came from BC, Alberta, and the USA. We had to make sure we had enough tickets for the "Biker Boys"! Even the owner of the Chinese Laundry Restaurant next door came running in with \$200 in hand looking for tickets. While it was rather unusual, we did have a lot of fun and many laughs.

Volunteering for the Symphony introduced me to many Penticton people who were volunteers, and many have become life-time friends.

*it was a lot of work, but a lot of fun*

# Maja Pannes

OSO Intern from Hildesheim, Germany



On February 22 I got to Kelowna. Although it is my fourth time visiting the Okanagan I knew from the beginning that this time it would be different. My first visit had been in January 2018 when I worked at Big White for a couple of months. At that time I did not know that I would return to this place one day. But I did. The reason for my second and third visits was my boyfriend who I had met at the ski resort. He is from Kelowna. By then I had figured I would come here more regularly.

Around two years later I decided to do an internship in Kelowna. I am studying arts and cultural studies in Germany and music is my Major. Not only is this a great chance to spend some time in the Okanagan, I thought, but also to gain experience in music and concert management as well as getting to know arts organizations in the valley.

So on February 22 I got here, on the 23rd I bought an old car (I knew you don't get around in Canada without a car) and on the 24th my six-week internship at the OSO office started. I was really excited.

The first three weeks went by in a rush. Besides supporting Tanya and Nikki, two wonderful and hardworking ladies, with their administrative work, we had — as they told me — the toughest week in a long time coming up: three performances of a completely new school show and three performances of a Masterworks concert in a total of six days. Although that meant to not have the weekend off and work in the evening it was the best week. I had the chance to not only see five out of the six concerts but also to participate in the school shows myself. Rosemary had given me the responsibility for the slide show that was supposed to run in the background during the show. It was an important part of the show because it visualized the music and the story of the narrator.

Right after the last concert was over, COVID-19 became a serious issue which forced the organization to first cancel the next planned concerts, then rehearsals and after a week we were not even allowed to work at the office anymore. For me that basically meant that my internship was over.

Even though it ended differently from how I expected I had an amazing time. Everyone who I had the opportunity to meet — staff, artists, musicians, but also back stage crews at the venues and of course the incredible Rosemary — were welcoming and kind to me. I got to know the Okanagan much better and learned a lot about arts and culture in Canada.

Thank you for letting me experience your great society. May we meet again.

*to gain experience in music and concert management*

## Geraldine Parent

*OSO Executive Director*



PHOTO CREDIT LYNDA MILLER

I have thoroughly enjoyed reading all the OSO stories for this 60<sup>th</sup> anniversary project and the insight they provide to someone new like myself. Many of our contributors gave and continue to give so much of themselves to the OSO, whether through volunteerism, financial contributions, or through the music itself. This is a rich and collective history, one that has been worth celebrating this season and one that takes on significant importance at this current time.

My OSO story is not extensive by any means. I've interacted with the OSO on and off since my arrival in the Okanagan 25 years ago and more recently over the last three years, but since November I have been totally immersed in all things OSO.

Here are some of my musings as the newbie:

The charming yellow Knowles House at 865 Bernard where we call home, has its own set of quirks and idiosyncrasies. Among the many are paper thin walls and one large 'dining room' table where every meeting, large or small, takes place... let's just say, there is no quiet space in the house when all the family are home.

While I understood this theoretically, the practicality of performing a three-city tour every month is a bit crazy. Imagine the many details related to an OSO concert production that takes place in three different venues, using two different ticket agents, involving the movement of 45 musicians and any guest artists, coordinating hundreds of pages of sheet music, hospitality and front of house needs all before anyone steps into the theatre. Add to that any potential week-of weather disturbances, unexpected musician sickness, or a miscommunication ... you just have to be ready for anything.

I must admit I'm having some difficulty making the connections between our musicians — their names, to their faces to their instruments. Given I've got some extra time right now while we are all "staying at home" I might tackle a little crafting project — imagine a seating chart complete with photos, names and instruments all set on a stage. I can picture it now.

