



### **Dr. Henry David Abraham**

Henry is a psychiatrist, writer, and activist. Before studying the violin as an adult, he graduated from Muhlenberg College in Pennsylvania, Hopkins for his medical degree, and Harvard for psychiatry. He served as a consultant to the National Academy of Sciences and as advisor in the development of the Diagnostic Manual of the American Psychiatric Association. Henry was also a writer of TV sitcoms in Boston which were awarded an IRIS, Peabody, and an Emmy. In 1985 he was a co-recipient of the Nobel Peace Prize for his work co-founding the International Physicians for the Prevention of Nuclear War. He is a past president of the Toronto City Opera. He is honored to be playing with Strings con Brio.

### **Nancy Dixon, Violinist**

Nancy McGraw Dixon found her love of music by laying her fingers on the family's player piano. She has sung in many choirs and has a Bachelor of Arts in Music from Tulane University. She started playing the violin when she was 35, playing with Melrose Symphony Orchestra in Massachusetts for 14 years. Nancy was sad to leave, but just as happy to arrive permanently in Sarasota, and to find great ensembles to play with.

### **Amanda Bauman, Bassist**

Amanda Bauman has been an orchestra teacher at Laurel Nokomis School since 2004. Her principal instrument is clarinet. Double Bass was the first orchestral string instrument she fell in love with under the guidance of Dr. Michael Allen at Florida State University, where she earned her Bachelors of Music Education. Amanda spends time with the Mark Wood community where many orchestral educators work to bring string teaching into the 21st Century. Aside from recreational composing,

beading, and gardening, she enjoys spending time with James, her husband of 12 years, and two rescue dogs.

### **Dorothy Blum, Percussionist**

Dorothy is involved with arts, music, and cultural events throughout the state. A member of the Association of Florida Teaching Artists and recognized watercolorist, she provides workshops and classes in percussion and watercolor. Dorothy is Co-Director of ROOTS Summer Arts and Cultural Program of Manatee County, and percussionist with the Manatee Community and Northport Concert Bands. She has served on multiple arts, music, and health boards throughout the state, steering committees including Ringling and the Sarasota Orchestra, and advocated on state and national levels.

### **Scott Blum, Percussionist**

Scott performs and teaches throughout Florida and locally with Sarasota Contemporary Dance, First Brass, Lakewood Ranch Wind Ensemble, Anna Maria Island Concert Chorus and Orchestra, and Manatee Community and North Port Concert Bands. He is an active member of the Association of Florida Teaching Artists and Arts for Healing. Scott is Director of the ROOTS Summer Music and Cultural program of Manatee County, and received numerous awards and grants for community initiatives. His performances include theatre, band, orchestra, opera, radio, television, and studio recording.

### **Linda Brucksieker, Violinist**

Linda Brucksieker has played violin since third grade. She played for over 20 years in the Livonia Symphony in Detroit, Michigan, as well as churches, weddings, and Nutcracker ballets. Since moving to Florida in 2006, she has played with Boynton Beach Symphony, Sunrise Pops, Broward Symphony, and now that she is in Sarasota, the Pops Orchestra of Bradenton and Sarasota, and as a mentor in Church of the Palms Orchestra. She also is a registered nurse and a grandmother of four.

### **Dr. Donald (Don) Buxton, Cellist**

Don Buxton is a professor emeritus from Auburn University. He began music at age 50 on his wife's old cello after her teacher said she had gotten good enough and needed a better instrument. There is a lot of truth in the adage about "old dogs and

new tricks.” Don played cello with the Auburn Community Orchestra before moving to Bradenton in 2010. Currently, he plays with the North Port Symphony, the Bradenton Symphony Orchestra, and Strings Con Brio.

### **Fredda Buxton, Cellist**

Fredda Buxton took piano lessons as a child. She played clarinet in high school and college, but always wanted to play the cello. As an adult she played bass clarinet in the Auburn University Band and started cello at age 48. Subsequently, she has played cello with the Auburn Community Orchestra, LaGrange Georgia Symphony, and Montgomery Alabama Symphony. Currently, she enjoys playing with Strings Con Brio.

