

April 17, 2008

CONTACT: South Pasadena Strings Program, Susan Pascale, 626/403-4611
FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

'VIVA VIOLA' AT THE 2nd ANNUAL VIOLAFEST IN SANTA MONICA

The orchestra's unsung hero had its day, at a gathering of young musicians

Young violists from the South Pasadena Strings Program participated in the second annual 'ViolaFest Los Angeles,' on April 12. The event, held in Santa Monica brought together more than 100 youngsters, grades 4 through 12, to learn from---and play alongside--- some of the world's most accomplished viola players, musicians and composers.

Faculty and performers included violists Pamela Goldsmith and Paul Coletti, composer Paul Seiko Chihara, and violinist Robert Vilay Gupta, the youngest member of the L.A. Philharmonic.

Susan Pascale, director of the South Pasadena Strings Program taught a class for beginning violists about developing good habits. South Pasadena Strings Program students who participated included Campbell Affleck, Alexis Cooper, Jim Snowden-Ifft, and Ariana Solotoff. All four youngsters play with the South Pasadena Elementary Orchestra or South Pasadena Youth Orchestra, directed by Pascale.

The viola, Pascale says, is the unsung hero of the orchestra. "It is bigger than a violin, and smaller than a cello. It has a gorgeous rich sound, and is frequently the inner voice of the orchestra, but is often overlooked. ViolaFest brings it to the forefront. Coming to this event is a great way to inspire students, and that means they practice more!"

Pascale says she often finds herself in the position of encouraging students to switch from violin to viola, because there are more opportunities for violists. "My daughter Ariana, moved to viola three years ago. I brought her to the first ViolaFest last year. It had a huge impact on her, to be among so many violists, including the best players in the world." At this year's ViolaFest, Ariana was selected to participate in a master class with violist Goldsmith.

The grand finale of the event was a joint performance by all students and faculty of the Brandenburg Concerto No. 6. ViolaFest was chaired by Gina Coletti, co-sponsored by the Southern California Viola Society and the American String Teachers Association, and hosted by Santa Monica High School. For more information go to www.southerncaliforniaviolasociety.com. Information about the South Pasadena Strings program, elementary orchestra, and youth orchestra, is at www.stringsprogram.com.