



## Spring 2024 Newsletter

### President's Message:

Happy Spring 2024 Season, Everyone!  
We're really starting to come together on our delightful variety of music!

As mentioned at an earlier rehearsal, we've got some plans in the works for this season:

#### Sectionals

We aim to have approximately 4 hours of sectionals this season to help us with difficult passages in our work, and improve our general cohesiveness.

#### Small Ensembles

We'll be putting together a small ensemble with our more advanced players, to create a community outreach presence via performances at senior centers, and possibly schools. The first event is in June. We'll need a committee to support this project.

#### Website

Members can access the member's side of the website to stay up to date on rehearsals, breaks, and performances.

In addition, there is a tab on the website available to all, where we can receive financial support - this will be updated over

time, and will list our immediate and future needs.

#### Fundraising

We need volunteers to create a small team to handle selling ads and other general fundraising projects. Please let me know if you're interested.

#### Thank you

Thank you to everyone in the orchestra for pulling together as a true community, to help in so many areas of needed support!

Below you'll find committee reports as well as interviews with people from our past and present.

~ Charlotte Laby



## **Grants Committee**

Koreen Johannessen

Over the summer we created a grant writing/fund development committee to find the resources that would allow us to enhance the musical and performance abilities of orchestra members, and increase our enjoyment and fun. Committee members are Koreen Johannessen, 2<sup>nd</sup> violin and current Committee Chair, and Lin Bell, cello. We were greatly assisted by Charlotte Raby (doing a fantastic job of editing) and Angharad Laetsch (doing a much needed web search.) We wrote and submitted our first grant to the Arizona Commission on the Arts.

Before getting started a close friend and successful grant writer gave me one piece of advice - "read the grant." We did, thought we had found a match, but although we met criteria, the Lifelong Arts Engagement Grant was not a go. We asked for \$7,500 to fund sectionals and develop a small group ensemble for performances at senior centers. We'll keep looking.

This month we requested a small award from the Arts Foundation of Tucson and Southern Arizona to help launch our new Lazlo and Fran Veres Young Composer Competition. More on this exciting new project as it takes shape.

If you would like to be included in our development activities and have ideas, time, and/or connections, we would love to hear from you: [johannessenkoreen@gmail.com](mailto:johannessenkoreen@gmail.com).

## **Jim Click Fundraiser Committee**

Shari Hoffstedter

Hi fellow musicians! We're beginning the Jim Click Millions For Tucson Raffle to support our wonderful orchestra and we need you!!

We participated in this raffle last year. It raised over \$1k for our organization, and we

also received a \$600 bonus. This year, we are planning to sign out groups of tickets to anyone in the orchestra who would like to try to sell some outside of rehearsal. Tickets will also be sold on our website and at rehearsals.

The tickets are \$25 each or 5 for \$100. Naturally the more we sell, the more money we raise. The prizes this year:

**Grand prize:** New 2024 Jeep Wrangler Rubicon 4xe Plug-In Hybrid.

**2nd Prize:** Two Round Trip, First Class Airline Tickets to Anywhere in the World.

**3rd Prize:** \$5,000 Cash

100% of the money raised supports Southern Arizona nonprofits. The drawing for prizes will be held on December 12, 2024, so we have plenty of time to sell lots of tickets!!

Lisa Marie McCusker and I are helping with the raffle by distributing tickets, collecting ticket-stubs and money, and returning all the information to Jim Click headquarters by the deadline of December 6, 2024.

Thank you for your help in making our fund raising a success!!

## **Young Composer's Competition**

*The Laszlo and Fran Veres Young Composer's Competition* is open to all ages up to seniors in high school, and will be run every 2-3 years. Professional composers and music teachers from the community will adjudicate. The winner will be mentored by Toru and Rafael, and will also work with the orchestra to finalize their piece for our performance in December. Help us to spread the word within the music community!



*Editor's Note: Below we get to know two people who are new to us, and two who have a long history with the orchestra. All have had a positive impact on who we are today. I hope you'll find their stories interesting!*

## It All Started with Susan Bovre

Many of our founding and long-term members may remember Susan Bovre.