### **Nancy Carroll, Violinist**

Nancy studied violin in New York, and has a Master’s Degree from New York University in Music Education. Her Bachelor’s Degree is in Art, with a Minor in Music. She taught strings in the Stamford Connecticut Public Schools, as well as privately for 10 years, and has a certificate in Suzuki Methods. She also continued to pursue her ceramic art and business. After moving to Maine from NY, Nancy joined the Bangor Symphony Orchestra. She has recently been studying jazz violin.

### **Sumiko Chipman, Violinist**

Sumiko Chipman has been a lover of the arts since a young child. She started playing violin at the age of seven. Sumiko participated in the Sarasota Orchestra Youth Philharmonic program and played in her high school orchestra at Riverview High School. As an adult she continues to play for fun.

### **Lee Ann Deak, Cellist**

Lee Ann started playing the cello at age 10 through middle school. This started her life-long love of Classical music and the beautiful sound of the cello. She returned to playing the cello in her 50's. Currently, she plays in a period music group "The 77th NY Regimental Balladeers" and the North Port Symphony. She feels very blessed to spend time with her grandchildren and family. She recommends the pursuit of learning an instrument at any age. One of the books that influenced her decision to return to the cello was "Never too late: My musical life story" by John Holt.

### **Jaime Del Castillo, Violinist**

Jaime Del Castillo grew up in Sarasota, where his love of playing music began with the piano at eight years old. At age 12, Jaime fell in love with the violin as a student in the Pine View School orchestra program under the direction of Mr. Kenneth Bowermeister, to whom he is eternally grateful. Jaime now works locally as an Attorney with Legal Aid of Manasota, providing free legal services to low-income individuals in the community. Jaime is delighted to be making music once again with Maestro Bowermeister and Strings Con Brio.

### **Dariela Delgado, Violinist**

Dariela Delgado is an educator, writer, and editor. She holds a B.A. in English and Education from Florida State University and a Financial Accounting Certification from Harvard Business School. A multi-instrumentalist, she has performed traditional Mexican folk music and jazz throughout the Sarasota community. In her free time, Dariela shares her love of music by teaching violin to both children and seniors.

### **Piilani Edwards, Violinist**

Piilani Edwards's father's love for classical music and opera inspired her to play the violin. Originally from Hawaii, she has lived in Lakewood Ranch since 2006. She and her husband spend their time between Florida and Sonoma County, California. She also plays with the North Port Symphony and Illyrian Symphony Orchestra. After retiring from airline and sales management, she enjoys traveling, swimming, golf, playing mahjong, and genealogy.

### **Nancy Eldridge, Violinist**

Nancy Eldridge recently moved from Costa Mesa, CA, to Osprey, Florida. From 1996-2021, she was a first violinist in the Pacific Symphony (Orange County, CA). In addition to playing in the Pacific Symphony, she coached aspiring young violinists in the Pacific Symphony Youth Ensembles and maintained a private Suzuki violin studio. Nancy joined Strings Con Brio in the Fall of 2022.

### **Leon Friedberg, Cellist**

Leon Friedberg is from Ohio and holds both Bachelor and Master Degrees in cello performance. He has taught music in public school and privately. He has performed in several local and regional orchestras in Ohio and Illinois. Friedberg has been a practicing attorney for over forty years. Leon very much appreciates not only the

opportunities that Strings Con Brio offers for performing the unique string orchestra repertoire, but also the warm and inviting environment that SCB provides for its musicians and their families.

### **Maria Fullam, Violinist**

At age eight, Maria Fullam was taught violin at school by Mary Ann Wirth (violinist). Maria played in school orchestras throughout high school and college. She graduated from SUNY Stony Brook with a Bachelor's of Science in Computer Science/Math Education. For 28 years, Maria's violin was hardly played. She was too busy raising her family of four children. In 2010, the Mid-Hudson Community Orchestra helped to unearth her violin where she played until 2020. Maria and her husband, Marty (bassist) moved to Lakewood Ranch in 2021. They were introduced to Strings Con Brio in 2022 because of Maria's longtime friendship with Mary Ann. Maria & Marty thoroughly enjoy playing with this orchestra. Maria encourages parents to give their children music lessons. So many benefits, which will last a lifetime.

