

# ORANGE COUNTY REGISTER

## Artists of the Week: PSYO concerto competition winners

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This week, we highlight the winners of the Pacific Symphony Youth Orchestra's annual concerto competition. The orchestra, a branch of the Pacific Symphony Youth Ensembles, offers intense orchestral training and the opportunity to play orchestral works onstage at the Segerstrom Concert Hall to more than 100 string, wind and percussion musicians in grades 9-12. The winners of the competition are invited to perform a solo in the orchestra's season-ending concert, which was held this past Sunday.

**Name:** Jake Platt

**School:** Dana Hills High School

**Grade:** 11

**Hometown:** Laguna Niguel

**Instrument you play:** double bass

**How did you get involved in music?** Everyone at my elementary school was required to play an instrument in fourth and fifth grade. I picked up the violin because it seemed like it was the most popular. When I got to sixth grade, however, I switched instruments to what I currently play, the double bass.

**What is your favorite piece of music? Who is your favorite composer?** It's difficult to have just one favorite when there are so many out there. I guess if I had to choose one piece to be my favorite, it would be the "Danse Macabre" by Camille Saint-Saëns. As for a composer, I would definitely choose Tchaikovsky.

**Who have been your influences? Did you have a mentor in your development as a musician? If so, how did they help you?** Obviously my parents are huge influences. I'm lucky to have them support me in everything I do. As far as a mentor goes, I would definitely give that title to my teacher, Doug Basye. He has done everything in his power to guide me to where I am at today, and I am very appreciative of that.

**What inspires you?** Just the idea of getting better and playing the instrument as well as I can. I also look forward to the possible opportunities that open up and the people I will be able to meet.

**Other than music, are you involved in any other activities? If yes, what are they?** I play tennis on my school's team. I am also an officer of my school's music appreciation club.

**What do you get out of playing music?** I get a feeling of joy that nothing else is able to bring. It is also just very relaxing to just go home and be able to play an instrument and forget about everything else.

**How do the arts figure into your long-term goals?** I plan to go on playing the bass in college. If everything works out, I would definitely love to become a professional musician, whether it be in an orchestra or in a studio.

**What is the best advice you have received?** I think the best advice I have received was just to never let anyone get you down. You should be the only one to have control over your emotions.

**Do you have any other thoughts about being a musician that you would like to share with us?** If you are questioning whether you should play an instrument or not, you should. Not only is it fun, it also opens up a lot of opportunities you may not have previously had.

**Name:** Hanae Yoshida

**School:** Northwood High School

**Grade:** 10

**Hometown:** Irvine

**Instruments you play:** tenor trombone and piano

**How did you get involved in music?** Music has been a part of my life since childhood, but I never took interest until I started playing the trombone. My love towards music increasingly grew when I switched my primary instrument from piano to trombone in fifth grade. I love trombone. I always think and relate everything that you can think of to the trombone.

**What is your favorite piece of music? Who is your favorite composer?** I have too many pieces that I love. If I have to choose, it would have to be the "New World Symphony" by Dvořák. I never get tired of listening to all four movements. My favorite composer is Shostakovich because (his music has) lots of trombone parts.

**Who have been your influences? Did you have a mentor in your development as a musician? If so, how did they help you?** The person I admire the most is my sister, Tomomi. Also a musician, she gives me advice for what I should do in phrasing, intonation and articulation. Because of Tomomi, I am able to efficiently use my time and become a better player. Although she is forced to listen to the sounds that leak out of the practice room (because I play so loud), she kindly supports me in music. She is my third eye and looks from a different point of view to make me a better player as well as a better person. Not only does she help me through music, but she also talks to me about academic or social struggles I have and encourages me to stay optimistic.

**What inspires you?** Going on YouTube and listening to professional orchestras, jazz bands and musicians encourages me to become a better musician. Watching videos not only teaches me how people express music through playing, but through their facial expressions and physical features as well. Also, each individual has their own unique characteristics that make them stand out, and I hope I will be able to have my own uniqueness to express myself in the future as well.

**What do you get out of playing music?** I get another opportunity to express myself that I cannot explain with words.

**How do the arts figure into your long-term goals?** I hope to live with music throughout the rest of my life as a musician and never deteriorate my passion and love towards music.

**What is the best advice you have received?** The best advice I have ever received was how practice makes discipline rather than perfection. Practicing for a long time does not mean you will become a better player.

Each practice time has to be valued and spent efficiently to change your flaws.

**Name:** Emma Lee

**School:** Crean Lutheran High School

**Grade:** 10

**Hometown:** Tustin

**Instruments you play:** cello and piano

**How did you get involved in music?** Ever since I was little, music has been a part of my life. My mom always made sure to play baby Mozart and lots of Beethoven. When I was old enough, I started playing the piano. It was later in the fourth grade that I wanted to be a part of the school orchestra. I wanted to play the violin, but after some persuasion, I started the cello and loved it ever since.