Musings aside, my first six months with the Society has been totally engrossing, and like any good story, complete with fits of laughter and moments of tears. While my OSO story has only just begun, I am curious to turn the pages on the unfolding scenarios and the new characters that will present themselves in the weeks and months ahead.

*like any good story, complete with fits of laughter and moments of tears*

I have learned so much this past season with the addition of "My OSO Story". People have shared a great deal about themselves and why their connection to the Okanagan Symphony is so meaningful. My hope is this holds true with our story as well.

Graham and I moved to the Okanagan in 1993. Our history with the organization has been as varied as the history of the organization itself. We have been Board members, donors, sponsors, fundraisers and I, a chorus member. When asked to write this story, I had a difficult time deciding what I would like to share. In the end, I guess it is about what brings me the greatest joy from my & our relationship with the Okanagan Symphony.

So what comes to mind? We frequently invite guests to join us for an OSO performance or event. Unbeknownst to us, one couple were symphony "virgins", never having been to a symphony before. During our preconcert dinner; they shared their deep concern, actual fear they may not like the show. Happy to report, the sheer surprise and excitement that was expressed from their experience, was both enriching and gratifying for all.

Then our friend, who indeed is a Country and Western music lover first and was quite convinced classical music, was not his thing. He then had the good fortune to enjoy a private performance by four siblings who are members of the OSYO (Youth Symphony). The opportunity gave him a first hand look at the dedication both the players and the family required for these young musicians to succeed. The passion and joy for their music and their willingness to share their gift has provided him some insight into why music is so important to support and sustain.

Finally, sharing the experience of one of our school shows with a donor. While waiting to enter the concert hall, he had observed the children arriving and after sitting for a moment, he turned to me and said with a huge smile, " This is amazing. Look at all of the children, smiling, excited. Most of these children have never had an opportunity to be in a concert hall, let alone experience live music such as this. This makes me very happy. This is why we support, it makes it all worthwhile."

The sheer joy and excitement of wanting to jump out of your seat, whistle and cheer because you know you have just experienced the extraordinary. Seeing the musician's pride after sharing their music with their colleagues and their audience. Experiencing the passion Music Director Rosemary Thomson brings every time she shares her expertise and knowledge from the stage.

We cannot forget the unsung heroes behind the scenes, the resolve and dedication of our staff that help make all of this happen. The organization is so blessed to have their smiles, knowledge and let's get it done attitude, which gets it

## Judy Burns

*President, OSS Board of Directors*



PHOTO CREDIT LYNDA MILLER

Even though we are in a very challenging time where there is much uncertainty, one thing I do know, music brings people and communities together.

done. There are many fond memories of the volunteers we have had the privilege to work with over the years. What would we do without volunteers? Finally, our supporters, that basically includes everyone who knows and loves the Orchestra. One has to be in awe at how people over the years continually step up and contribute in some way to help sustain our organization.

Today, even though we are in a very challenging time where there is much uncertainty, one thing I do know, music brings people and communities together. How and when we come through this, time will tell. At some point the Orchestra will be able to gather on stage to perform, perhaps we too will be transformed. There is one certainty, we need to keep the music alive. Our health and well-being depend on it.

In closing, if you do need to seek a place of comfort, please try listening to your favourite piece of music, or to remember a time when you were sitting in an audience filled theatre and smiled. I hope it brings you joy.



Judy and Graham in Newfoundland

When I reflect back on the beginning of my tenure with the OSO, thirteen years ago, I could never have imagined the vital importance that this ensemble would play in my life. The music, the people, and the connection to community has brought me incredible joy and enriched my life in unimaginable ways. I am so grateful to be the Music Director of this unique and exceptional organization.

Driving from Calgary for my first concert as Music Director I was excited for the possibilities ahead of me in leading the OSO into the future. It was early April and as I headed south along the 97 with my toddlers in the back seat, the beauty of spring (still a future promise in Calgary), was in full bloom in the Okanagan. It took my breath away. The Okanagan has been taking my breath away ever since.