### **Martin (Marty) Fullam, Bassist**

Marty Fullam started playing guitar at age nine and enjoys playing folk, soft rock, and Irish pub tunes on acoustic guitar, and jazz on electric guitar. About 20 years ago, he picked up the electric bass to play in a church worship band and a classic rock band. Just 10 years ago, with an urge to play jazz bass, he bought a string bass but wound up playing in the Mid-Hudson Community Orchestra with his wife Maria (violinist) instead! Upon retiring from a career at International Business Machines Corporation (IBM) and moving to Florida in 2021, he played a season with the Pinellas Park Civic Orchestra, and then joined Strings Con Brio at the beginning of 2022.

### **Maria Ginés, Violinist**

Maria Ginés is a violinist and strings teacher in the Lakewood Ranch area. She has over 30 years of experience playing the violin and toured for several years playing with professional orchestras all over Florida and the USA. Miss Ginés has Bachelor's Degrees in Music Education and Early Childhood Education and a Master's Degree in Education. She toured with Motor City Irish Dance both playing the violin and dancing from 2015-2020. Miss Ginés enjoys reading, dancing, running, and listening to music. She is currently the director at Risen Savior Academy in Lakewood Ranch.

### **Mari Gottdiener, Violist**

Mari Gottdiener is a violinist and violist. She started playing violin at age 9, and learned the viola during the pandemic. As a lover of chamber music and orchestra playing, Sarasota is an ideal place to escape from the New England winter.

### **Angela Hartvigsen, Violinist / Violist**

Angela Hartvigsen was born and raised in Sarasota. She has served as the Fine Arts Program Specialist for the Sarasota County Schools since 2009, and before that, taught orchestra/music at Booker Middle, Dr. Phillips High (Orlando) and in Colorado for over 25 years of combined classroom experience. A violinist/violist whose first private teacher was Mr. Bowermeister, Angela attended Pine View School, Sarasota High, Florida State University (Bachelors of Music Education) and Colorado State University (Masters of Music). She also plays the piano and is learning electric bass. Angela and her husband Jake (a PVS alum) have two great sons, Ben (PVS class of '19) and Will (PVS class of '23). Angela is happy and excited to be playing this concert with Strings Con Brio and under Mr. Bowermeister's direction once again!

### **Mary Lou Huggins, Violinist**

Mary Lou began playing violin in the 4th grade. Although her degrees are in chemistry and management, she continued playing violin in various college and community orchestras in Wisconsin, Pennsylvania, and Michigan while working and raising a family. She and her husband became snowbirds in 2011. Since coming to Florida, she has played with the Sarasota Adult String Orchestra and the North Port Symphony.

### **Arnold (Arnie) Jochums, Violist**

Arnold Jochums is a retired Assistant Attorney General from Arkansas who has always enjoyed music. With music his main hobby, he played guitar in numerous small combos. He started on cornet in grade school and played in high school. After law school, he studied flute with a professor at SIU-C. In Pine Bluff, he played violin in a community orchestra. He took saxophone lessons and played with the North Little Rock Community Band. He was a founding member of the Meshugga Klezmer Band. After moving to Sarasota in 2014, he took lessons on violin and viola. Most recently, he played with the Sarasota Adult String Orchestra.

### **Justin Kim, Violist**

Justin Kim is a student at Pine View School. He has been playing viola since summer 2022. He enjoys playing and listening to music every day since then. He is currently a member of Pine View Orchestra as well as Sarasota Youth Orchestra and is happy to join Strings Con Brio, be part of an orchestra, and bring the music to the community. Besides music, he likes to play games on PC, and has a strong interest in math and coding.

### **Margaret (Marge) Knoblock, Violinist**

Having roots in the Midwest, Marge Knoblock worked her way through Wheaton College earning a Bachelor of Science degree, followed by teaching home economics in the public schools. After marriage and starting a family, her husband was transferred to Florida. At age 65, Marge inherited a violin and started taking lessons. She is presently active in singing and bell choir, orchestra, painting, and pickleball.

### **Carol Koehler, Violinist**

Carol Koehler is a retired registered nurse of 42 years and in nine states. She moved to Sarasota, FL from Cleveland, Ohio to be near family. Carol has played second violin with Community orchestras for 20 years. She is thrilled to be part of Strings Con Brio.

