



Becker Family Foundation Newsletter

Online Concert Brings Music into the Homes of Students and Parents

Under pandemic conditions, musicians the world over have been faced with impossible challenges, including how to perform when regulations limit how many people can be at a venue safely at any given time. This was the conundrum that The Becker Family Foundation faced earlier this year. However, with ingenuity and determination - not to mention a healthy amount of creativity - a solution was found.

For weeks, students rehearsed at home and via online lessons. Key foundation members reached out to other performers around the globe, and those performers chose to donate their time to creating something wonderful. Students met in small groups and were professionally recorded playing their songs. World-renowned musicians sent in videos of themselves performing stunning pieces of music. Editors went to work compiling these videos into something



larger, something that could reach far further than the usual concert.

On June 4th, the video went live, and students, parents, and music-lovers alike gathered in their homes to see and hear their loved ones perform alongside such names as Rachel Barton Pine, Abraham Feder, Sylvia Pine, and Nikolas Simon.

“What an inspiration for our students!” says founding member Marilyn Becker. “To hear themselves play in the same venue -



or video - as these great talents will push them to want to do more with music. It gives them a personalized role model that they've shared the screen with, so to speak!"

The feedback has been unanimous as well. With hundreds of views, this video has already reached more people than ever expected. The reason why is simple. Music breathes life into the world, and when music is limited, we all have to work a little harder to take in a breath. On June 4th of this year, it became just a little easier to breathe.

Highlights of 2020

January Concert

January 9, 2020

On January 9th of this year, The Becker Family Foundation and Play if Forward String Ensemble joined with The Newberry College Department of Music School Performance and professional musician Sonja Lee to bring a violin performance to Newberry S.C. This incredible showing of musical talent was a Dufford Institute for Cultural Diversity Event in conjunction with Newberry Arts For All (NAFA), The Becker Family Foundation & Newberry College Department of Music School Performance.

Spring Concert

June 4th, 2020

On June 4th of this year, Play it Forward joined professional instrumentalists from around the globe to record their performances safely and create a video of these performances that was released on YouTube. The concert was met with resounding praise for the students and professionals alike. The video has been watched hundreds of times to date, and can be found [here](#). During this concert, Matthew Luz was recognized with the Carl Becker young musician award. Ethan Beebee and Courtney Bradley were also recognized for their achievements this year.



Play It Forward Recital

November, 2020

The students of the Play it Forward string ensemble gathered at the home of Jennifer and Cole Beebe to perform outdoors, allowing for safe, socially-distanced showcasing of their work.



Winter Recital for Play it Forward

On December 15, the members of Play It Forward held their winter recital for family members and close friends. The teachers, Andrew Lynn and Ying Lao, attended via Zoom to guard all attendees and performers from a possible exposure to Coronavirus. They were greatly missed by all of the students, although their dedication to safety protocols was appreciated just as greatly.

The event was hosted by Chuck Herin, the manufacturer of Pegheds, located in Winnsboro, Sc. He invented the pegs which are installed on most of the instruments owned by the foundation.



Announcements

Online Group Lessons Become Online Private Lessons

The Becker Family Foundation strives to provide students with the highest quality experience possible, even in pandemic conditions. With this mission in mind, online group lessons have been converted to private lessons, allowing for personalized instruction. While both students and teachers will truly miss the moments of “joyful chaos” group lessons provided, this new approach has already allowed students to improve further in their lessons and progress at a pace that’s tailored to them as individuals.

Hoover Family Foundation Grant Given

We are excited to announce that the Becker Family Foundation has received a \$55,000.00 donation from the Hoover Family Foundation that will be used to fund an endowment. We are grateful for their generosity and have set a goal of obtaining 4 matching grants from other organizations.

Daniela Diaz Granted Use of 1915 Carl Becker Violin by Michael Upton and Becker Family Foundation



This year, Venezuelan-born violinist Daniela Diaz was gifted the use of a 1915 Carl Becker Violin. With this instrument, Danielle hopes to further her musical prowess and expand her experience with violin. Having once had the honor of playing at Carnegie Hall, an instrument of this quality will only serve to improve her sound and expression.

Want to Get Involved?

1. We need your help in building our email list. We are hoping to reach 2,500 people by the end of May. You can do this by visiting www.beckerfamilyfoundation.com. Scroll to the bottom of the page and enter your email address. Please ask your friends and family members to do the same.
2. Please follow the “The Becker Family Foundation” Facebook page! While these first two may not seem important, we have some opportunities that require us to grow our list and doing either of these will help us tremendously.

