

# Alumni Performer Bios

## **Ryan Andersen '13**

I currently attend Illinois Wesleyan University where I am a senior. I play cello in the Illinois Wesleyan Civic Orchestra and also sing in the Collegiate Choir, which recently completed a week-long tour in France. I am majoring in Music Education and will do student teaching with high school and junior high orchestras this coming fall.

## **Heather Martin-Bixler '82**

I just finished my doctorate in Violin Performance. I live in New York City with my jazz saxophonist husband and together we have 4 children. The older 2 are on their own. Professionally, I play traditional Irish music as well as classical violin and teach both genres. Interesting side note: I taught Michael J. Fox's kids for 7 years.

## **Rachel Brown '16**

I will be attending the University of Chicago next year. Music is a huge part of my life, and I play the alto saxophone, clarinet, and flute, as well as sing in choirs. I plan to major in something related to science and look forward to continuing my musical career in college.

## **James Castañeda '08**

I graduated from UW-Madison in 2013. I now live in Washington, DC and am finishing up my 2nd year as the music teacher at School-Within-School @ Goding (SWS), a city-wide DC Public School for PK3-5th graders. I also play cello with the Capital City Symphony and am constantly searching for opportunities to prepare, rehearse, jam and perform with fellow musicians.

## **Mateo Garcia-Novelli '15**

I am currently attending the University of Notre Dame. I spend the rest of my time with my family in Racine, WI and Buenos Aires, Argentina. At Notre Dame, I am majoring in Economics and am also a member of the Notre Dame Chorale. I recently returned from a study abroad trip in Israel.

## **Angeline Gragasin '03**

I graduated from The University of Chicago in 2007 with honors and a BA in Interdisciplinary Studies in the Humanities, where I won the Theater and Performance Studies Award and a Jeff Metcalf Fellowship. I currently live in Brooklyn. I tell stories about ecology, memory, and power. I'm currently a Kate Spade & Co Foundation fellow at NEW INC. I recently lectured at Harvard Law School and am currently developing my first feature film.

## **Andrew Herndon '15**

I currently attend Georgetown University where I study International Business and Spanish. My favorite professional moments have been observing and hearing government professionals speak about public-private partnerships. As a trumpet player, my favorite moments were playing abroad in Vienna, Budapest, and other amazing venues with the Milwaukee Youth Symphony Orchestra.

## **Janet Miller Kaido '93**

I received my BA in Oboe Performance from The Curtis Institute of Music and my Master's in Sacred Music at Westminster Choir College. I currently direct the music program at Christ Church in Ridley Park, PA, and I have an inspiring Suzuki Piano studio, *The Philadelphia Suzuki Piano Academy*. I live with my wonderful husband, Shintaro, and our two crazy cats.

## **Kyler Krenzke '16**

I played trombone and piano throughout high school in jazz band, pit orchestra, orchestra, and jazz combo. I will be attending the University of Minnesota in the fall, and plan to study Computer Engineering.

**Janice Martin '85**

I studied at Indiana University School of Music and The Juilliard School. Because of my professional work, I was able to secure honorary use of the 1708 Burstein/Bagshawe Stradivarius Violin from the Stradivari Society. Currently, I headline my own show in Branson, Missouri, performing as a pianist, violinist, and soprano - and I am the world's only Acrobatic Aerial Violinist.

**Mark Paffrath '74**

I am a pop/folk singer, songwriter and multi-instrumentalist. I live in Racine with my wife, Amanda '85, and our kids, Wesley and Nohra. Currently, I host an open mic at TG's in Kenosha, bring music to many senior living centers throughout southeastern Wisconsin and am the Music Leader at First Presbyterian Church in Racine. This fall, Wesley joins Prairie's Upper School Class of 2020!

**Luke Patterson '12**

In addition to playing piano, clarinet, and sax, I composed music that many of my talented classmates performed. Currently, I study music and literature at Bard College and am scheduled to graduate in the fall of 2016. My future plans include learning how to cook, as the prospect of continuing my current diet of oatmeal, PB&J, and pasta seems somewhat grim!

**Ellie Plachinski '16**

I will be attending the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in the fall, where I plan to major in Mathematics. I have been playing violin for fourteen years, and I was a member of MYSO for eight years, going on tour with the Senior Symphony last summer.

**Ronnie Quella '75**

I was the recipient of one Prairie's first music scholarships. I attended Marlboro College in Vermont and was the Outstanding Fine Arts Graduate at UW-Parkside in 1985. I perform in southeastern Wisconsin as an accompanist and chamber musician. Currently, I am the music director at St. Paul the Apostle Catholic Church and a private piano teacher at The Prairie School.

**Alex Rehorst '16**

I am looking forward to attending Colorado College for the next four years. Musically, I began playing trumpet in 5th grade, and completed my last two years of high school as a member of the Metropolitan Orchestra in MYSO. For my career, I intend on pursuing something in the medical field.

**Bill Reid '73**

I received my BFA at the Kansas City Art Institute and my MFA from the Cranbrook Academy of Art in Bloomfield Hills, Michigan. I then settled in as Prairie's Artist in Residence, and have been granted numerous awards and exhibitions in museums across the country. The Milwaukee Home and Fine Living Magazine says it like this: "Bill Reid is to sculpture what Dr. Seuss is to children's books."

**Kurt Ringwalt '16**

One of my favorite experiences at Prairie was playing drum set in Pit Orchestra for the *Addams Family* musical this year. I'll begin attending Colorado College in the fall, where I plan to major in biochemistry and continue playing jazz.

**Rebecca Steffensen Schmidt '03**

I currently live in Merton, WI, with my husband Matt, our 2-year-old daughter, and 3-month-old son. We are entertained by our dog and flock of chickens, sail on inland lakes, and also enjoy making music with friends and our church community. I attended the University of Wisconsin-Madison, and my career calling in life is to inspire high school students as a science teacher.

**Bobby Schuessler '06**

I call L.A. home where I live in West Hollywood with my long-term partner. I've spent my career hosting on-camera segments, writing, and editing for a variety of fashion, entertainment, and publishing outlets. Now, as the style director at *Who What Wear*, I'm responsible for pumping readers with an endless flow of fashion content through video and photo series. I still love to sing in my free time!

**Suzanne Gasiorkiewicz Selmo '98**

I live in Santa Monica with my husband, Brian Selmo '96, and our kids Colette, 3, and Rowan, 1. I graduated from Syracuse University, and in 2014 I released a lullaby album, "Shine: Lullabies for Everyone." Currently, I am working on an album of originals.

**Elizabeth Steffensen '04**

In 2008, I graduated from St. Olaf College and subsequently completed M.M. and D.M.A. degrees in Voice Performance from the University of Minnesota - Duluth and the University of Minnesota - Twin Cities, respectively. I currently live in the Twin Cities with my husband, Ryan, and I love visiting my family in Wisconsin. This summer, I will perform with Minneapolis's Mill City Summer Opera for a fifth season.

**Ieva Swanson '88**

I hold a CNA from Gateway Technical College and a few other certificates and degrees. I live in St. Louis, MO. I untangle sticky problems with people at work using the power of Social Science. My favorite professional moment so far was volunteering for a few weeks in Peru. Everything I do goes better with music.

**Matt Vollmer**

I attended Prairie in Middle School and started playing bass at age 12. Since then, I have not been able to put it down and have dedicated my life to music. I received a degree in Music Composition from UW-Milwaukee and regularly perform with various groups. I currently reside in Racine with my wife.