### **Ann Krause, Cellist**

Ann Krause recently unpacked her cello after several years and is happy to be playing again. She has played cello with the Minot (ND) Symphony Orchestra off and on since she was in high school. Ms. Krause recently retired. Her hobbies include boating, travel, and animals. She is a member of the Sarasota Bay Rotary Club. You may see her volunteering as an usher at The Van Wezel. North Dakota is her summer home and Siesta Key is her primary residence. She lives with her Miniature Dachshund, Pippi.

### **Dr. Aihan Kuhn, Cellist**

Aihan Kuhn is an award-winning author, holistic doctor, and the President of Tai Chi & Qi Gong Healing Institute ([www.taichihealing.org](http://www.taichihealing.org)), a non-profit organization promoting healthy living/healthy aging. For many years, Dr. Kuhn has helped thousands of patients and students overcome various physical ailments and emotional struggles. Her focus now is on holistic healing education. Since childhood, she has had a passion for music and played Chinese instruments such as Er Hu (two-

string), Yang Qin (Chinese hammered dulcimer). Her love of Cello started at age 50, and she is delighted to join Sting Con Brio, expanding her musical experience.

### **Diana Labrador, Violinist**

Diana Elizabeth Labrador is a recent graduate at the University of South Florida, Sarasota-Manatee. She majored in Language-Speech and Hearing Sciences with a Minor in Children's Behavioral Healthcare. She has been playing the violin since she was five years old, and most recently, was the Concertmaster for the Venice Symphony Youth Orchestra and a member of the Sarasota Youth Philharmonic. She has been singing as part of a children's choir from the age of six years and is now a cantor at her church. She has performed as a vocalist, singing the national anthem, in several musical theater productions, in gigs with a Latino band, and as a volunteer with her musical talents.

### **Armida Lawter, Violinist**

Armida Lawter started violin at a music school at the age of 6 and later, after auditioning, was accepted at the professional school of music and arts in Tirana, Albania, continuing for violin as a primary instrument. She has played violin in youth festivals as first chair, and has also performed under the baton of the renowned Albanian conductor, Zhani Ciko. She continued her studies for speech therapy in Italy, but in the States, she has been primarily raising and homeschooling her children. Besides singing and playing violin at church, she also performs for a variety of events. She is a member of Strings Con Brio and has participated with Illyrian Symphony Orchestra, Symphony on the Sand, and performs chamber music with various groups.

### **Joel Leonard, Violinist**

Since Joel retired from his career as a biomedical engineer and research scientist with NASA, the space agency, he has joyfully made music his avocation. His early training in violin and later intense interest in the mandolin (and Russian domra) gave him the tools to be involved with many different genres of music including bluegrass, old time fiddling, klezmer, Irish, international music especially Eastern European and of course, classical. He has been a member of numerous community-based orchestras and founded the Washington Balalaika Society Orchestra, the largest and best of its kind in the U.S. More recently, Joel has formed collaborations with



professionals in guitar and piano and gives recitals in the Sarasota area. He is thrilled to be associated with Strings Con Brio.

### **Jack Liang, Violinist**

Jack Liang is a student at Pine View school. He has studied playing violin since he was five years old. Music has been part of his life and gives him a lot of joy. He is happy to be part of the Strings Con Brio Orchestra!

### **Ralph Liebstein, Violinist**

While in California, Ralph Liebstein went to a performance of the Los Angeles philharmonic. His cousin was a member of the violin section. As a child, he studied piano. It was at the concert that he thought it would be a good idea to take violin lessons. So, at age 41, he started. As it turns out, it was one of the best decisions he ever made. In his business life, he was an insurance broker. He insured small businesses along with automobile and homeowners' insurance. Ralph feels that it is a wonderful experience being part of an orchestra. In addition to making many friends in the orchestra, he has also become good buddies with Mozart, Beethoven, and Tchaikovsky.

