

## Spotlight: Winston Yu

*Winston Yu, violin, is an alumnus of Apple Hill and a former board member.*

### **Tell us how you first became involved with Apple Hill.**

My first summer at Apple Hill was 1998. Sebastian Ruth from Community MusicWorks in Providence (who played in the Boston

Philharmonic Orchestra with me) had passed my name along to Apple Hill since someone had dropped out and they were looking for someone to jump in quickly. I had no idea what to expect (except for Jesse Holstein telling me to look for his two friends from college, Mike and Elise!). Needless to say, that summer I fell in love with the place, the people, the shacks, the stray mouse, the music making, and have been coming ever since. I later joined the Board and was proud to help and contribute the participant perspective. It's funny to think that I became a part of the Apple Hill family because someone dropped out. Thank you to whoever you are!



*Winston Yu (L) with Apple Hill Director Lenny Matczynski*

### **What are you doing now? What is it like?**

I am a hydrologist at the World Bank working on water issues. I also teach at Johns Hopkins University. My work entails a lot of travel and though mostly satisfying in terms of the mission, it can be stressful and overwhelming at times. So music is my escape. It's strange to say this, but I really enjoy practicing now. My 7-yr old who plays cello thinks I am crazy. But after the “pleasures” of working in a bureaucracy, to focus on this physical thing, making music, actively listening, taking apart whatever piece I am studying is really satisfying. Music is my jam and life would be so boring without it. So I make time and grab any opportunity to play, classical or otherwise. I've played in a bunch of different bands over the years and often find myself helping other musicians with strings and piano. I recently joined the singer-songwriter Laura Stevenson for an NPR Tiny Desk concert (<https://www.npr.org/series/tiny-desk-concerts/>)

### **How has what you learned at Apple Hill helped you in what you do now?**

From the beginning, I have always been a fan of Apple Hill's playing for peace philosophy. I remember touring Israel and Jordan with the Philadelphia Youth Orchestra following the Oslo 2 Accords in 1995 and thought then a lot about music as a way to bring people together. Barenboim-Said's West-Eastern Divan Orchestra would start up shortly after that time, but the intimacy of chamber music is so very different. Lenny's talk about the making of chamber music as analogous to building dialogue and understanding (e.g. listening, flexibility, trying different ideas, expanding your sense of what is possible) always resonates and inspires me. These are important skills for being a civically engaged human - especially important in these times.

### **Can you tell us about one of your favorite Apple Hill memories?**

Picking one favorite Apple Hill memory is impossible! I don't know where to begin. From participating in a Fellowship quartet to many fantastic musical experiences (Enescu, Weinberg, Ullmann ...), to learning how to swim at Apple Hill, to rescuing a pair of moose antlers, to every personal one-on-one conversation, to the numerous late night sight readings (the one with faculty violinist Tai Murray stands out!), to dramatic phone book readings and rib eating contests, it is hard to choose just one. And it doesn't get easier, because rest assured every summer those enduring memories just keep piling on.