



## Musician Profile – Sue Bonfeld, GPFS Member

### Tell us a little bit about yourself?

My flute journey began in 3rd grade band - and I consider myself very fortunate that those were the days when even semi-rural elementary schools like mine had robust music and art departments. I switched to piano in 6th grade when my orthodontist nixed the flute; switched again to the bassoon in 7th grade - which I loved - and then back again to flute during college and beyond. Those years were very hit or miss with consistent practice as my relocations (in the US and of regular travel. It wasn't we were living in San return in earnest to the Community Music Center of San Francisco, a wonderful organization devoted solely to music and music education for all ages. Fifteen wonderful months of lessons, participation in a chamber music group and informal jazz duets. Sadly, work intervened again so it wasn't until my retirement in 2016 after 35 years in the investment management industry that I came back permanently to the flute. In April 2021, I decided to give piano one last try and found not only a renewed interest in it, but also a renewed interest in music overall. And, without question, it has helped my flute fitness!

*It is a joy for playing that I look for in any musician, completely contagious!*

respect to lessons and work prompted several internationally) as well as a lot until a sabbatical in 2003 when Francisco that I was able to instrument. I stumbled into the

### When did you join and why are you a member of GPFS?

In 2018, my husband and I relocated to Portland after more than 20 years in San Francisco. My flute teacher suggested that I look into GPFS as a possible way to find a new teacher - and connect more broadly with the music community here in Portland. I began working with Jessica Bartlett in early 2019, first in person at the Multnomah Arts Center and then, when Covid hit, via Zoom. Currently, we see one another, still via Zoom, every other week. I find that schedule works really well versus a lesson every week. Maybe that's just part of the aging process???

### **What are you working on now/what's been on your music stand?**

I am currently working on two pieces:

- 1) Duet: Sonata No. V; Largo and Allegro - Handel
- 2) Solo: Serenade - Haydn

I use short pieces from Flutetunes.com for warm up and for sight-reading practice. There are also several pieces that I use just to practice vibrato. I have a "love/hate" relationship with etudes and other technical repertoire. Right now, I would say it is tilting more towards love, but that could be fleeting! While I always strive to improve my playing, I think one of the wonderful things about being an adult returning student is the ability to say "I really want to go in another direction!"

### **What's your favorite go-to piece to play?**

It is interesting to me that I don't really have any "go-to" pieces for flute. I do for the piano....so perhaps it is something that needs to coincide with beginning to learn an instrument? Hmm...I need to think about how to work that into my practice routine!

### **Who are your favorite flutists these days and why?**

I would love to listen to a more diverse group of flutists - I just never seem to set aside time for it. Another thing I hope to eventually work into my practice routine. My favorite flutist will always be Rampal, followed closely by Galway, both of whom I was lucky enough to see perform live several times. One thing that has helped me tremendously most recently is watching YouTube videos with flutists playing the pieces I am working on. I really enjoy listening to the nuances of each performance and then trying to apply what I have heard to my own playing. It is a joy for playing that I look for in any musician, completely contagious!

### **How are you looking forward to being involved with GPFS/music and fluting in the area?**

A bit of a long-winded answer to this one. As I mentioned earlier, I began to take piano lessons in April 2021. My husband bought me an electric piano for my birthday and off I went! It has been a wonderful experience and the third time in my life I have tried to make progress on the piano and, finally, with some success. The first two attempts were abject failures! Why this time? I'm not sure, but clearly I was ready in a way I had not been before - and I have a great teacher (Jessica teaches the piano as well!). Again, for reasons I don't quite understand, playing the piano has fostered an interest in music history and theory, as well as the origins of instruments. It has also made a huge difference in how I approach my flute and my practice routines. I am trying to be more focused on the musicality of a piece versus just playing the notes correctly. GPFS programming has been perfectly tied into my educational goals relative to the flute and I look forward to participating in more of the offerings going forward. I would also love to meet other flutists interested in informal musical get togethers to play duets or trios. My schedule does not allow for the time commitment

necessary for performance-based ensembles, but something informal well then that would be wonderful. Of course, Covid permitting...

**What else would you like to share about your fluting and musical life, particularly in the Portland area/Oregon?**

I love seeking out books, both old and new, about music: history, theory, memoirs, practice techniques. I recently finished *The Piano Shop on the Left Bank* by Thad Carhart (loved it!) and have *Practical Music Theory* by James Lincoln Collier and *Practicing: A Musician's Return to Music* waiting for me. I dream of having a library room dedicated to music, but for now, I am thankful for a plethora of second hand bookstores nearby and the Multnomah County Library (online version)!

Here's my little corner of the world, a slice of our guest bedroom. The mandolin and ukulele were both gifts. I have no facility whatsoever with string instruments! I love musical instruments of all kinds. I would have a whole room of them if I could!



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