



Featuring Flutists from the Portland Youth Philharmonic Orchestra & Portland Youth Wind Ensemble



Safina Afzal

What PYP group are you in? How long have you been playing the flute? What other groups do you play with, if any? Who are you studying with now? What school year are you in?

Currently, I play flute in the Portland Youth Philharmonic Orchestra; I auditioned for PYP between the summers of 6th and 7th grade. I began playing flute during 6th grade for the Meadow Park Middle School Band. As of now, I am a sophomore attending Westview Highschool. Along with PYP, I play flute in my school's wind ensemble and direct the marching band as a drum major. I study flute with flutist Corrie Cook: Mrs. Cook plays her instrument in the Vancouver Symphony up in Washington.

What do you love about playing an instrument?

Ever since I was young, music has always been a big part of my life. Whether it be listening to old hits with my father or jamming out in the car with my mom and sister. After playing flute, I received an unexplained comfort from playing my instrument every day. As I progress through high school, the flute has been a great outlet for me; It is always great to pick up my instrument and let the music envelop me. Furthermore, playing an instrument has opened my eyes to numerous opportunities (i.e. PYP, Marching Band, etc.)

What do you enjoy most about playing in the Youth Philharmonic?

After playing with PYP, I noticed a large improvement in my musical abilities: By playing with many older experienced musicians, I learned many new habits and tricks that I still use to this day. When rehearsing in school ensembles, these new skills help me assist others around me. Additionally, I have made many friends and connections while being in PYP.

How do you feel you benefit from making music?

As I have said before, playing flute has been a great outlet for me during high school. When classes get super stressful, it is always nice to play my instrument and solely focus on music. Through making music, I have also learned about a whole new world regarding orchestras and ensembles.

What solo or etude are you working on now?

Currently, I am working on the 1st and 2nd movements of a solo piece called *Sonatina* by Eldin Burton. I am preparing this piece for OMEA's solo and ensemble competitions. As of right now, this is probably one of the most difficult flute pieces I have tried to conquer. The runs and high notes are a challenge!

What keeps you motivated to improve? Do you have a favorite practice routine?

For me, the players around me motivate me to improve. When playing in PYP I am always surrounded by incredibly talented musicians who are very dedicated to their craft. Ever since 7th grade, I have always watched these musicians in awe; as I grow as a musician, I always look at those around me. I tend to practice the flute for at least an hour after school. I begin practice with sight-reading, tonal work, and scales. The second half of my playing sessions are dedicated to the repertoire that needs attention.

Favorite flute solo to listen to? (Maybe that piece you listen to over and over again and aspire to play someday?)

A piece I really enjoy listening to is the second movement of the *Flute Concerto* by Jacques Ibert. I know a lot of really talented flute players who have played it for competitions and recitals. One day, I aspire to play it at a high level.

Your favorite flutist(s) to listen to in the whole wide world, and why?

Personally, I really enjoy listening to Jasmine Choi, she makes pieces sound so majestic and smooth, regardless of the difficulty.

Who has helped you most on your musical/flute journey so far, and how?

A lot of people have influenced me and my flute journey. However, my teacher, Mrs. Cook has influenced me a lot: She creates a fun environment to play flute in and always provides cool tips and tricks.

When you aren't making music, what do you like to do with your time?

In my free time, I like to spend time with my friends and family. Additionally, I enjoy listening to various types of music such as hip-hop, RnB, and indie rock.

Favorite book you've read recently?

Recently, I have read Breaking Dawn from the Twilight saga. The adventure and romantic angst in the book always leave me on edge!



Diego Fernandez

What PYP group are you in? How long have you been playing the flute? What other groups do you play with, if any? Who are you studying with now? What school year are you in?

I play in the Portland Youth Philharmonic Orchestra! Currently I am in my 6th year of playing the flute. Currently I also play in the Camerata Orchestra at PYP, and My high school symphony. I study with Martha Long! Right now I am a Junior in High school.

What do you love about playing an instrument?

Not only do I have the honor of playing flute in PYP, I also get to play my favorite instruments, the Piccolo! What I love most about it is its incredible ability to soar over the orchestra with incredible melodies. I love to listen to recordings, hear the piccolo and go "that's me!"

What do you enjoy most about playing in the Youth Philharmonic?

Making such incredible music with all of my friends. There is nothing more satisfying then being on stage as an ensemble and putting on a show. It's such a special opportunity that I enjoy every minute of.

How do you feel you benefit from making music?

I benefit from music by knowing what it means to do something at a level of excellence. To do something and to do it well is something music has taught me and I incorporate it into my everyday life. I always ask myself, how good or how amazing can I do or be at this?

What solo or etude are you working on now?

Right now I'm actually working in auditioning for college in the fall of 2022 so a handful of solos. Some of my favorites are the *Bach Sonata in E Major*, *Danza de la Mariposa* by Valerie Coleman, and *Scrivo in Vento* by Elliot Carter!

What keeps you motivated to improve? Do you have a favorite practice routine?

My main source of inspiration and motivation comes from simply wanting to become better and to play better. My middle school director, Mr. David Hodges, would always say – “You need to do the work now to have fun later!” Although I am having lots of fun now, there's always room to improve and working hard will always be a must!

Favorite flute solo to listen to? (Maybe that piece you listen to over and over again and aspire to play someday?)

I love so many works it's hard to just pick one! If I had to, currently my favorite solo is the *Penderecki Flute Concerto*!

