

Family commits to making music

Mike Latona/Catholic Courier

FAIRPORT — Once inside the Marini home, it doesn't take long to figure out this family is serious about music. After all, how many places have you visited where a 7-foot-long marimba occupies the living room?

Stick around long enough, and you're bound to hear Nick Marini playing that marimba or thumping away on his drums. Or perhaps it will be A.J. playing the violin. Or Christopher, the piano or saxophone. Or Cecilia, the cello.

These musical pursuits don't come cheaply. A.J.'s Glasel-Berliner violin is worth \$6,500, and you can throw in another two grand for his bow and case. Nick's percussion instruments are also worth several thousand dollars. All four children take private lessons as well.

Another big chunk of change is about to go toward travel expenses when the family visits Italy April 9-18. There, A.J. and Nick will take part in the Rochester Philharmonic Youth Orchestra tour that will include concerts in Milan, Bologna, Florence and Rome.

Such undertakings involve a considerable commitment of time as well as funding. For instance, along with their RPYO affiliation, both A.J. and Nick take part in numerous mu-

sical groups at Fairport High School. And when it comes to practice, A.J. has been known to spend six hours a day during the summer months perfecting his violin talents.

Yet this intense devotion seems to engender deep satisfaction, rather than stress, among family members.

"Oh, I love it. I don't function very well unless I have a full plate of activities," A.J. said. The 17-year-old added that music is "something we've been doing so long, it's kind of hard to think of life without it."

"Concerts and rehearsals have become so routine," agreed Nick, 16. "I enjoy it a lot, really. When I practice, I don't think 'Oh, I'm going to work.' I look at it as a new challenge."

Their mother, Janie, noted that dedicated musicians in general view their craft as an outlet, not drudgery.

"It isn't just work anymore. Once you get to a certain level, you can just relax when you play," said Janie, a longtime performer and instructor.

That being stated, a strong work ethic must still exist in order to scale grand heights — a key point for A.J. and Nick considering that both aspire to be full-time musicians as adults. "Talent will only take you so far. The hard work is going to take you further," Janie said.

The fruits of such dedication show up not only in musical achievements,



Mike Crup/Catholic Courier

Seventeen-year-old violinist A.J. Marini and his 16-year-old brother Nick, a percussionist, practice at Fairport High School March 15. Both are parishioners of Fairport's St. John of Rochester Church and are members of the Rochester Philharmonic Youth Orchestra.



but in social circles as well. Nick said he enjoys the camaraderie that exists among his fellow musicians, and A.J. appreciates the volunteer assistance lent to the RPYO by adult musicians in the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra. The Marinis volunteer their abilities as well; family members have often performed for services at their parish, Fairport's St. John of Rochester.

"For us, music is a wonderful family activity," Janie said. "Everybody goes to everybody's concerts."

The upcoming RPYO trip will be particularly special for the Marinis. A.J. has been designated as the Italy tour's concertmaster, meaning he will lead the violin section and help lead the orchestra as a whole. A.J. will also be the last orchestra musician to appear on stage; a concert-

master's entrance signals that the concert is about to begin.

While A.J. and Nick already have their sights set on performing careers, it's still too early to tell whether the same will hold true for Christopher, 12, or Cecilia, 10. Nick said he also might pursue the culinary arts. Either way, he appreciates his parents' open-mindedness about his career options: "They're always encouraging me. They said 'If you want to go into something else, we're behind you 200 percent,'" Nick remarked.

A.J., however, remains firm on music, even though he's also adept with computer technology and would perhaps have a safer career path in that field: his father, Claude, owns a computer company.

"A lot of people have been asking me, why not computer science?" A.J. said. "The simple answer is, I've been doing music for 12 years — for so long, it's a part of my being."

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