

Name: Brian Volkman

City/Town of Residence: Muskego

Instrument: Horn

How long have you been with Concord? I joined in Nov 2002 and played my first CCO concert at the Basilica the next month.

What is your earliest musical memory? When I was very little, my mom would practice her flute. She played in the Indianapolis Philharmonic, a volunteer group like the CCO that started in 1941.

What got you interested in music, and what was your involvement growing up? We had a piano and Mom encouraged me and my younger sister Diane to play, starting us in private lessons when we were 7 or 8. When I was nearing 6th grade, Mom took me to an Indianapolis Symphony Concert. The idea was for me to see all the different instruments in action. I don't know what the ISO performed that night, but when I got to Mr. Iverson's band room on the first day of middle school I picked the horn. Meanwhile, Diane took up the flute and later graduated from the Cincinnati Conservatory. She still teaches and plays professionally. I was very fortunate to study with good teachers and play the horn in orchestras and chamber ensembles throughout high school, college and graduate school. My first trip to Milwaukee was in high school when the Greater Indianapolis Youth Symphony did a pair of exchange concerts with MYSO. Some MYSO player probably had to spend the night at our house in around 1984. During grad school for chemistry at Berkeley I got the chance to play Mahler's 5th symphony in the UC symphony. That's about as good as it gets for a horn player.

Why do you perform with Concord? It keeps me out of the bars (for a short time each week). Seriously though, you people are great (Tristann included) – who wouldn't love playing with CCO?

What has been the high point of your involvement with Concord? The entire musical experience is something I wouldn't trade for anything, but lots of social events stand out in my memory: CSO concerts at Ravinia, wine club at Jamin's house (he made cheese!), post-rehearsal beer at the Mexican restaurant. Here's the first one that came to mind: when I was on the CCO board, we had an end-of-season post-concert party and Jim Mitchell served his smoked brisket. I mean, Rita is my all-time favorite oboe player (sorry Marcia), but that man of hers is a certified genius with meat and wood chips.

What do you do for a living? I'm on the Biochemistry faculty at the Medical College of Wisconsin. My research group studies the three-dimensional architecture of protein molecules.



Our goal is to develop new molecules that could be used as drugs for cancer and autoimmune diseases.

Tell us about your family? I met my wife Kristen in a freshman chemistry lab at Berkeley. I was the TA. I asked her out on our first date when she turned in her final exam. Now she's an allergist and we have two kids – Andrew (8) and Emi (6). Kristen wants to know when CCO will play Quiet City again – she loves Bob Syverson's playing, especially on that piece.

What are your hobbies besides practicing and playing? I like to be outside on the golf course and in the water swimming or wakesurfing. My baseball-obsessed son has rekindled my enthusiasm for our national pastime.

What is your favorite recording? I haven't listened to it for a long time, but the 1981 Berlin Phil/Von Karajan recording Holst Planets was one of the first CDs I purchased. It was one of the early all-digital recordings from Deutsche Grammophon and I listened to it almost every night all through college.

Who is your favorite composer? It's got to be Richard Strauss – for the tone poems and the horn concerti.

What is one thing most people don't know about you? I was born blind in my left eye, so I can't see the 3D effects in 3D movies!

What is your advice for kids who are interested in music? Start on the piano, learn how to read music and play your favorite song (Andrew is working on 'Take me out to the ballgame'), and then do whatever you find most enjoyable. Share your talent with other people for the rest of your life.