



SYMPHONY NEWS & UPDATES

July—2020

Volume VIII

In This Issue:

- Upcoming Events
- Board Member Spotlight
- Precautionary Measures due to COVID-19
- Open Board Positions
- Conductor Letter to Seniors, May 2020

Photos from Playathon, February 29, 2020 and

The Power of Music & Optimism

Dear EVYS Family,

We have all been a little knocked off our feet since March, and we wanted to reach out to you with encouragement and hope. Even in the worst moments in history, music has given hope to many survivors, and it has been the source of comfort in a world where peace and solace were hard to find. Such was the case for Alice Herz Sommer, a Czech pianist and young Jewish woman who was one of the sole survivors of her family during the Holocaust.

After being taken to Auschwitz where she might have died, Alice's musical talent and exquisite ability to play the greatest classical pieces on the piano from memory helped to save her life. Not only was she selected to play for German soldiers and leaders, but she was carried away to another world of hope and fed by the physical, mental, and spiritual stimulation of her music. She was able to survive the holocaust and move forward with a productive life over a century. She raised her son Rafael Sommer, also a survivor, to be a world-renowned cellist.

Before Alice died in 2014 at age 111, she was the oldest pianist in the world as well as oldest holocaust survivor. In an interview for a documentary in 2013, Alice said that despite living through many difficulties and losses, she said she still continued to play the piano 2.5 hours each day, finding joy in the music, strength to live a life of beauty, and even laughter and optimism. Some of the quotes from the documentary film, *The Lady in Number Six*, follow here:

- "With music I was always happy. Even thinking of music makes me happy. One of the greatest philosophers said, 'Music is in first place among all the arts. It brings you onto an island of peace, beauty and love.'"
- "When you are really down in the hell and come up again, you have learned what matters in life and what doesn't. And what matters is very few things. Life matters and human relationships matter, and that's about it. The rest is not important."
- "It depends on me whether life is good or not. It depends on me, not on life, on me. Everything is good and bad. I look at the good side." (See also *A Century of Wisdom—Lessons from the Life of Alice Herz Sommer*.)



Current Upcoming Schedule

- **Auditions**—8/3, 8/5, 8/8 via Zoom
- **Parent Meeting**—Monday 8/31 via Zoom, more details to come
- **First Rehearsal**—Monday 9/14, Higley High School
- **Fall Concert**—Monday 11/16 at 7pm, Higley CPA

For more info and to request an audition, go to: www.evysaz.org/audition-request/

In the event that we cannot start EVYS rehearsals in person, our conductors are prepared to move forward virtually.

Board Member Spotlight:

Tami Messenger — Social Media & Online Marketing Director

McKenna Messenger just completed her eighth year of playing the cello, seven of which she spent playing with EVYS. When McKenna was first selecting an instrument, she consulted with her aunt, a violinist and pianist, who recommended the cello to her. After finding a used ¾ size cello for \$35, McKenna thought she would give it a shot! That was the best \$35 she ever spent!

McKenna says, "My favorite part about EVYS is being able to play and learn challenging techniques and music with conductors and instrumentalists who are wholeheartedly passionate about music. As for the future, I hope to continue playing in orchestras wherever I live, and possibly teach private lessons. I am sad that this was my final season, but I have loved every minute of it! I'm so grateful for the way it has prepared me for a future full of music."

Tami was new to the board this past year and served as the Social Media Director. While she is not a musician herself, she certainly enjoys listening to music. She is very grateful to have provided all five of her kids with the gift of music, as they have played many instruments— trumpet, cello, percussion, and piano. When not helping with EVYS, Tami also runs a landscape construction company with her husband and drives the "Mom Taxi" to music lessons, dance, cheer, football, and church. In one brief year, Tami has brought EVYS light years ahead in social media and online presence! We also thank Tami for making new EVYS t-shirts possible & much, much more!



[Smile Amazon](http://www.evysaz.org/smileamazon/)

For those interested in donating to EVYS, the process is easier than you think. Check out the link below to see how you can donate while making your everyday purchases: <http://www.evysaz.org/smileamazon/>



SYMPHONY NEWS & UPDATES

July—2020

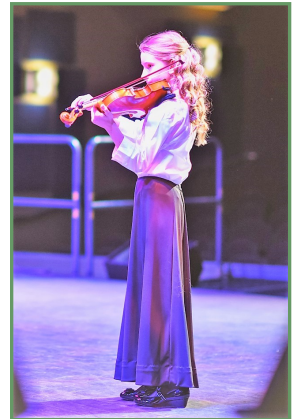
Volume VIII

Precautionary Measures Due to COVID-19

We want to let you know that due to COVID-19, EVYS is taking precautionary measures as recommended by the CDC and the state of Arizona. At this time, we plan to open our doors again in September at Higley High School, following Higley Unified School District guidelines and updates:

- Face coverings where social distancing is not possible
- Small group assemblies only – 50 or less
- Hand washing and/or sanitizing upon arrival along with health weekly questionnaire (screen for fever, cough, shortness of breath, or contact with anyone who has tested COVID positive).
- Enhanced sanitation and disinfecting procedures
- No sharing of items—music stands, music, pencils, food, etc. Avoid touching eyes, nose, mouth.

We will continue to send updated info to our members. We know how precious this youth symphony experience is to our musicians, and we will work together to provide a safe environment for all who can and wish to participate in the upcoming 2020-21 EVYS season. In the event that we cannot start rehearsals in person, our conductors are prepared to move forward virtually.



OPEN Board Positions:

Secretary, Social Media & Online Marketing Director, Volunteer Coordinator

Conductor Letter:

**Jon Gomez —
Wind Specialist**

Greetings Graduating EVYS Seniors,
 It is always amazing to me the times in our lives that we spend together and the types of wonderful relationships that are forged while experiencing the joy of making music. As we all move on to the next chapter in our lives, it is comforting to know that in some cases, our paths will continue to cross. It is comforting to know that in some cases, we will continue to keep music in our lives. And, it is comforting to know that together we will move past this remarkable historical event in our lives to make a positive difference in our society. If I may, I would like to offer these beautifully written thoughts from an anonymous author that I have shared with others on occasion.



Teacher's Prayer

I want to teach my students how to live this life on earth,
 To face its struggles and its strife and to improve their worth;
 Not just the lesson in a book or how the rivers flow,
 But how to choose the proper path wherever they may go;
 To understand eternal truth, to know the right from wrong
 And gather all the beauty of a flower and a song.
 For if I help the world to grow in wisdom and in grace,
 Then I shall feel that I have won and I have filled my place.
 And so, I ask Your guidance, God that I may do my part
 For character and confidence and happiness of Heart.

Friends, I hope that your experience with EVYS has helped you grow both musically and personally. Congratulations on your high school graduation and I wish you nothing but the best in the future.

Most kind regards,

Jon Gomez

(Sent May 2020 to EVYS Seniors)



For those interested in donating to EVYS, the process is easier than you think. Check out the link below to see how you can donate while making your everyday purchases: <http://levysaz.org/smileamazon/>



P.O. Box 1195, Higley, AZ. 85236

www.evysaz.org