

IN THEIR OWN WORDS
Get to Know the WVS Musicians
Lisa Tharp, Piccolo



Tell us about your music journey:

I started piano lessons when I was 5. I recall my mother saying, "Remember how you always wanted to play the piano? There'll be ice cream afterwards." Sold! and here I am--thanks, Mom! I began playing the flute when I was 9 and over time gravitated towards the piccolo as it suited my favorite playing style. The piccolo never has anything boring and usually is the enthusiastic sparkle on top of things--I like that.

I earned a Bachelor of Music Education from Kansas State University and a Masters of Music Performance from Wichita State University. However, I actually came to AZ to study piano at ASU in the DMA (Doctor of Musical Arts) program, having abandoned the flute after a unsuccessful hand surgery. In one of those quirky life twists, I was able to go back to the flute after those years of intense piano practicing which ultimately served as physical therapy.

I also earned a Masters in Library and Information Science from the University of Arizona to make the most of my "day job," in libraries. I was a teen librarian for many years and then Branch Manager at several locations, retiring from the Ironwood Branch of Phoenix Public Library in 2018. I currently work as part-time faculty Reference Librarian at South Mountain Community College.

In 1997 I won the piccolo position with the Sun City Symphony (now West Valley Symphony). I play piccolo for the Musica Nova Orchestra, principal flute in the Chandler Symphony and flute and piccolo for the Oregon Arts Orchestra. My husband and I have a Bassoon/Flute duo *Arpeggio* and we perform as well. Next season we'll be premiering a newly commissioned work by River Sawchyn, *Two Travelers*.

Do you have any siblings? I have a younger sister, Lael. She played percussion.

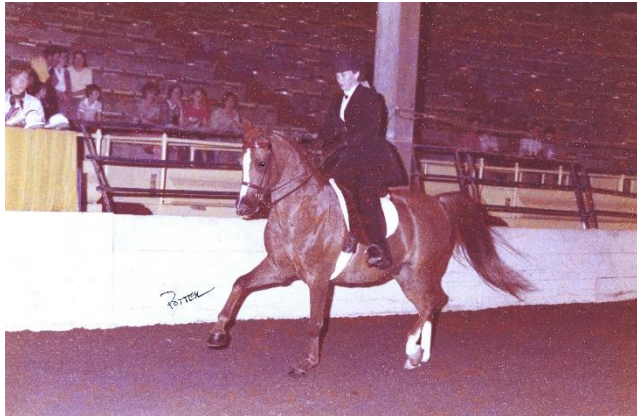
What is your dream job? Playing piccolo in an orchestra—I am very lucky to play in two!

What's your claim to fame? If you ask the people sitting around me, they'd probably say "loud high notes!" That's one of my favorite piccolo roles!

What was your favorite subject in middle school? Besides music? Math!

What is your current passion project? All things piccolo. My current favorite artist is Ksenia Kueylar of the Saint- Petersburg Philharmonic Orchestra. I love her recordings of the Vivaldi piccolo concertos.

I have always been passionate about animals, especially dogs and horses. I was lucky enough to show horses as I was growing up. My parents, especially my mom, were big believers in the 'work hard for what you want' philosophy so behind the scenes, there was a lot of work...like stable cleaning.



Do you play multiple instruments? If so, which ones? I also play and teach piano. All of my students are on Zoom!

What is the best gift you have ever received? My Kawaiii 7' grand piano. Thanks, John!

What is your favorite food? Why? Dark Chocolate cheesecake. Delicious and decadent, LOL!

What do you like to learn about? How the brain works—how we learn best and what can influence that. I am also very interested in neuroplasticity—how we can train the brain with our thoughts.

What is your current favorite TV show/movie/binge? Wednesday. It's a Netflix series about Wednesday Addams. I enjoy her unfiltered truthfulness.

What is something you've always wanted to do but haven't tried yet? Skydiving.



Star Trek or Star Wars? Star Trek, however, Lord of the Rings is my rabid obsession.

What is your favorite movie of all time? Lord of the Rings and The Matrix trilogy.

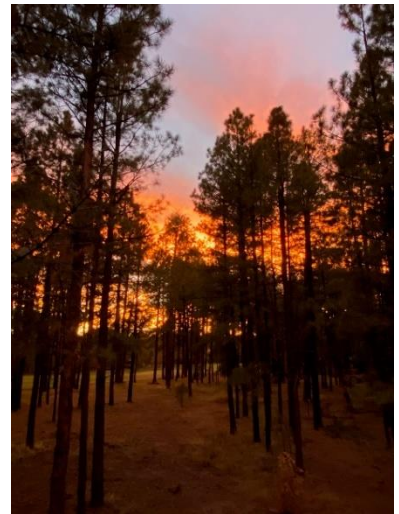
What is the best concert you've ever been to? When I was in High School, the Saint Louis Symphony played and did masterclasses at a regional event. The first piece they played was *Ruslan and Ludmilla*. That sweep of orchestral sound changed my life. I wanted that, to be in that, to be part of playing that. I still get goosebumps remembering it!

What was your first job? Selling popcorn at Worlds of Fun, an amusement park in Kansas City.

If you had a yacht, what would you name it? Maverick

Do you prefer a beach or mountain vacation? Mountain, preferably without snow. I love Pinetop Arizona. I love reading with trees all around and hiking the trails. Here's a photo of a favorite reading spot!

What is your favorite thing to practice or perform? I really like performing new works. It's stimulating intellectually and creatively to look at something fresh and explore the possibilities.



We have two Dogs. Viggo the crazy Labradoodle--the most affectionate dog you'll ever meet, and Linus the Mexican Hairless, named for the Peanuts character. Linus loves the piccolo--really! He's my practice buddy and is always curled up somewhere in the room (sent a picture). My late afternoon ZOOM students know him for coming and poking me when it's time to feed him.

And here is Viggo, watching for birds and planes. He's happy to bark at either one.



How do you spend your free time?

Lots of dog walking and exercise. My exercise goal is 12 hours a week--2 hours at the gym and 6 hours of dog walking, 6 hours of bicycling. I like Long Distance cycling and I ride at least an hour every day--currently indoors in front of the TV, LOL. I also love reading mysteries--real "figure-it-out" mysteries not suspense--especially outside underneath our giant pine tree.

