

Vero Beach Chamber Orchestra

NEWSLETTER 2022

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Joana Gonzalez, piano soloist, 2022 VBCO season.

The Vero Beach Chamber Orchestra, founded in 2007, welcomes experienced adult musicians and advanced students to share the experience of playing the orchestral repertoire under Conductor Colbert Page Howell. Music purchased by the orchestra is donated to the Vero Beach High School Music Department's Library. Concerts are free and open to the public. Community donations are used to provide scholarships to our graduating seniors. Community support and participation is welcome!

Vero Beach Chamber Orchestra Season 14 (and 13, and 12)... **THAT'S A WRAP!**

The Vero Beach Chamber Orchestra concert on Sunday, April 24, 2022 was a celebration not only of Beethoven's 250th birthday, but also of community endurance, persistence, and good humor as the orchestra overcame three years of unexpected challenges, ending with a great concert, an appreciative audience, and a happy reception.

"Bringing our Beethoven celebration to the finish line was a much longer undertaking than we'd expected, thanks to COVID", explained VBCO Board President Dwight Holmes. "What was supposed to be a 250th birthday wound up being a 252nd birthday celebration. While all arts organizations suffered the same challenges, the adult/student/seasonal nature of our group threw a few more monkey wrenches into the works, but in the end we were able to pull it together, and it was a great experience."

The Vero Beach Chamber Orchestra, led by Colbert Page Howell, is unique in a region that boasts a vibrant and varied cultural environment. The pillars upon which the orchestra was founded were unique in that they had less to do with pursuing performance fame and more to do with enhancing music education in the schools as its primary mission, and providing full and part-time resident musicians with a welcoming place to play good music.

When he arrived in the area, Tom Fritz, the orchestra's founder was concerned that there was no string program in the Vero Beach Schools, and decided to do something about that. He purchased a small inventory of violins, and began recruiting students to learn to play them. In a parallel effort, Tom founded the VBCO to provide a place where students and adults could learn great music and perform as musicians, regardless of age.

You're Invited...

Musicians invited to Join the VBCO

Did you play violin (bass, trumpet, etc.) in high school or college and have been thinking about getting back to it now that you have a little more time? We'd like to meet you. This might be just the ticket to polish your skills and claim a seat in this extraordinary ensemble. For more information, contact Richard Ballinger at bratsche17@hotmail.com (772-564-3952) or Page Howell at page.howell@indianriverschools.org (772-564-5413).

Donors Invited to Join the Effort

Donations are the lifeblood of the Vero Beach Chamber Orchestra. Please make a donation to help us continue our work including the purchase of music that is donated to the Vero Beach High School music library, and the presentation of free concerts open to the public. Thank you!

[Click here to DONATE!](#)

Or checks may be sent to:
VBCO
PO Box 651334
Vero Beach, FL 32965



The symbiotic underpinnings of the founder's philosophy has created a most interesting relationship between the school, the musicians, and the community as a whole. The effort has been enormously successful, yet significantly unsung. In the 14 years of its history, the VBCO has purchased thousands of dollars worth of music for its own performance, and has donated it all to the Vero Beach High School Music Library. Once without any orchestra at all, the Vero Beach High School now boasts three large orchestras and a varying number of ad-hoc performing groups, a busy string faculty, and hundreds of orchestral students.

There are a number of defining aspects to the Vero Beach Chamber Orchestra that are worthy of note. The first is that the group is a not-for-profit 501(c-3) organization, dependent upon donations to underwrite each season. Offering two concerts each season, both free and open to the public, audience donations comprise the bulk of the group's income. "It was my objective to be sure that anyone who wanted to come to hear a concert was welcome and not impeded by ticket prices," explained Tom Fritz.

The VBCO has had wonderful success in presenting a number of local professional musicians as featured soloists, a strategy that resonates with the community. For its final concert, the VBCO presented Joana Gonzalez, piano soloist, playing Beethoven's Piano Concerto # 3 in C minor. Ms. Gonzalez, who spent part of her childhood in Vero Beach, received her undergraduate degree from the University of Miami's Frost Music School and a Master's degree from the Manhattan School of Music in New York City. The entire performance experience, from first rehearsal to final bow, was productive, collaborative, cooperative, and delightful. "I would like to express the deep gratitude and love I feel towards all of you. The immense privilege of being able to recreate an age-old masterpiece in collaboration with many other musicians for an audience eager to listen is not lost on me. Furthermore, it was an absolute pleasure to work with each and every member of your orchestra," wrote Joana following her performance. The VBCO shared her joy, as did the audience, judging from the standing ovation and many enthusiastic audience comments.

At the end of each season, the orchestra offers small scholarships, derived from audience donations, to its graduating seniors in recognition of their efforts and contribution to the group. These small tokens also serve as a reminder that important and enduring things can come from modest beginnings.