



John Gleysteen

City/Town of Residence: The East Side in Milwaukee Co.

Instrument: Violin and piano.

How long have you played with the CCO? At least 15 years.

What is your earliest musical memory? Watching my mother sing lead in "Carmen" with the Florentine Opera Company when I was age 4. I sat in the audience and cried when Carmen died on stage because I thought my mother was dead.

What got you interested in music, and what was your involvement growing up? My father played violin and my mother sang opera, so I have always been surrounded by and interested in music. I started on piano lessons, but then gave up the piano for the violin. When I got to 5th grade, I discovered jazz piano and gave up the violin. In college, as an education major, I had to play a band or orchestra instrument in addition to piano, so I sent home for my violin and have been playing it, in addition to piano, ever since.

Why do you perform with Concord? What is your favorite thing about performing? It is a thoroughly enjoyable musical experience. It is fun to be part of a group that plays well without playing beyond my ability. I like the music that Music Director Jamin Hoffman picks out, although not always at the first rehearsal of it! My favorite part of performing is being able to sit in the middle of a fine orchestra playing great music.

What has been the high point of your involvement with Concord? The winter concert in 2009 when I got to play the jazz piano part to Dave Brubeck's La Fiesta de la Posada at St. Josaphat's Basilica with the CCO and the Master Singers of Milwaukee. On violin, each and every concert has been a high point for me.

What do you do for a living? I sell real estate for Shorewest Realtors, I maintain duplexes that I own, and I play the piano.

Does anyone in your family share your interest in music? Unlike my parents, I have not successfully instilled an interest in music in my family members. I tried to teach my children to play, but I may have been too tough of a teacher for young children.

What are your hobbies besides practicing and playing? Swing dancing, roller blading, ice skating, taking long walks, riding my bicycle.

What is your favorite recording? Whichever recording of a great jazz pianist I happen to be listening to at the time. There are so many great jazz pianists and they made so many great recordings I cannot pick one out as my all-time favorite.

Who is your favorite composer? Any one of a number of Romantic composers (including some on either side of the Romantic era), from late Beethoven to Prokofiev, including but not limited to Mendelssohn, Bruckner, Brahms, Debussy, and Tchaikovsky.

What is one thing most people don't know about you? When I was about 8 years old, my mom had me wear an Indian head band and put a yardstick in the back of the head band and in my belt to keep me from hunching over when I played violin.

What is your advice for kids who are interested in music? If you are at all musical, stick with it and do not quit. There are far too many adults out there who say they wish they had never given up playing an instrument. Don't become one of them!