Susan was involved in getting the Foothills Phil off the ground in 1991, under the management of the Catalina Foothills School District (CFSD). The District was new and didn't have an orchestra for its music students. So it established a community orchestra of mostly adult members, to support the structure of the group, allowing CFSD students to fill in and receive support and mentorship from the conductor and orchestra members.

Susan was always creatively involved in music and dance, and attended The Eastman School of Music from the age of 4 years, through high school. She studied piano and flute while there, but was expelled from the piano program for being "obstinate." But, she persevered, and graduated from the flute program.

She attended the University of Wisconsin for one year as a Dance major, and then 1962 graduated from Vassar College with a BA in Drama. In the 1970s, Susan taught children's creative dance and adult modern dance. Once she completed her Master's in Dance at San Jose State University in California in 1980, she completed her graduate certification in gerontology at the UA, and became a specialist in fitness/balance and fall prevention for older adults.

For several years in the 1980's she also worked for the CFSD Community Schools Program, which is when she was tasked with starting the Foothills Phil orchestra in 1989.

As Susan began interviewing conductors for the job, she realized if she were to fulfill her assignment of creating a true community orchestra which supported students and average adult players, the most important question she must ask each candidate was, "who could join this orchestra?" All but one candidate wanted to establish auditions and set requirements for high skill-levels. But Laszlo Veres said "anyone could join."

Susan hired him, and as they say, the rest is history.

Laszlo helped name the organization the Foothills Phil, saying the group wasn't mature enough yet to be called the Foothills Philharmonic. This first orchestra, in 1991, had thirteen flutes, seven trumpets, and one violin! From there, it grew, and for nearly 29 years, members enjoyed the relaxed congenial environment, and playing genre favorites such as pops, marches, show-tunes and the occasional challenging classical pieces.

Although the newly established 501(c)3 orchestra has made some changes to better support its functionality, we have Susan Bovre to thank - for her "obstinacy" and understanding of the original job-brief - which has allowed us to maintain our unique community presence, providing accessibility to people of all ages and supporting mid-level players, today.

CFSD chose the right person to organize and launch the orchestra.

Thank you, Susan!



Susann Bovre (R) and Veronika Zinsmaier, April 2023, Tucson, AZ



Composer Bob Atwell is currently offering up to 70% off his standard commission prices for Friends and Family, including members of the Foothills Philharmonic, through 11/2024. [bob@bobatwellmusic.com](mailto:bob@bobatwellmusic.com)  
<https://www.bobatwellmusic.com/>



## Composer Spotlight:

### **Kokichi Tagawa**



I learned about Jazz from TV shows in Japan. I used to play the harmonica and piano for fun when I was young. When I was in 10th grade, Toshiko Akiyoshi, one of the first to graduate from the Berklee College of Music, and one of the first Jazz pianists from Japan, came to Nagasaki where I was living at the time, and I was mesmerized by her playing. When I started working as an engineer, my friends asked me to join the band, and I purchased a drum set which was 5 times my monthly salary at the time. I started working at a bar as a musician at night, and worked as an engineer during the daytime. I continued studying Jazz through remote

studies by mail and in 1985, Berklee College of Music had an in-person class in Japan and I attended the classes. Many of my classmates went to America right after the class to study at Berklee, but I was not able to do so at the time.

In 1992, I had an opportunity to retire early from my job, I was 46 years old. I took the opportunity to go to study at Berklee College of Music. My family - my wife and four children - came with me to the USA. After a year of study at the college, it became necessary for me to work again, so I took a job as an engineer while finishing up my degree. I finished college in two years. I had a wonderful time studying Jazz composition and vibraphone with Gray Burton.

My son, Toru, asked me to write Music for Peace in 2022 for the Tucson Repertory Orchestra's 3rd trip to Japan. I took his idea and composed the piece using Japanese Traditional sound, pops, classical music and jazz. The piece is written to pray for world peace.



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## **Composer Spotlight:**

### **Ian Guthrie**



The orchestra played Guthrie's *This is Snow Overture* last season, and we enjoyed performing it and meeting him. Here we learn more about his life and journey.

#### **How did you discover your affinity for music and talent for playing and composing?**

I actually stumbled upon it by accident. I became fascinated with re-arranging the music I learned on the piano around the age of nine, and my parents recognized I was composing. It is most fun to reflect on how my musical style developed: I really continued to learn by simply copying and changing parts of pieces I learned at the piano, and only by the age of 11 did I strive to compose something that could not be considered a "derivative" of someone else's work.