### **Karen Mamel, Violist**

Karen Mamel began playing viola in the eighth grade in the Sarasota public school system. It became a passion through high school along with youth orchestra. Her career was as a registered nurse. Karen has been a member of the Tampa Bay Symphony since 2001. In 2022 Karen relocated from Tampa to Sarasota where she discovered Strings Con Brio and that she and Maestro Bowermeister played in the same youth orchestra! Other interests include learning harp and glass art. Karen has multiple installments of glass art around Florida. In Tampa, her work is displayed in the front windows of Violin Shop Tampa.

### **Richard Lipov, Violinist**

Using his father's violin, Richard took his first violin (and music) lessons at age 35 from a Peabody masters violin candidate. They worked together for 3 years using the Suzuki literature books 1-4. Since retirement, Richard has taken lessons at Sarasota's Suzuki Institute with Claudia Birdsall. He has played with the Sarasota Adult String Orchestra under several conductors, most recently, Roxane Soloway. He is most

grateful that musicians have a place to make beautiful music through Strings Con Brio.

### **Arlene Locola, Violinist**

Arlene Locola, violinist, violist, teacher, conductor, and performer, inherited her grandfather's violin at the age of 10. Music and children have been her lifelong passions. She earned her Bachelors and Masters in Music Education, and spent her life teaching strings in the New York, California, and Fort Lee public schools in New Jersey, where she spent 25 years and was known as the "Mom of the Pops Orchestra". Upon retirement, she started a Bergen County youth orchestra called "The Fine Tuners" that provided many opportunities to perform in the community. Most recently, she and her husband fell in love with Sarasota while on vacation, sold their house in New Jersey, and moved to Florida.

### **Alexandra Merton, Violinist**

Alexandra Merton graduated from Colby College (Maine) with a B.A. in Music History, and has a Masters in the Management of Human Services from Brandeis University. She played the piano for many years including high school and college. After a career as the Business Manager of a non-profit human services agency outside of Boston and then moving to Venice, she took up the violin. She has played with Strings Con Brio and the Venice Community Orchestra.

### **Ellen Niemi, Cellist**

Ellen Niemi, is a retired elementary and music teacher from Ohio. After graduating from the Eastman School of Music (student of Ronald Leonard), she was a member of the Columbus Symphony (Ohio), West Shore Symphony (Muskegon Michigan), Perrysburg Symphony (Ohio), and Adrian Symphony (Michigan). Her years in Florida have included teaching and coaching young cellists of the West Coast (now Sarasota) Youth Symphony, organizing several "Celebration" events, performing in the Braden River Trio and other chamber ensembles, starting the Lakewood Ranch Music Club, and playing in the Sarasota Pops. Ellen has retired after 17 years with The Venice Symphony.

### **David (Dave) O'Fallon, Percussionist**

Dave, originally from Chicago, worked for many years as a freelance percussionist and sub for the Chicago Symphony with whom he toured and recorded extensively. He completed a Doctor of Musical Arts degree in Composition at the University of Kentucky and taught at several universities in IL and currently Music Theory and Orchestration at the Frost School of Music in Miami. Since relocating to southwest FL, he has participated in orchestras, bands, and choirs, and as a guest musician with Strings Con Brio on viola.

### **Dr. Susan Oliveri, Violist**

Susan Oliveri grew up in Sarasota and started playing viola with Mr. Bowermeister in 6th grade at Pine View School. She has played with the Sarasota Youth Orchestra, Pine View Orchestra and String Quartet, and was a Young Artist Concerto Competition finalist - playing the Hindemith Viola Concerto. Susan received her Bachelors in Nutrition and Doctorate of Pharmacy from the University of Florida, completed a residency at the Hospital of the University of Pennsylvania, and is a cardiac hospital pharmacist at Sarasota Memorial Hospital. Susan and her husband Anthony relocated to the Gulf Coast in 2022 and are usually busy shuttling kids to music lessons, youth orchestra, and soccer practice. She is ecstatic to be playing in an orchestra with Mr. "B" again.

### **Joan Pollock, Violinist**

Joan Pollock thanks her grandmother for instilling in her a love of music and for tuition to attend a performing arts high school where she played bassoon. When making reeds overwhelmed making music, she left music to pursue a range of careers including public relations, grant writing, and finally affordable housing development. Upon retiring to Sarasota in 2015, Joan was fortunate to find a patient violin teacher in Cynthia Wiley and thus rediscover the joy of music. This is her third year with Strings Con Brio.

