



# STOMPING GROUNDS

**T**o quote Randy Newman, “I love L.A.!” I feel very fortunate to again call Los Angeles my home base. The year-round warm climate, beautiful ocean and mountain views, thriving music scene, world-class restaurants, and friendly people make it a wonderful place to live.

I was born in San Diego, moved to the middle of the Mojave Desert for a few years (my mother drove three hours each way for violin lessons in Los Angeles), and then grew up in L.A. until I was a teenager. It was the perfect place for an aspiring violinist to learn and grow.

When I was seven years old, I began studies with Alice Schoenfeld and had chamber-music coachings with her sister Eleonore. I had bi-weekly lessons, chamber-music studies, and classes at the Community School of Performing Arts (now the Colburn School) on the weekends. When driving around we listened to—and today still listen to—KUSC, with the comforting and friendly voice of Jim Svejda in the car.

Alice organized all kinds of performing opportunities—from visiting dignitaries to local competitions, concerts with the Young Musicians Foundation, and eventually, several television shows. I debuted with the Los Angeles Philharmonic when I was 11 and was

the leader of a piano quartet, the Angels Ensemble of California, which performed twice on *The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson*, *That’s Incredible*, and at the Emmy Awards, where a special highlight was meeting Big Bird backstage.

One year, the Berlin Philharmonic and Herbert von Karajan visited town to perform at Ambassador Auditorium in Pasadena. My dad, a classical-music

nut who loved to blast Beethoven in the garage while working on his cars, was able to score one lucky ticket to this momentous occasion. After much discussion, it was decided that I would be the lucky ticket holder—despite the fact that I was only seven years old! They dropped me off at the beginning and picked me up the second it was over. I felt tremendous pressure to stay awake throughout the duration of the concert, but I made it through and still remember the opening chords of Beethoven’s Fifth Symphony like it was yesterday.

It was experiences like these that served as guideposts to my future. I will never forget going to the Hollywood Bowl with my mother and sister, sitting in the nosebleed section with our Japanese bento dinners. While we ate, we heard the Tchaikovsky violin concerto and I decided then and there, I wanted to be a concert violinist. (In my 20s, after I performed at the Hollywood Bowl, we celebrated at Wolfgang Puck’s iconic Spago restaurant. I nearly fell out of my chair when he hand-delivered a salmon pizza to the table! You just never know who you’re going to meet in L.A.)

Richard Colburn, an industrialist, major arts philanthropist, and amateur violist was incredibly generous and loaned me violins and bows from his vast collection. He would hold soirees at his beautiful estate, where I would perform a movement of a concerto or a showpiece. The Colburn School of Music was largely funded by Mr. Colburn, and serves the L.A. community with instruction in music and dance for young students and a tuition-free conservatory that attracts the best talent from around the world.

The opportunities to make music in Los Angeles are enormous with spectacular venues such as the Ambassador Auditorium, Broad Stage, Disney Hall, Hollywood Bowl,

Violinist Anne Akiko Meyers reminisces on a childhood spent in the rich Los Angeles music scene



Royce Hall, and Segerstrom Hall, among many others. Whether a student at the prestigious Colburn School of Performing Arts; an early professional; a young string player gaining experience in the American Youth Symphony Orchestra; or a performer in a Hollywood studio orchestra, the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, the Los Angeles Philharmonic with Gustavo

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Dudamel, the New West Symphony, the Pacific Symphony with Carl St. Clair, or the Pasadena Symphony with David Lockington, one is always deeply aware of the rich musical history of Los Angeles.

What other city in the world can claim to be home to so many great musicians of the 20th century? Charlie Chaplin, Ella Fitzgerald, George Gershwin, Jascha Heifetz, Bernard Herrmann, Erich Korngold, Charles Mingus, Gregor Piatigorsky, Sergei Rachmaninoff (who loved visiting the farmer's market!), Arthur Rubinstein, Igor Stravinsky, and John Williams to name a very few.

Los Angeles is incredibly diverse in its character, people, and culture. The history of immigrants seeking refuge in this sunny and beautiful paradise has created an incredible city with rich musical experiences where dreams really do come true.



Emmy Awards Show



Onstage with the Los Angeles Philharmonic



Post-concert with Andres Segovia

## MY SHOP

Growing up, I would regularly visit luthier Robert Cauer, who worked on Richard Colburn's violins, and drool on a Strad or Guarneri that would periodically come through his workshop. Today, Georg Ettinger from the Hans Weisshaar shop looks after the "ex-Vieuxtemps" Guarneri del Gesù that I exclusively perform on now, and is a one-stop shop as he also rehairs my Tourte "ex-Rosand" bow. [hweisshaar.com](http://hweisshaar.com)