

Trudy Larson, Executive Director and Strings Director

Trudy Larson, Executive Director and founder of NYSO, is a private Suzuki violin and viola teacher in North Andover, MA.

In 2001, Trudy Larson was awarded the Massachusetts "Private String Teacher of the Year" by the Massachusetts American String Teachers-National String Orchestra Association, an honor that recognizes exemplary dedication and commitment to string education outside of the schools.

Mrs. Larson is the founder and director of "Summer Strings," a summer chamber music camp for string players begun in 1996. Since 1998, she has been involved in a pilot string-teaching program in a school in Lawrence. Under the auspices of the Northshore Youth Symphony Orchestra, she has been instrumental in organizing and fundraising for the Lawrence Youth String Ensemble.

Gerald Dolan, Music Director and Conductor of Advanced Wind Ensemble

Gerald Dolan joined NYSO in 1995 as Music Director, and has brought to the orchestra the leadership and musicianship that has caused significant growth in both the students and the organization. Mr. Dolan is presently the Director of Bands for the Ipswich Public Schools where he teaches the concert band, jazz ensemble, jazz improvisation classes, and computer music composition classes. In 2002, Mr. Dolan was awarded the prestigious Lowell Mason Award, presented by the Massachusetts Music Educators Association to a music educator in Massachusetts who has demonstrated outstanding leadership in music education and has made important contributions to music and music education. In 2003, Gerald Dolan was awarded one of the "George Olmsted, Jr. Class of 1924" prizes for excellence in secondary school teaching" from Williams College; seniors from Williams College nominate a secondary school teacher that made a difference in their life.

Walter Pavasaris, Conductor of Senior Orchestra

Dr. Walter Pavasaris joined NYSO in 2006 as the conductor of Senior Orchestra. Dr. Pavasaris graduated from Hartt College of Music, earned an M.M. in String Instruments from the University of Michigan and his Ed.D. from Boston University. He is currently the Coordinator of Fine and Performing Arts in the Lexington Public Schools. Dr. Pavasaris continues to be active as an adjudicator, clinician and guest conductor throughout New England. As a conductor, he has had the distinct privilege of having conducted festival orchestras in all four districts of Massachusetts. In 1992, and from 1999-2001 he was the guest conductor of the United States Youth Ensemble String Orchestra during their European tour. In 1992 Dr. Pavasaris was the recipient of the Paul Smith "Conductor of the Year Award" from MICCA, and in 1996 the Massachusetts Educators Association acknowledged his many contributions to music and music education by bestowing on him the Lowell Mason Award. Currently, he serves on the faculty of The Boston Conservatory where he teaches String Methods; he is also the conductor of the Arlington Philharmonic Orchestra.

Sandra Doneski, NYSO Chorale Conductor

Dr. Sandra Doneski has had the pleasure of teaching music to students in Kindergarten through graduate school and conducting choral ensembles of varying ages and voicings. She is currently Assistant Professor of Music at Gordon College, where she teaches courses in music education methods, supervises student teachers and conducts the Gordon College Children's Choir. She founded the Children's Choir in 2000 to give children in the community the opportunity to grow as musicians and to provide music education majors an opportunity to develop as teachers and conductors. Sandra has also served on the faculty of the New England Conservatory Preparatory School, where she was Associate Conductor of the Children's Choir Program. Under her guidance, NEC implemented choral programs for early elementary and middle school students that focused on vocal pedagogy and building musicianship. She is a graduate of Gordon College and received her Master's and Ph.D. in Music Education from The Hartt School, University of Hartford. Dr. Doneski's research interests include the development of children's and adolescents' singing skills, music classroom pedagogy, the acquisition of aural understanding and its relationship to music literacy, and curriculum development and assessment in music education.

Liana Bishop, Assistant Chorale Conductor

Liana grew up in Massachusetts and received an undergraduate degree in Music Education, with a concentration in voice, from Gordon College. Upon graduating she became a choral director for the Lexington Public Schools, taught private voice, and performed with Montage, a vocal chamber group. Three years later, she began attending the Longy School of Music where she earned a Masters Degree in Vocal Performance. During this time she performed with the Tanglewood Festival Chorus, the Newton Symphony, gave solo recitals, taught voice at Gordon College, and co-directed two children's choirs at the New England Conservatory Preparatory School. After receiving her Master of Music degree, she became Music Director at the Newton Presbyterian Church. She continued to teach at Gordon College and performed with a vocal ensemble called Cantillare. After serving as Music Director for one year, Liana took her current position of Music Director at Lexington Christian Academy, and was recently also named Fine Arts Division Head. She continues to teach voice privately and performs regularly at Park St. Church in Boston and with the chamber chorus Beatus. During the summer months she is on staff as a choral conductor for the Summer Music Academy at Gordon College.