### **Andrii Padkovskyi, Violinist**

Andrii Padkovski was born in Lviv, Ukraine. He has been learning to play the violin since the age of 6. In Ukraine, he studied at a specialized school for gifted children. In connection with the war in Ukraine, Andrii and his mother moved to Florida, where he now lives and goes to school. Andrii has taken part in many competitions for young musicians in Ukraine and Europe and has repeatedly won. From an early

age, he enjoyed taking part in various concerts and playing in orchestras. Currently, he performs with the Sarasota Youth Philharmonic Orchestra, String Con Brio, and the Illyrian Symphony Orchestra. He recently received second prize in a music scholarship competition presented by the Venice Musical Society.

### **Patricia (Trish) Pearce, Violinist**

A Tampa Bay native, Patricia Pearce has not strayed far from this corner of Florida. She works in Corporate Finance for Sarasota Memorial Hospital. Trish holds degrees in Accounting and English Literature from the university of South Florida. She took piano lessons as a child, and currently studies violin, guitar, and piano. Trish performs as a violinist with Strings Con Brio, the Venice Community Orchestra, the Illyrian Symphony Orchestra, and Allegro Music Academy.

### **Joan Pollock, Violinist**

Joan thanks her grandmother for instilling in her a love of music and for tuition to attend a performing arts high school where she played bassoon. When making reeds overwhelmed making music, she left music to pursue a range of careers including public relations, grant writing, and finally affordable housing development. Upon retiring to Sarasota in 2015, Joan was fortunate to find a patient violin teacher in Cynthia Wiley and thus rediscover the joy of music. This is her fourth year with Strings Con Brio.

### **Lynne Richman, Violinist**

Lynne Richman is originally from Pennsylvania and moved to Florida in 2018. Upon moving, she retired from the medical profession working family practice for 15 years as an LPN, and prior to that, on a Medical/Surg floor at her local hospital. She has always had a love for classical music. She studied classical guitar for 8 years and is currently studying classical violin under the instruction of Cynthia Wiley of the Sarasota Violin Academy.

### **Paula Rothman, Cellist**

Paula is a retired clarinetist and teacher from Philadelphia. She has an undergraduate degree from the Eastman School of Music and a graduate degree in performance from Temple University. She was a freelance clarinetist and an orchestral and chamber music specialist. She had a private studio and taught at Settlement Music

School. After taking cello class at Eastman, she vowed one day to seriously study cello. At age 68 she kept that promise and discovered she had been playing the wrong instrument for 58 years. She is devoting her retirement to learning to make music on the cello. Her most interesting orchestral job was playing the Shofar (ram's horn) with the New York Philharmonic.

### **Jamie Ruetz, Bassist**

Jamie is a semi-professional bassist who has played locally with The Pops Orchestra of Bradenton and Sarasota and operates his own violin repair shop, Triton Music Services, in Sarasota. In an interesting side note, he began his double bass career (as an adult) under the baton of Maestro Bowermeister via the Sarasota Orchestra's adult strings program, and is honored to be working with him again in Strings Con Brio.

### **Carol Sandborn, Violinist**

Carol Sandborn is a retired teacher from Sarasota County Schools. During her time teaching elementary school, she played the violin in both the Port Charlotte and the Venice Symphony orchestras. After a long break, Carol is happy to resume playing the violin with Strings Con Brio.

### **Mario Santana, Violinist**

Mario Santana started his music education with piano and violin at the age of seven in his hometown of Holguin, Cuba. In 2012, he was concertmaster of the Sarasota Youth Symphony, and in 2013, toured Europe as a member of Jazz Juvenocracy, playing on the top student stages of every major European jazz festival such as the famous North Sea and Montreux Jazz Festivals. He currently resides in Sarasota, Florida, and has freelanced as a violinist since.

### **Dr. Steven Sewall, Violinist**

Steven Sewall has been a practicing orthopedic surgeon in Marlboro, Massachusetts for many years during which time he has been a member of the Lincoln-Sudbury Civic Orchestra. This is his second season as a snowbird. He started playing the violin in his youth in Hartford, Connecticut at The Hartt School of Music, and continued his musical studies at Brown University where he was concertmaster of the orchestra.