Your favorite flutist(s) to listen to in the whole wide world, and why?

My favorite flutist is Philippe Bernold!

Who has helped you most on your musical/flute journey so far, and how?

So many people have really inspired me, from my directors to peers, but one really sticks out. Dr. Abigail Sperling, my first real flute teacher, has really helped me grow as a flutist. She pushed me to always make beautiful music and to always put my best foot forward. She set me up for success in every way and I am always grateful for all the help she has given me and for the support she still has for me!

When you aren't making music, what do you like to do with your time?

I love to spend time online or napping, both are good at taking up my time!

Favorite book you've read recently?

My favorite book I've ever read is *The Mysterious Stranger* by Mark Twain. I love it so much because it really spoke to me, it's usage of terms and the way it explores certain concepts it's so incredibly interesting.



Macy Gong

What PYP group are you in? How long have you been playing the flute? What other groups do you play with, if any? Who are you studying with now? What school year are you in?

I'm in the Portland Youth Philharmonic, and I've been playing the flute for 10 years. I currently study with Sydney Carlson, and I'm a sophomore at Oregon Episcopal School.

What do you love about playing an instrument?

I love playing an instrument because I can play by myself or with others, and the versatility makes it extremely enjoyable.

What do you enjoy most about playing in the Youth Philharmonic?

I enjoy playing in PYP because I've met so many amazing musicians that have become some of my closest friends. I'm able to perform music for others to enjoy while learning from my peers.

How do you feel you benefit from making music?

I benefit from making music because I'm not a visually artistic person, so playing the flute allows me to enjoy the arts from a different perspective.

What solo or etude are you working on now?

I'm currently working on the third movement of Ibert's *Concerto*.

What keeps you motivated to improve? Do you have a favorite practice routine?

I think that the pride after a successful performance is what keeps me motivated to improve every day.

Favorite flute solo to listen to? (Maybe that piece you listen to over and over again and aspire to play someday?)

My favorite flute solo to listen to is either the *Reinecke Concerto* or the *Mozart Concerto in D Major*.

Your favorite flutist(s) to listen to in the whole wide world, and why?

I love Jasmine Choi's tone and her musical choices.

Who has helped you most on your musical/flute journey so far, and how?

I think that my parents and teacher have helped me the most. My teacher has helped me get to the level I'm at right now, and my parents have supported me along the way.

When you aren't making music, what do you like to do with your time?

I enjoy baking and spending time with friends and family.

Favorite book you've read recently?

Everything, Everything by Nicola Yoon.



Yirhe Ha

What PYP group are you in? How long have you been playing the flute? What other groups do you play with, if any? Who are you studying with now? What school year are you in?

Hello, my name is Yirhe Ha. I am an 11-year-old flutist playing in the Portland Youth Wind Ensemble. I have been playing the flute for one and a half years. I play for the Portland Youth Wind Ensemble. My flute teacher is Sydney Carson; however, as a beginner I was taught by Dawn Weiss. I am currently a sixth grader at Tumwater Middle School.



What do you love about playing an instrument?

I love the flute because of the clean and bright sound coming out of the instrument. The flute can be played in joyful skipping mood to a dark stomping attitude. My instrument can beautifully played as a melody, a harmony, an accompany, or a solo.

What do you enjoy most about playing in the Youth Philharmonic?

There is more elegance to the ear when I play with others in the wind ensemble than playing alone. It sounds like birds singing together in tune beautifully and splendidly. It's a real delightful opportunity to play with others.

How do you feel you benefit from making music?

As you may know, there are several beautiful types of music out there with emotions. They may be sorrow, despair, grief, joy, warmth, pleasant, resentment, fury, and displeasure; these emotions are what brings the music to life, and the feelings I can express by not using words at all, but with my instrument.

What solo or etude are you working on now?

Right now, I'm working on a piece called *Madrigal* by P.H. Gaubert. It's a piece filled with peacefulness and excitement.

What keeps you motivated to improve? Do you have a favorite practice routine?

I prefer to stay in areas with a lot of space, so I practice in my living room at home. It's quite spacious and when I play a piece, the place I'm in fits where the music is supposed to be played.

Favorite flute solo to listen to? (Maybe that piece you listen to over and over again and aspire to play someday?)

I like listening to *Flight of the Bumblebee* by Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov, it's expressed with variety of emotions. I love the actual story behind it too.

Your favorite flutist(s) to listen to in the whole wide world, and why?

My favorite flutists to listen to is Jasmine Choi. The way she plays and treats the music is like how the composer exactly wants her to play it.

Who has helped you most on your musical/flute journey so far, and how?

The people who have helped me most on my musical journey is my mom and my teachers. My mom was the one that started my musical journey. She taught me piano and supported me when I tried other instruments. When I started the flute, she was supportive and always cheering me on and encouraged me to join orchestras and try competitions. Before I knew it, I was already in two orchestras - MYS and PYWE. 2020 was a difficult year to be in, but with all the materials and support, I could make it, and I did. My mom and my teachers support me while I'm still in PYWE.

When you aren't making music, what do you like to do with your time?

When I'm not practicing flute or in orchestra rehearsal, I'm probably at fencing or in my room doing homework. In my spare time, I go down to the garage to exercise on the treadmill or play with my dog, Dori.

Favorite book you've read recently? One of the favorite books I've recently read is, *Persepolis*.

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