

Bio for Malva Freymuth Tarasewicz

Malva Freymuth Tarasewicz, D.M.A. is a writer and a professional violinist. Born and raised in Boulder, Colorado, Malva won numerous music competitions in her teens and was soloist with regional orchestras such as the Boulder Philharmonic, University of Colorado Symphony, Central City Opera Orchestra, Jefferson Symphony, Greeley Chamber Orchestra, and Broomfield Civic Symphony. Malva was chosen to represent the Rocky Mountain region at the 1983 MTNA (Music Teachers Nat'l Assoc.) national-level competition, was a finalist in the prestigious Seventeen Magazine-General Motors National Competition in 1984, and in 1985 she won various scholarships including the Cincinnati Starling Scholarship for study with Dorothy Delay, an Aspen Music Festival Scholarship, and an Honors Quartet Scholarship at the University of Colorado (C.U.), Boulder.

At the age of 25, Malva earned her Doctor of Musical Arts degree from C.U., focusing on violin performance and pedagogy, with additional studies in kinesiology and sport psychology, dance, and theater. She and her husband then moved to Oahu, HI for three years. There, Malva played in the Honolulu Symphony, taught at the University of Hawaii, and coached the Hawaii Youth Symphony. She also studied massage therapy at the Honolulu School of Massage and spent a semester at Modesto Jr. College in California, conducting the college orchestra and teaching various music classes. During this time, Malva began writing articles on mental practice and on ergonomic violin/viola set-up; some of these materials have since been published in professional magazines such as The Strad, Strings Magazine, American Music Teacher, and Medical Problems of Performing Artists.

In 1994, Malva and her husband moved to San Diego where they became the proud parents of their first and only child, Benjamin. When Benjamin was diagnosed with autism in 1997, the family relocated to Boulder, Colorado. During these initial years back in Boulder, Malva wrote her first book, Mental Practice and Imagery for Musicians, which received stellar reviews in professional journals both in the U.S.A. and overseas. Malva also earned a position with the Boulder Philharmonic Orchestra, performing with this ensemble up to the present day.

Throughout the years, Malva has enjoyed playing chamber music and teaching privately. Her students have been first-place winners of competitions, have soloed with orchestras, and have been invited to participate in honors master classes, orchestras, and chamber ensembles. Aside from her studio teaching, Malva has enjoyed presenting occasional lectures and workshops based on the materials in her book and articles. Malva also has a deep love for choral music. For 2 ½ years (beginning early in 2008), Malva was the choir director at Summit Middle School in Boulder and her top-level groups were widely acknowledged for their excellence. Additionally, Malva taught drama at the school and directed a show called Orphan Train.

Aside from her accomplishments in the realm of the performing arts, Malva has maintained a life-long passion for horses and in 2002, became the proud owner of her own mount, named Orion. Over the past decade, Malva has trained Orion from the entry levels of dressage through several steps of the FEI (Federation Equestrienne Internationale) levels; throughout this entire training period, Malva has been fortunate to have the steady guidance and supervision of her close friend and trainer, Gretchen Ahlem. Malva has earned the U.S. Dressage Federation's bronze and silver medals, and also the U.S.D.F. bronze and silver freestyle bars. Malva was the regional Musical Freestyle champion in both 2008 and 2009, and has consistently placed 1st or 2nd in the RMDS (Rocky Mountain Dressage Society) year-end rankings in her division, receiving the "Horse of the Year" award several times.

While Malva's achievements have been numerous, her primary focus since 1994 has been motherhood. When Benjamin was first born, Malva laid aside her professional aspirations and dedicated herself to being a homemaker. Then, when Benjamin was diagnosed with autism at age 2 ¼, Malva began carrying out a full-time behavioral therapy program. With the aid of a few helpful books and with the occasional guidance of various therapists, Malva staged an ongoing intervention program, relying largely on her own creativity, intuition, and experiences as a teacher while striving to help Benjamin overcome the barriers of autism.

At this time, she began keeping a detailed personal journal, making daily entries about her work with Benjamin. As the months stretched into years and the journal pages accumulated, Malva maintained her determination to keep reaching for the stars as far as her son was concerned. When Benjamin had progressed sufficiently to begin attending a small, home-based pre-school, Malva remained present in an adjoining room, notating Benjamin's behaviours and emotions in her journal, remaining accessible to the teacher in case extra support was needed. Only when Benjamin began attending a public school (at age 7) and began receiving para-pro support did Malva begin having consistent daytime hours to pursue her other interests; previous to this development, Malva's professional work had taken place primarily during the night, when Benjamin was fast asleep.

To date, the written evidence of Malva's dedication to helping Benjamin consists of several-thousand finely-typed pages. This precious collection of memories is the source-material for Malva's book about her life-journey with Benjamin: a deeply-felt recounting of how, together, she and Benjamin have overcome challenges, have broken barriers, and have striven for the fulfillment and joy that can be found in life.