3. Please consider contributing. We did have several fundraisers disrupted by the current conditions. A \$10.00 gift is welcome and appreciated! The amount is not as important as having a broad base of contributors. There is a paypal link at www.beckerfamilyfoundation.com or a check can be mailed to:

The Becker Family Foundation
PO Box 517
Chapin, SC 29036

Student Spotlight **Ethan Beebe**



Ethan Beebe found out about the opportunities provided by The Becker Family Foundation the day the foundation began. Although he already knew how to play piano, he wanted to learn strings in order to further “stretch his musical wings”. Once lessons began, Ethan knew that he wanted to play the bass. He loves adding harmony to pieces of music, and finds it fascinating how harmony adds depth. Since playing the bass, Ethan has developed a newfound confidence in his playing, knowing that he has to play confidently and correctly to support the other players. In order to do this, he has to be disciplined and practices often so that he always plays to the best of his ability.

Now that he plays the bass, Ethan has an added way to enjoy family nights. They get together and play music! He combines his knowledge of piano and now the bass to write songs and perform them with his family. This has created beautiful moments of bonding and further love of music in general. He even plans on recording himself on piano, then bass, then combining the recordings to create his own duet!

Through the Becker Family Foundation, Ethan has found a particular joy in working with instructor Andrew Lynn. Through Mr. Lynn, Ethan has felt personally encouraged and challenged, and is eager to surpass every expectation set before him. Combined with the use of high quality instruments that produce superior sound, this drives Ethan to improve even more to create truly beautiful music with fine instruments. Recently, Ethan has switched to cello and is enjoying the expansion to his musical experience.

Becker Family Spotlight
Jennifer Becker



Jennifer Becker was born on August 14th 1955, the third child of Carl F Becker and Geraldine Becker. Crafting with her hands has been a lifelong passion. She started carving at the age of 8 and in 1966 she started in the violin business learning from her father and grandfather.

By the age of 17, three violins were made and she had the honor of assisting her father on the restoration of a Stradivari violin, the first of many. Over the next few years she continued learning the details of restoration work and making fine instruments.

In April, 1978 she married Rom Jurewicz and moved to Minnesota. In between having three children - Eric, Stephanie and Alya - Jennifer dedicated time to collaborate with her father restoring fine instruments and making violins in the Wisconsin shop.



In 1986 Jennifer opened her shop in “Dinkeytown” located on the campus of the University of Minnesota.

Rom passed away October of 2003 and the shop was closed two years later. For the next ten years Jennifer found it impossible to do much work “at the bench”.

In 2014 she met Scott Blomgren at the Arthur Murray dance studio and married him in 2017. Life after working in the shop is very busy with sewing, dancing, gardening, and playing the cello in the Golden Valley Orchestra. The new shop location in Saint Paul has been thriving and proved to be very productive. Innovative ideas abound with Jennifer making a green colored violin cut like a gem that she calls "the Emerald". Other

colors and unusual shapes will be coming in the future.

It has been a very full career filled with many fine instrument restorations, countless happy clients matched with their ideal instrument or bow, 33 violins finished and the latest #34 (the Falcon) delivered in December of 2020. At the age of 65 she hopes there will be another 20 years of making violins. She enjoys so much hearing the young up and coming musicians playing and learning on the instruments from the Becker Family Foundation, instruments that she worked on so many years ago.



Moments with the Foundation





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*Denotes founding members

Special Thanks

We would like to extend special thanks to Doni and David Jordan for their generous donation of the Carl F. Becker Young Musician Award.

We would also like to thank, from the bottom of our hearts, all of the musicians who donated their time and talent to our Spring Concert. Musicians are listed below:

Abraham Feder

Nikolas Simon

Kimberly Kennedy

Katherine Taylor - Paul Becker instrument 2011

Daniela Diaz - 1915 Carl Becker Violin

Rachel Barton Pine

Sylvia Pine

Additional thanks to D. Ray Wade, founding member of the foundation and cornerstone of the organization, who passed away this year on September 8. We send our love and condolences to his family, and will continue to honor his memory through the works of this foundation.



The Becker Family (BF) Foundation, a tax-exempt 501(c)(3) charitable organization, was founded in 2018 to expand awareness of and appreciation for stringed instruments. It provides services and funding for violin, viola and cello stringed instrument education, research, performances, and artists, to benefit listeners and learners alike.