### **Shane Sharkey, Violinist**

Shane Sharkey is a graduate of Venice High School and studies violin at the Sarasota Music Conservatory. He enjoys making, teaching, and composing music and has shared his passion for music through different orchestral groups such as the Venice Symphony Youth orchestra, Venice High School Chamber Orchestra, Sarasota Youth Orchestra, Illyrian Symphony Orchestra, and Strings con Brio. His solo and ensemble performances received superior ratings in competition. He also helped co-direct a summer music class and has participated in collaborative performances with The Venice Symphony and Chamber Orchestra of Sarasota.

### **Roberta K. Simon, Cellist**

Roberta K. Simon started playing the cello in fourth grade through senior year in White Plains, New York. She played in school orchestras, Westchester County Junior Orchestra, and in multiple All County Music Festivals. After a 25-year hiatus, while volunteering for the Baltimore Symphony, Roberta met Paula Childress, a cellist in the Baltimore Symphony with whom she began to study again. Then in Scarsdale, New York, she had the opportunity to study with Yosif Feigelson, a Concert Cellist who studied at the Moscow Conservatory with Rostropovich and Natalia Gutman. There she played in the Manhattanville College Community Orchestra. After a seven-year hiatus, she joined Strings Con Brio in September 2022.

### **Sofia Sirocchi, Violinist**

Sofia Sirocchi holds a Bachelor's of Science in Nutritional Sciences, a Minor in Music Performance, and an Undergraduate Certificate in Music in Medicine from the University of Florida, where she was a member of the UF Symphony Orchestra and UF Health Ensemble. She holds a Master's of Science in Medical Sciences and a Graduate Certificate in Health Sciences from the University of South Florida, where she was a member of the USF Health Orchestra. She is currently a fourth-year medical student at Philadelphia College of Osteopathic Medicine South Georgia. In her spare time, she enjoys playing with Strings Con Brio.

### **Donna Smith, Violinist**

Donna Smith is an accomplished pianist and violinist, holding multidisciplinary degrees from Indiana University of Pennsylvania, The University of Michigan, and Troy State University. Donna serves Trinity Presbyterian Church, Our Lady of Lourdes, and Epiphany Cathedral in Venice, FL. Donna teaches private violin, viola, and piano

lessons and accompanies professional and aspiring musicians. Donna plays for The Sarasota Players, Venice Theatre, and Dingbat Theatre Project. Donna is the former principal 2nd violinist and section violinist for both The Venice Symphony and The Punta Gorda (formerly Charlotte) Symphony. She also played with Strauss Orchestra of America in the annual Salute to Vienna New Year's Concert Series. She performed in Bulgaria, Hungary, Slovakia, Czech Republic, and Italy. Donna is the founder and former director of The Venice Symphony Youth Orchestra.

### **Nurit Sonnenschein, Violinist**

Nurit Sonnenschein was born into a musical family and began playing on an eighth-size violin at the age of five under the tutelage of her father. For most of her formative years, she played in camp, college, and community orchestras. Life interceded, and her focus turned to raising her own musical family. In 2020, she discovered the Venice Community Orchestra, and on a tip from a colleague there, was thrilled to join Strings Con Brio in 2021.

### **Michaeline Spencer, Violinist**

Michaeline began playing the violin in second grade. She was not sure if it was going to be something she stuck with for life or just something fun to do now. The more she learned, the more she was hooked. From middle school through college, she attributes so many great memories with her violin. Her violin is more than a hobby. It is a passion that will never go away. She has been a part of so many orchestras back in her home state of Indiana and is now branching out into Florida. Her most favorite experience was getting to go to China with her University Orchestra.

### **Claire (Hanson) Stone, Violist**

Claire grew up in Sarasota attending Pine View School, where she started playing strings with Mr. Bowermeister in middle school, and continued through high school. Returning to Sarasota after studying engineering and history at Northwestern University, Claire was delighted to return to the viola with Mr. B. in the Sarasota Adult String Orchestra. Between her busy career as a Solutions Architect building and implementing software with Insurity, Inc. and keeping up with her daughter, Claire has not made time for making music in recent years. She is thrilled to be playing with Maestro Bowermeister and Strings Con Brio.

