

Her instrument is the easiest to hear



Rita Hayes

The piccolo is sometimes referred to as the "icing on the orchestra's cake," though some people may think it as the worst possible instrument in the orchestra because it's so high and loud.

"There's no place to hide – no one to cover you up if you make a mistake," says Rita Hayes, who is now in her twentieth season playing piccolo and flute with the Asheville Symphony.

Playing the piccolo takes tremendous breath support, and playing in tune is challenging. The embouchure (position of the lips) is extremely difficult because the instrument is so small.

Asked what she enjoys most about playing with the Symphony, Ms. Hayes responds, "It's a thrill to play such beautiful music with such wonderful players. The musicians are just wonderful."

Ms. Hayes loves all kinds of music, but especially Celtic. Visitors to Biltmore House and the Grove Park Inn often have the opportunity to hear Ms. Hayes perform as a member of "Braidstream," a group that plays Celtic, classical, and jazz and music from other countries, along with some of Ms. Hayes's original compositions. She also plays with Mountain Chamber Players, a sextet (wind quintet plus piano) based in Brevard.

Her favorite classical composers are the French Impressionists – Faure, Debussy, and Ravel. "I love the dreamy quality and heart-felt sensuousness of the sound," she says. As one might expect from a flautist, one of her favorite compositions is *Prelude to the Afternoon of a Faun*.

Lately she's excited about preparing the music for *Carmina Burana*, the featured work on this season's April Masterworks concert. "I love the primitive sensuousness of both the musical theme and the lyrics -- everything from sacred hymns to drinking songs. It's just a lot of fun!"

She started playing piano at age five. Her mother was a cellist with the National Symphony in Washington, DC, and also played the piano. "I was always singing and dancing, so she thought my talent should be developed." At age 10, Ms. Hayes started playing the flute, because "flutes sounded pretty and looked pretty. I liked all that silver."

At age 14, she added voice lessons to her studies. She was in musical theater all through middle school and high school. "Name a Broadway show tune and I know it. It was going to be my field, until I realized I didn't have the driving competitive edge that was needed. But I always have been a jazz vocalist, singing professionally since age 17." While studying at the Cincinnati Conservatory, Ms. Hayes had a chance to work with some truly great jazz musicians, including Roberta Flack.

Ms. Hayes just took her dream vacation last summer – a trip to Italy and Greece. "I could do it six more times. I loved just listening to all the native Greek music." She is planning to go to Ireland this summer. This time she plans to take her flute and do some active playing.

Ms. Hayes loves the natural beauty of Asheville, and fears the beautiful landscape could be spoiled by rampant uncontrolled development. She also loves the community. "I feel the community here is very special, because there is a lot of interest in spirituality here." Ms. Hayes enjoys reading books by Deepak Chopra and other spirituality-based literature, such as *The Return of Merlin* and *Servers of the Devine Destiny*.

Private students and students at Brevard College and AB Tech have the good fortune to have her as a flute teacher. If you listen to WCQS radio on Tuesday evenings and hear a silky, soft feminine voice announcing the tunes, it's Rita Hayes.

She considers her greatest accomplishment to be raising her son Adam Johnson, age 21. He lives at home and has been running his own recording business since age 16. He specializes in on-location recordings including concerts by the Asheville Symphony, Asheville Symphony Chorus, as well as other classical performances and church productions.

Ms. Hayes has been a wonderful resource for the Guild's Music in the Schools project, helping line up musicians for the concerts. Music in the Schools is "a huge passion of mine," she says.

Over the years, she has watched the orchestra evolve from a community orchestra to the fine professional orchestra it is now. Her wish for the future would be that Asheville could have a really good performing arts center and become more accessible to a larger community and younger audience. "...and I think Daniel Meyer is just the person to do it!"

Welcome these new Guild members

When researching great places to retire, one name that kept recurring in the books and on the internet was Asheville. Four years ago, **Maureen Fitzgerald** came to see for herself, and decided they were right.

As a young adult, Maureen left her home in Evansville, Ind., to work at the United States Senate. She was involved in Social Security and Veterans Affairs. After that she was in real estate in the DC area for 10 years, and then in retail. Now she enjoys working part time at the Folk Art Center. In addition to attending Symphony concerts, Maureen has enjoyed dulcimer lessons and a jazz class at the UNCA College for Seniors. She also especially enjoys theater and volunteers for the Humane Society.

Welcome to newlyweds, **Cecil and Teresa Cantrell!** They moved to downtown Asheville following their May 1 wedding.

Cecil and Teresa honeymooned in Italy and have recently returned from another trip to Germany, Austria and Italy. They plan to visit Australia in the near future. "We had been single for a long time, and want to make up for missed opportunities!" Teresa majored in voice at Queens College, and received a master's degree in music from Indiana University. She was a music teacher in Anderson, S.C., until a mutual friend introduced her to Cecil. Cecil is a graduate of Middle Tennessee State University and lived in Hendersonville for 40 years where he owned, until recently, Skyland Petroleum Company. Many people know Cecil also through his former restaurant, The Coachlight, which was located on Long Shoals Road.

"We did not come to Asheville to vegetate!" say **Michael and Valerie Lord**. The couple stays very busy attending choral and symphony concerts, exploring the countryside, reading, and walking. They also enjoy activities at the Asheville Unitarian Universalist Church. They look forward to starting classes at the College for Seniors and possibly joining a choral group.

Michael first came to the U.S. in 1978 as a computer programmer in New York for an English bank. In 1994 he married Valerie, an English friend of long-standing who is a qualified Midwife. He and his new bride explored the Blue Ridge Parkway, looking for a beautiful place to live with friendly people that also had an active arts community – where else, but Asheville?? They now live in Alexander and enjoy the gorgeous mountain views.