Walter O'Keefe, Conductor of Intermezzo Orchestra

Walter "Randy" O'Keefe joined the NYSO staff in 2004 as the director for Intermezzo Orchestra. Mr. O'Keefe has been the Music Department Head and Director of Bands for the Masconomet Regional School District since 1990. During his tenure at Masconomet, his jazz ensembles and concert bands have won several state and regional awards and traveled extensively. He earned a BA in Music Education from Ohio University in 1982 and his MM in Trumpet Performance from the University of Notre Dame in 1987 with additional studies in Music Education at the Hartt School of Music. Mr. O'Keefe has been the principal trumpet of the Melrose Symphony Orchestra since 2001 and recently retired after twenty years as the principal trumpet and featured soloist for the 567th Air National Guard Concert Band of the Northeast. At the state and district level, Mr. O'Keefe has served as a trumpet adjudicator for Northeast Junior District, the Ensemble Manager for the Massachusetts All State Jazz Ensemble and the Concert Chairperson for the Massachusetts All State Music Festival.

Abigail Haynes, Conductor of Prelude String Ensemble

Abigail Haynes is a graduate of Gordon College in Massachusetts. She holds the Bachelor of Music in vocal performance. While a student at Gordon, she was a member of the Gordon Symphony Orchestra and played violin in the Gordon Chamber Music Program led by James Buswell and Carol Ou. Her solo debut as a violinist was with the Salem Philharmonic Orchestra in 2001. She has been teaching violin and voice lessons privately since her time at Gordon. She was raised as a Suzuki violin student and is currently studying in a long term Suzuki teacher training program at the Hartt School of Music. Abigail has also sung with the Tanglewood Festival Chorus for the Boston Symphony Orchestra at Tanglewood's Ozawa Hall, Symphony Hall in Boston, and New England Conservatory's Jordan Hall. She was a soprano soloist in the Lubbock Chorale performance of Handel's Messiah in 2004 and performed a voice recital with her husband Matthew for the community of Lubbock, Texas in 2006. She currently lives in Amesbury, Massachusetts with her husband.

Marissa Scarano, Assistant Prelude Conductor

Marissa Scarano has been performing and teaching for more than 20 years. Marissa is credentialed through the Royal Conservatory of Music (Canada) and the Suzuki Association of America. Marissa has traveled all over America employing her talent in contemporary genres and has spent time in Nashville as a studio musician. An important part of her commitment is to express her love of music through teaching a new generation of musicians.

Heather Kent, Director of Flute Choirs

Heather Kent is the Founding Director of NYSO's Flute Choir Program that was conceived in 2001. Under her leadership, it quickly expanded from an eight member choir to three choirs of varying levels. Ms. Kent is a dedicated teacher who has performed in numerous solo, orchestral and chamber settings throughout the years. Greatly influenced by her own principal teachers, Doriot Dwyer, Leone Buyse and Philip Kaplan, she remains committed to maintaining the art of flute playing. She was educated in Boston receiving a BM and MM in Flute Performance and taught for a number of years through Gordon College.

Many of her students have successfully entered into regional and national programs, master degree programs and competitions at several levels. She has founded two chamber ensembles and two additional flute ensembles, one performing at Symphony Hall as part of a Flute Choir showcase. Ms. Kent has been invited in as guest conductor, clinician and artist for several flute pedagogy workshops. She currently serves on the Board of Directors for the nationally recognized James Pappoutsakis Flute Competition where she has also acted as a Chair of events and as one of the preliminary adjudicators. Additionally, she has adjudicated the Massachusetts All-State auditions and several other area events, including The Greater Boston Flute Association (GBFA) where she served as President, Vice President and sat on the Advisory Board. Ms. Kent is an active member of the National Flute Association and has recently begun to write for the GBFA Gazette and other flute publications and local newspapers.

New conductor, to be announced

Nalani Fujiwara, Clarinet Choir Conductor

Joining the NYSO staff in 2002, Nalani Fujiwara comes to us as an outstanding clarinet teacher and performer. Ms. Fujiwara is a graduate of the University of Hawaii, with a Bachelor's in Music. She is also a freelance musician in the North Shore Area – playing musicals in Salem, Gloucester, Ipswich and Annisquam, as well as performing with several area orchestras. Currently, Ms. Fujiwara holds a position as Elementary Woodwind Specialist and Band Director in Salem, MA. She also teaches a clarinet choir at Ipswich High School and teaches many private clarinet students.

Robert J. Bradshaw, Composer in Residence

Robert J. Bradshaw earned his Master of Music Degree in Composition, Bachelor of Music Degree in Theory/Composition and Performance Certificate in Trumpet from the University of South Carolina. In addition to composing, he is a member of the Cape Ann Symphony, teaches composition master classes at all levels of education, and is currently Visiting Lecturer at Salem State College. Mr. Bradshaw had been commissioned to compose works for many professional ensembles, schools and organizations, and written works for orchestra, wind ensemble, jazz band, marching band, chorus, musical, opera, ballet and various chamber ensembles. Since 1997, Robert J. Bradshaw has composed numerous pieces for NYSO.

His music has been described as “contemporary work that is accessible to a variety of audiences” and is frequently performed around the world from America to Europe and Asia. Recent commissions and awards include the 2005 Manchester Music Festival Composition Competition, 26th Annual Pappoutsakis Flute Competition, New England Musical Heritage Initiative/New England String Ensemble and the American String Teachers Association with NSOA. He is a member of the Broadcast Music Inc. (BMI), Society of Composers Inc, National Association of Composers, American Music Center and American Composers Forum.