### **George Tapia, Violinist**

Born and raised in Sarasota, George owns a locally-based digital marketing agency. His passion for music started out with the piano in elementary school and was furthered by picking up the violin in sixth grade. He has played with the Venice Symphony, Pine View School Chamber Orchestra and String Quartet, FSU Philharmonia, as well as the Sarasota Orchestra's youth program, joining the group in their Carnegie Hall debut in 2008. Since graduating from Florida State University, moving back to be closer to family and start his business, George is thrilled to bring music to the community once again through the Venice Community Orchestra and Strings Con Brio.

### **Carmen Troyer, Cellist**

Carmen was born and raised in Sarasota, Florida. She currently works a full-time job in accounting at a food distribution company and has been playing the cello for almost two years. Although she grew up playing piano, Carmen always thought the cello had such a terrific sound and knew that if she ever learned a new instrument, cello would be the one. She is honored to be a part of the talented group that is Strings Con Brio.

### **Matrick Thorpe, Cellist**

Matrick Thorpe (think Patrick with an “M”) loved the sound of violins until he heard a cello. His heart set on being a cellist, he went straight to school and arranged to study with the high school students during recess (he was too young to attend music class officially). While there is “no place like home,” he was excited for the opportunity to spend two months in 2022 traveling and performing throughout Europe and looks forward to traveling with his cello again soon. He plays for The Pops Orchestra of Bradenton and Sarasota, and Strings Con Brio.

### **David Turner, Cellist**

David Turner is a retired antiquarian bookseller and library consultant. He has played a number of instruments and finally got around to learning the cello three years ago. He has been a Sarasota resident for 20 years and volunteers at Marie Selby Botanical Gardens as a tour guide and teaches classes in wild bird rescue at Save our Seabirds. He is former chair of the Sarasota County Library Board and was the Maine State Croquet Champion.

### **Nicholas (Nick) Ungarelli, Cellist**



Nick Ungarelli is a Sarasota native, and has been playing the cello since he was in middle school. He first began playing at age 11, and quickly discovered what would become his life-long hobby and passion. While he spends his working hours assisting employees who get injured at work, he always makes sure to leave a portion of the day for practicing, and when he finds time, for reading too. When he was younger, he was a member of the Sarasota Youth Orchestra, and was also involved in their yearly summer music camp.

### **Norma Wanegar, Cellist**

Norma began to play music at the age of five with piano lessons. At 11, she began studying violin, which she made her primary instrument until she was in her 30s. During a hiatus from active playing, she raised her daughters and worked as a Computer Specialist for the International Business Machines Corporation (IBM) and insurance companies. During her late 50s, after completing a Master's degree, she satisfied her lifelong passion for playing the cello, playing with chamber, community, and professional groups.

### **Mary Ann Wirth, Violist**

Mary Ann earned her Bachelor and Master degree in Music Education from Hofstra University and Queens College of the University of New York, respectively. She taught for 20 years in Half Hollow Hills Schools on Long Island, and taught violin and viola privately. In 1989, she moved to Charlottesville, Virginia and played violin and viola in the University of Virginia orchestra then became principal violist of The Waynesboro Symphony. She directed the Western Albermarle high school orchestra and continued to give lessons privately. She has been a violin member of The Venice Symphony and violist in the Anna Maria Island Orchestra and Avanti Sinfonia. She communities between Virginia and Florida for the concert seasons and works with several quartets and trios who perform at various musical engagements.

### **Georgene Zechman, Violinist**

Georgene Zechman graduated from Penn State University as a Reading Specialist, and has taught in Pennsylvania, Virginia, and Indiana. She lived in Chicago for 38 years, and has two children and seven grandchildren. Georgene has lived fulltime in Sarasota for the last thirteen years, but was a snowbird for the past 25 years. She began studying the violin at the age of twelve, and played with several different

orchestras including the Penn State Orchestra and Fairfax Symphony Orchestra (Virginia). Currently, Georgene plays with the Church of the Palms Orchestra and Strings Con Brio.