I grew up in a big, noisy, musical family with seven kids. I had a string quartet (I played my great grandfather's cello) and a piano duet with my sisters. We played in the Niagara Youth Orchestra and sang in the St. Thomas' Anglican Church choir as well as in our big old station wagon with no radio. When I chose to pursue music at university, majoring in piano, no one was very surprised. I loved playing piano (and I still do) but it was in making music with others that I truly thrived.

When I discovered conducting several years later it was as if the clouds parted and I knew what I had been training for all of my life. I love conducting with every fibre of my being. To feel the vibration of the music, help to shape and pace it with my colleagues on stage and send it out to the audience is like no other feeling I have ever experienced. When I get to stand on the podium I am in my happy place and enter a state of mind that happiness specialist Mihaly Csikszentmihalyi calls flow.

I had been given wonderful training opportunities throughout Canada and spent a lot of time assisting great conductors, learning from incredible musicians and watching orchestras successfully connect to their respective communities. Starting with the OSO, my "own" orchestra, was like my training wheels came off and I discovered the joy and exhilaration of flying freely.

Over my thirteen seasons I have been privileged to make music with players who are at the top of their game, who bring a fearless passion to their music making that elevates the orchestra and our whole community. I have also come to know them as colleagues, friends and even family. Many of them have taken on the important role of teaching music to my own children for which I will always be so grateful. Our own players are often featured soloists. They join the impressive roster of guest artists who have brought such inspiration to us all. The players of the OSO are also some of the most generous that I have encountered. They

## Rosemary Thomson

OSO Music Director



PHOTO CREDIT STEPHANIE DEA PHOTOGRAPHY

a fearless passion to their music making

with  
a deep sense  
of hope,  
wonder and  
gratitude.  
Quite  
simply,  
I love my  
job

truly love what they do and that joy is reflected back to me and to our audience every time we set foot on stage.

Of course what the OSO does on stage is just the tip of the iceberg. For 60 years so many have supported the OSO from behind the scenes. It has been my privilege to work with a small but mighty team of devoted staff members who bring creativity and diligence to every project we undertake. Our staff meetings are energized, productive and full of ideas. In many of our pursuits we stand on the shoulders of our volunteers. They work tirelessly on behalf of our offerings and they definitely share in the magic. The members of our Board of Directors have brought the devotion of time and skill in the massive job of overseeing the OSO and I have learned so much from so many. I am in awe of the generosity of our sponsors, donors and funders. Their commitment to supporting what we do affirms the strength of leadership that we enjoy in the Okanagan.

Collaborating with other cultural groups has also been richly rewarding. I love diving into a project that develops

new partnerships and stretches the orchestra and our audience in different ways. Putting the orchestra on scaffolding, playing in vineyards, surrounding the audience in the theatre and grabbing Olivia Walsh's ankle to prevent her tumbling overboard while she played her cello on the back of a speeding motor boat are just some of the fun that we have had showcasing the OSO in unique ways.

In addition to the many memorable performances, I am really proud of how the OSO has engaged with our community. From toddlers to teens to those with long life behind them, I have met and shared music with so many throughout our beautiful valley, in libraries, community centres, on mountaintops, in parks and churches, seniors residences and friendship centres. Working with our OSO Chorus, Youth Chorus and the Youth Orchestra (with my amazing colleagues Carol and Dennis Colpitts) reaffirms for me the impact that music can have on all of our lives.

The OSO has allowed me to live a story that is truly blessed, that connects me to this community and to the wider world with a deep sense of hope, wonder and gratitude. Quite simply, I love my job. I am so lucky to have signed on as Music Director for the next four years. I know that when I look back, any challenges — viral or otherwise — will pale in comparison to the colourful adventure that I have been privileged to live in my role with the OSO.

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**OKANAGAN SYMPHONY  
ORCHESTRA**

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ROSEMARY THOMSON, MUSIC DIRECTOR