That conundrum still seems to be part of my identity today. Although all my degrees are in composition, I am discovering that my musical life thrives when I can accompany and perform others' works as well as my own. It is strange to be in academia where your degrees usually explain who you are, and yet it is possible that I am more of a collaborative pianist on a day-to-day basis than a composer.

I think it is for the best, though, that I can play so much music that is by other composers, though: Since I am so inundated with what has been written, I am less interested in merely creating my own versions

of those pieces; instead, I find myself aching to create things that I do *not* get to hear regularly. While this certainly has placed me at disadvantages in the past and the present, it has allowed me to try more experiments as a composer than I would have ever done if I was just writing what came to mind first. While "*This is Snow Overture*" is quite "conservative" by some standards, it has elements of Stravinsky, Richard Strauss, Franz Schubert, and others, and elements that I rarely hear in the concert hall. I think my music today would sound a lot more like Mozart if I was not so intimately familiar with so much repertoire through the last 2000 years.

#### **What did that journey look like - types of challenges, how you overcame them, etc.**

I just tried to write things that appealed to my family and friends. Growing up in the semi-rural areas outside of Portland, OR as the World Wide Web was just coming into being, I did not have a lot of outside resources by which to measure my work. I just did what I wanted. There were a lot of opportunities in the Portland area, however, that helped me learn how to be a better composer for instruments other than the piano. The most important of those was probably FEARnoMUSIC's Young Composer's Project, in which I participated for five years.

My composition teacher, Dr. Robert Priest (who had studied with Messiaen, Lutoslawski, William Bolcom, and others), was very fascinated with experimentalism. At the time, I found it radical, but he was a key person in helping me discover the repertoire that created the experiences I mentioned above--being intimately familiar with so much repertoire of the past and present. That certainly led to challenges, though, that would last through the years: I was often too experimental and unique for my conservative composition friends, yet too conservative and derivative for my experimental friends. Nevertheless, I would not necessarily say that has become a chronic challenge, since every

composer has to deal with identity in these ways. If I had not had an experimental teacher, I may not even be a composer today.

One of the biggest challenges was dealing with my disabilities. It was very difficult to travel during my high school years, and it is only an Act of God that has enabled me to reliably travel since my undergraduate studies. One of the biggest opportunities I have received through this experience is the ability to learn how to persevere through adversity. I believe that while I certainly have been privileged in some ways, the goal is neither to complain about my disabilities or compare myself through my privileges, but to make the most out of every opportunity I have.

Another big challenge, though, was the idea of majoring in music, and putting all my eggs into one basket. Especially in the Pacific Northwest, music education in K-12 education is about as dead as can be. It was at times intimidating having to attend a small music program for my undergraduate studies, and then trying to prove myself in graduate school. I honestly am not sure I can give a particular reason why I got to where I am now, with the exception of simply taking advantage of whatever opportunities I could get, rather than those I could not. A big breakthrough happened the summer after my junior year, where, after tallying more than 500 orchestras around the United States that I wanted to contact to perform a piece of mine, the Northwest Symphony Orchestra near Seattle, WA premiered one of my works, with the Moore Philharmonic near Pinehurst, NC premiering some others. Since then, I have not had that many orchestral works performed, but I was never as intimidated about writing large-ensemble works after having those breakthroughs.

Perhaps the biggest challenge was graduating with my terminal degree in April 2020. Being in Florida--3000 miles from much of my family in Washington and

Oregon where there were lockdowns--I suddenly had to take odd jobs just to survive. This gave me a much needed appreciation for how hard many artists today work to serve our communities, and the opportunity to teach and compose for my livelihood is a blessing that I can only understand because I had to work non-music jobs for several months.

The journey continues as an Assistant Professor at Calvary University in Kansas City, but in new ways. I am not always quite sure what the next hurdles may be, but I do know that the road is survivable, and I can say the same to my students.

