

A String Fort Smith

Lori Fay, *Founder & Director*
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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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Concerts: Two Public Concerts by A String Fort Smith, directed by Lori Fay

Dates/Times: Thursday, April 4, 2024, 6pm/CST
Friday, April 5, 2024, 7pm/CST

Locations: Thursday, April 4: First Presbyterian Church, 116 North 12th Street, Fort Smith
Friday, April 5: St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church, 2701 Old Greenwood Road, Fort Smith

Program: Chamber Music for Strings, including:
G. F. Handel: Concerto in F Major for Organ and Orchestra, Op. 4 No. 4, HWV 292
Jean Sibelius: Romance in C for String Orchestra
G. P. Telemann: Burlesque de Don Quichotte

A String Fort Smith
presents

Two Public Concerts featuring Chamber Music for Strings by G. F. Handel, Jean Sibelius, and G. P. Telemann

The opening concerts of A String Fort Smith's 2024 Spring Season will take place on Thursday, April 4, at 6pm, at First Presbyterian Church, 116 North 12th Street, Fort Smith, and on Friday, April 5, at 7pm, in the sanctuary of St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church, 2701 Old Greenwood Road, Fort Smith. The performance will also be offered virtually in perpetuity on A String Fort Smith's YouTube Channel. Repertoire to be performed includes: G. F. Handel's Concerto in F Major for Organ and Orchestra, Op. 4 No. 4, HWV 292; Jean Sibelius's Romance in C for String Orchestra; and G. P. Telemann's Burlesque de Don Quichotte. Guest artist and virtuoso keyboard player, Benjamin Henderson, will be featured on organ and piano.

As we welcome the arrival of spring, I am so pleased to share the accomplishments of A String Fort Smith's truly remarkable ensemble of young musicians, faculty, and guest artists in two public performances. Now in our fourth season, our upcoming spring concerts offer a variety of beautiful chamber music by composers of the Baroque and Romantic periods. Our performances are free and open to all, and I look forward to welcoming everyone on these two occasions! I enthusiastically endorse Lori Fay, Founder and Director of A String Fort Smith.

A String Fort Smith, founded in the summer of 2020 by Lori Fay, is aimed at fostering excellence and unprecedented performing opportunities for junior- and high-school aged students interested in pursuing careers in the performing arts. Assisted by four devoted colleagues ó Anthony Verge, Assistant Director & violin; Barbara Godette, violoncello; Cory Winters, viola; and Nathan Boyd, double bass ó A String Fort Smith participants are selected based on an audition.

The ensemble consists of the most advanced and dedicated students ó approximately twelve to fifteen (12 to 15) per semester ó who make a commitment to rehearse for one hour once per week, on Monday evenings at St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church in Fort Smith. Members of A String Fort Smith's 2024 Spring Semester ó all of whom won a spot in the ensemble based on their outstanding audition ó are from a combination of Southside and Northside High Schools. Southside participants include: Rin Ahlert, Lydia Collins, Justin Han, Hi u Le, and Omar Martinez, violin; Thanh Lu, viola; Tzideny Romero, violoncello; and Luis Galdamez and Adren Stahl, double bass. Northside participants include: Isaac Edwards and Trieu Le, violin; and Rylee Whittaker, violoncello. The ensemble is delighted to welcome back Gregory Allen, a graduate of Northside High School, as well as Tru Reynolds and Allijah Rutherford, currently enrolled at University of Arkansas ó Fort Smith (UAFS).

Members of the general public cherish performances by A String Fort Smith, not only because of Fay's striking programming and the talented student participants, but because of an impressive array of guest artists and student soloists. The upcoming April 4th and 5th performances will be no exception.

Among the many highlights of the upcoming concerts by A String Fort Smith, will be an appearance by guest artist Benjamin Henderson, performing on both organ and piano. Benjamin Henderson is from Middletown, CT, and is the Director of Music and Organist at First United Methodist Church in Fort Smith. He received his Master of Music in organ performance at Rice University in the studio of Ken Cowan, his Bachelor of Music in organ performance from The Eastman School of Music in 2020, and at Eastman, was awarded the Performer's Certificate while in the studio of Nathan Laube. He is an aspiring composer and enjoys singing.

Founder and Director Lori Fay is a widely respected violinist, and brings years of symphony orchestra, chamber music, solo performing, and recording experience to the Fort Smith area where she resides. Ms. Fay received a Master of Music in Violin Performance from the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University (Houston, TX), as well as a Master of Music in Teaching from the Oberlin Conservatory of Music (Oberlin, OH). Since settling in Fort Smith nearly 20 years ago and establishing a career as Associate Concertmaster of the Fort Smith Symphony, Co-Founder and Co-Director of DuoBrava (www.duobrava.com), private violin, viola, and piano instructor, and more, her passion remains working with young string players interested in improving their skills and deepening their love of music.

A String Fort Smith concerts are FREE, open to the public, and appropriate for the entire family. Fort Smith's First Presbyterian Church and St. Bartholomew's Episcopal Church are accessible for the physically impaired. For patrons who cannot attend in-person performances by A String Fort Smith, the April 5, 2024 performance will be offered virtually in perpetuity, on A String Fort Smith's YouTube Channel. For more information about the work of A String Fort Smith, or for string players interested in auditioning for A String Fort Smith, please visit the website, at: www.astringfortsmith.com

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