

Get to Know Your WVS Musicians
Featuring: Claire Gordon
Music Director and Conductor West Valley Youth Orchestra
Long-time Violinist with West Valley Symphony



Hometown/Musical Education/Training? I am a native of Phoenix. I started piano in 1st grade and started violin when I was 8. I studied piano with Dr. Walter Cosand at ASU for 1 ½ years and studied violin with Dr. Eugene Lombardi for all 4 years at ASU. My degree is in Instrumental Music Education with a minor in Choral Music Education.

When did you become involved with the WVYO? The WVYO started with a 12-week trial session in the spring of 1997, and I was asked to be the conductor for the first full season in the fall of 1997. I've been the conductor ever since.

What's the most satisfying about your work with WVYO? Seeing the students progress from the beginning of the year to really making music together by the middle to the end of the year. They learn so much. Playing in an orchestra is quite different from just playing by yourself. It's rewarding to see their skills increase, and it's a joy to see them develop a love for orchestral music from all the historical periods: Baroque, Classical, Romantic and Contemporary.

Who is your favorite musician. Itzhak Perlman. He's an incredible violinist, and I admire the fact that he has achieved so much in spite of having polio.

First concert you ever attended? I remember my parents taking me to see the Nutcracker Ballet when I was about 7 years old. At the intermission, they took me down front so I could look over the edge and see the orchestra in the pit. I told them that I wanted to learn to play the violin. My dad bought me a violin and found a teacher for me, and the rest is history!

Celebrity Crush as a youngster? Bill Bixby on "My Favorite Martian" and "My Son, Eddie" – now that really dates me!

Celebrity Crush now? I wouldn't say it's a crush, but British actor Hugh Grant comes to mind. I don't know much about him personally, but he's very talented and I enjoyed the movies that he has starred in.

Favorite Vacation Spot? My husband and I don't travel a lot, but our most memorable vacation was a cruise/land tour in Alaska. It is beautiful country, and we got to see a lot of wildlife – reindeer, elk, bear, bald eagles, etc.

If you could only eat one food for the rest of your life, what would it be? It would probably have to be salad! I try to eat a lot of salads to keep my weight somewhat stable, but I do like salads too. (not sure if this is exactly the answer you're looking for, but that's what I'm going with!)

What famous/historical figure would you most like to share a meal with? What would you talk about? Jesus Christ. I would ask him what it was like to leave the glories of heaven to come to earth in human flesh, and what it was like to live as a human, knowing that his purpose was to die on the cross to provide for our salvation.