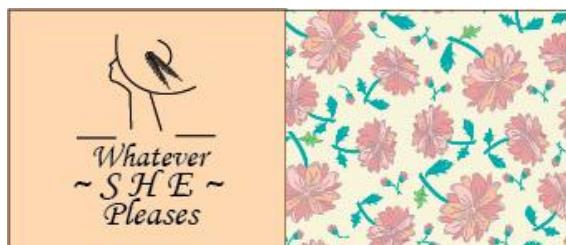
**Were either of your parents or other family members, musicians?**

No, not really. My mom's mom played piano, and my dad played some guitar. I have a cousin who was passionate about the guitar, and another who is currently teaching piano in the Boston area, but for the most part, my family history is not very musical. Instead, sports and outdoor activities were the big activities for us. Being raised northeast of Portland, OR, I got to visit waterfalls, forests, hills, and mountains that are totally alien to people in the majority of the United States (although Arizonans have seen quite a bit of these!). While Dr. Robert Priest made me emulate these sounds in my projects, it was not until I relocated from the Pacific Northwest to north Texas that I discovered these sounds could form a big part of my soundscape in my music.

While *This Is Snow Overture* does not utilize many overtly outdoor sounds, my *Shuksan Storm* (for orchestra), *Voices of the Earth* (for band), *The Tempest Long Foretold* (for viola and piano), *Soundscape Retreats* (for piano), etc. do. Furthermore, I think my nostalgia in nature has allowed me to more intentionally avoid harmonic progressions that sound popular or the like, as progressions such as those at the end of *This Is Snow Overture* make me feel closer to the outdoors.

We know how This is Snow Overture was triggered in your imagination - is it usually nature that leads you to new compositions, or what other types of things will trigger your writing? What does your process look like? I originally began *This Is Snow Overture* to compliment a concert with Arcady's annual performance of Handel's *Messiah*, since I know the Artistic Director. (That was the inspiration, anyway.) I think the title was simply to come up with something catchy, without any direct narrative. Many of my works actually begin this way, with no particular story until I play the piece in my head over and over, and then I find a narrative that can also engage the listener. Unless I am setting a poem to music, or utilizing a lot of special sound effects to emulate extramusical ideas, I am actually not very good at having a preconceived idea of what stories my pieces should tell.

Back to the origin of the piece: There was no guarantee of its performance or the like in Canada, and so I worked on the piece at my own pace. Interestingly, I was actually composing the majority of it during my exodus from the Midwest Storm Elliot in December 2022 in Tucson, and so it was fresh on my mind when I met Maestro Toru Tagawa. I am sure by this point that the snowstorm was inspiring the piece, and I aimed to be a little sarcastic, making light of the cold weather while making the music barely dramatic enough to still be a weekend warrior kind of ski trip.



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## Member Spotlight

### Marcia Gill



*Editor's note: The Foothills Phil's membership includes musicians who have been with us for months, to decades. Yet we don't often get a chance to truly know them. Documenting their lives is a way to do that, and to understand the history of the Phil more fully, as our members define us.*

"Time for your piano lesson!" my Dad called. I was six, and he was starting me early. I could already pick out simple pieces by ear, and my Methodist-minister Dad soon discovered I could name a pitch just by hearing it. Perfect pitch has enhanced my listening enjoyment throughout my life, as I could silently name the key and chord progressions of symphony pieces.

Violin lessons were added a few years later for both me and my sister. She continued with violin, while I continued with piano.

When I was 13, a cardiologist who attended my father's church, and who gave our family free medical care, misdiagnosed a serious and painful medical condition, concluding I felt no pain but was imagining it. This treatment of women by doctors was common in my time. The high dosage of psychotropic medication prescribed over the years led to a motor-function disability, which I recovered from once I got off those drugs. Thirty-three years later, I was finally correctly diagnosed and treated.

When I entered college, I continued with my music, but switched to organ. I also led a dorm choir, winning the Gold Cup in the annual Chapel Steps Choral Competition among all dorms.



Marcia with her college choir, 1958



But both my sister and I saw that for women of our generation, music would not support us. She went into pre-med, and after a few years as a little-white-rat cancer-research-assistant, I went over to the University of Rochester's new Computing Center, learning on-the-job how to program the new IBM mainframe computer, in machine language, punched into IBM cards which were stored in heavy file trays.