**What is your favorite piece of music? Who is your favorite composer?** My favorite composer would have to be Tchaikovsky. I love his concerto for piano. His symphonies are also great, lyrical and so relatable for me. I also love his "Variations on a Rococo Theme" for cello and "Pezzo Capriccioso." So intense and dramatic.

**Who have been your influences? Did you have a mentor in your development as a musician? If so, how did they help you?** My biggest music mentors are David Dunford, my piano teacher, and my cello teacher, Sarah Koo Freeman. The mentors that have sparked my curiosity to pursue conducting are maestro Alejandro Gutiérrez and conductor Irene Kroesen.

**What inspires you?** To me, music is another way of communicating. I love speaking through my cello to God and to the audience. To me, it's a getaway. I'm able to forget all about what's going on around me and live in the moment. It's an outlet that allows me to be who I am without being shy about it.

**Other than music, are you involved in any other activities? If yes, what are they?** When I have time, I love being outside. I like biking and kayaking. Other than that, I'm always studying, having quality family time and working hard in the practice room.

**What do you get out of playing music?** Music teleports me to the heavens, around the world and back. It allows me to retreat to a different kind of world, one of many colors and feelings.

**How do the arts figure into your long-term goals?** After college, I want to come back and play with the Pacific Symphony, and possibly even conduct. It's something I've dreamed of doing ever since I played with Pacific Symphony's Santiago Strings under the direction of Irene Kroesen.

**What is the best advice you have received?** From conductor Irene Kroesen: "If you're on time, you're late." From maestro Alejandro Gutiérrez: "Enjoy the process towards the final concert." From maestro Carl St.Clair: "It's not about the sound of the note, but the silence that follows it."

**Do you have any other thoughts about being a musician that you would like to share with us?** I wouldn't be where I am today without music or the Pacific Symphony Youth Ensembles. The experiences from PSYE have solidified my decision to pursue the study of music.

**Name:** Danielle Liu

**School:** Crean Lutheran High School

**Grade:** 9

**Hometown:** Yorba Linda

**Instruments you play:** violin, piano, tuba

**How did you get involved in music?** My mother had me start violin lessons when I was 4 years old and piano lessons when I was 6. I also participated in musicals in elementary school and landed a few major roles, including Annie in "Annie Jr." and Dorothy in "The Wiz." When I was in fourth grade, I joined the school band and started playing the trumpet, the baritone and the tuba.

**What is your favorite piece of music? Who is your favorite composer?** My favorite solo piece of music is the Vieuxtemps Violin Concerto No. 5 because the song requires a high level of both technicality and musicality. My favorite composer is Tchaikovsky. Tchaikovsky's music is passionate, lyrical and beautifully out of this world.

**Who have been your influences? Did you have a mentor in your development as a musician? If so, how did they help you?** Maestro Gutiérrez and Ms. Irene Kroesen have been important influences in my musical career. They have inspired me to play from the soul and to "be an artist," as maestro Gutiérrez says. My mom has been my mentor in my musical development since I was 4 years old. From the start, she has been my daily teacher, guide and my second set of ears. A special thanks also to my private teacher, Eunhee Kim, who has helped me to grow so much as a violinist.

**What inspires you?** I am inspired by violin virtuosos like Itzhak Perlman and Sarah Chang. Their playing is so technically clear, yet so musical, and this inspires me to strive to play like them. I am also inspired by those who are not afraid to be different.

**Other than music, are you involved in any other activities? If yes, what are they?** Outside of music, I spend most of my time working on academics. Science, math and creative writing are my favorite subjects. This year, I was a part of my school's first Science Olympiad team. I am also part of an ambassador internship program at my high school, in which I learn to be a leader and a role model student. Finally, I am involved in my church, where I help with the children's ministries.

**What do you get out of playing music?** Music brings me satisfaction and enjoyment. I love making beautiful music intimately with my instrument. I also enjoy playing music with my mom, sister and friends in orchestra. I love to hear how our instruments all come together to make a piece of music come alive. Music has additionally taught me patience and diligence.

**How do the arts figure into your long-term goals?** I would like to play the violin and be involved in music forever. I cannot imagine my life without music. I improvise and play violin for church, and I want to continue doing this throughout my life. Even though I would like to be a medical doctor when I grow up, I would still like to continue to study and teach the violin and to play music for as long as I live.

**What is the best advice you have received?** The best advice I have received is to not be nervous when I am playing but to "just enjoy!" When preparing for a concert, I practice until the music is ingrained in my muscle memory. Then, when I perform, I do not need to be worried. Instead, I can focus on sharing my love for music with fellow musicians and the audience and just enjoy my art.

**Do you have any other thoughts about being a musician that you would like to share with us?** Music is not just dots and lines on a page. It is a beautiful art that can touch souls. The most important part about being a musician is playing from the heart and enjoying the music. I also love that I can use my body motions and face expressions to convey emotions in my music. The best part about being a musician is being able to play with other people. The Pacific Symphony Youth Orchestra has become my second family, and going to orchestra rehearsal is the highlight of every week.

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