

Andy Leu

I am a sophomore and a Silver Star honor roll student at Rancho Bernardo High School. I began my piano studies at the age of four and the violin at seven. My current mentors are Mrs. Dana Burnett and Mr. Navroj Mehta. I have been a member of the San Diego Youth Symphony since 2004. I was appointed as the concertmaster of the San Diego Symphonic Orchestra for the 2005 season. Right now, I am the assistant concertmaster of the San Diego Youth Symphony and Philharmonia. Recently, I was awarded 1st place in the 2007 MTAC Concerto Competition String Division as well as Honorable Mention in the Piano division. I was also the 1st place winner in the 2007 VOCE Intermediate ensemble and 2nd place in the Intermediate Strings Division in the North San Diego Branch. Last year, I was a finalist in the Hot Shots Competition

I consider myself an “accidental” musician. When I was very young, I often tagged along to my brother’s piano lessons but slept through the entire session. One day, I woke up too early and the teacher asked me if I wanted to try the piano. I timidly climbed up the piano bench and hit a few random notes. This awed both my mother and the teacher because those random notes happened to be the first few measures of my brother’s piece. As you can imagine, I have studied the piano ever since. Later, I learned that this was called perfect pitch. My violin journey is even more accidental. Whenever I played games with my brother, I loved to devise instruments for sound effects. What I loved most was the thundering crash of the drums. However, I did not know what they were called at the time. In the next several years, I persistently begged my parents to let me play the “violin,” a term I heard somewhere. When the instrument finally arrived, my drum set was very strange – it had a bow and four strings! Without wanting to admit my mistake, I concealed my disappointment and learned to play it. Today, I really love my stringed drum set, and I am glad that I made that mistake.

To me, there is only one magic word in learning music – dedication. I try to maintain a minimum of one-hour practice for each of my instruments. I also love to listen to recordings and go to live concerts because professional performers can give us many insights into musical interpretations. In addition, I think that playing in an orchestra is a great way to develop musicianship. I hope to see more aspiring students get involved in school or community music programs.