There were no computing courses and no textbooks, so I established a program of non-credit courses, recruiting other programmers to each teach a course. I taught FORTRAN to professors and under-graduates in the same classes. Everybody wanted to learn these new programming languages.

My course became so popular that one semester, I had an enrollment of over 200. I had to reserve a lecture hall where seats went up almost to the ceiling, and I printed my own class notes and assignments, stacking them by the door, so students could grab a pack as they entered the lecture hall. There was no microphone, so I learned to "project."

With women in many fields self-expanding their job performance, the feminist movement picked up speed. We demanded equal job titles and equal pay. But the University had

women's pay scales budgeted in. No matter how we performed, we had to be called by some generic job title like "coordinator."

Each female programmer was called into the boss's office, alone. To me, he said, "There are no witnesses to what I am going to tell you, but you are going nowhere in your job because the University does not allow women to have any higher job title or pay than you have now."

All our higher performance duties were taken from us, and our jobs were reduced to that defined for a female "Coordinator." A man was hired to take over my programming lecture program. He laughed and laughed at us. It was the early 1970's. The Civil Rights Act of 1964 had said there would be no hiring or pay difference by gender, but companies were not compliant yet. I had been employed by the University for about 15 years.

One by one, each female programmer resigned and went elsewhere. I got a job in California's hi-tech Silicon Valley. Pay was still low but better than the University. When I first moved to Silicon Valley, the only apartment I could afford was in a low-income part of town nicknamed "Whisky Gulch." In this dangerous area, when I was in my forties, I was kidnapped and assaulted at gunpoint. But as women have done before and since, I was able to save my life by appealing to what little humanity the assailants still had, and then drove myself to the ER, where I was treated with indifference, as if this was a common occurrence. Eventually, with the help of my parents, I was able to move to a safer location, and through perseverance, I eventually bought my own home.

I learned to job-hop, whenever I heard "through the grapevine" that the start-up company I was working for was about to go under. I added "Technical Writer" to my resume. The Glass Ceiling for women seemed to be at slightly different levels at each new company, as they tried to navigate this new territory of women being actually hired into higher-level jobs.

Finally, I reached Hewlett-Packard, but with no title that included the word "Manager." As with all international companies at the time,

HP had to have managers who could interact with European companies, and European managers, who were all male, would not interact with female managers.

I realized that in the number of working years I had left in my life, I did not have time to improve my projected Women's Pension of about \$175 a month. I would have to go back to living in a cheap and unsafe "slum flat" upon retiring, where I again could be assaulted. I had never married, so I had to figure this out on my own.

I devised a plan. I would live off next to nothing, and save a defined amount for ten months a year, giving myself the other two months to make up any shortfall. After 12 years, my "Retirement Fund Business" was earning enough to equal my "defined amount" due each month, so I hired a financial advisor.

Upon retiring, I bought my house in Tucson for cash, and I finally got back to music. But the piano was not a group instrument. When I saw my nephew's old grade-school clarinet on the top shelf of his bedroom closet, I exclaimed, "You're not using this, are you?"

My first clarinet teacher usually taught kids, and I went through her book in three months.

I had to get into a band. The Tucson Concert Band was a little over my head, but it kept me going.



**Marcia with the Tucson Aires**



**The Desert Aires**

I also volunteered at a community TV station, as a regular production crew member TV cameraperson on a LOCAL MATTERS program for about 12 years, until the station's funding ran out. I also learned to produce and direct shows in the control room.



*Marcia Directing a TV show*

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**On the camera**

*Credits Scrolling at End of Show*

And then I heard of this group called the Foothills Phil which welcomed students, even "students" who had just taken up clarinet when they retired. The mix of music of all kinds was just what I needed. I took lessons from the Tucson Symphony's principal clarinetist for the first ten of those years. I'm still playing clarinet now, for over 20 years, even at 2 1/2 years 'til I turn 90, and even with eyesight and hearing beginning to fail, and fingers not as nimble. Music was a first love, and it still is.

Now, 25 years into retirement, I am living comfortably. Actually, I'm a millionaire. I still get my Women's Pension, which has increased to \$180 a month, and I have not become a "bag-lady" on the streets, as I had feared I would. I have overcome much adversity, and built a good life for myself.

