

# MountainTop Strings of California - Bio 2019

The **MountainTop Strings of California**, created in 2011, is based in Big Bear Lake and is under the direction of cellist and music educator Sharon Rizzo. MTSC is a small ensemble of string musicians that was created for the purpose of educating youth to concertize locally and tour abroad. These young musicians range from 13-17 years of age.

Our musicians have the joy of rehearsing and performing in an unbelievably artistic and inspiring small mountain community in Southern California, located 100 miles northeast of Los Angeles and surrounded by the San Bernardino National Forest, altitude around 7,000 feet. With over 300 days of sunshine each year, summer temperatures average 80 degrees, and winter brings about 100 inches of snowfall.

Since the first concert tour to Italy and Austria in 2013, MTSC has grown in popularity both on and off the mountain, having performed many concerts and community events, contributing to the overall cultural vision and enhancement of the mountain community.

The MountainTop Strings have performed in concerts and workshops in prestigious venues in Italy and Austria, including *Accademia Musicale Chigiana* in Siena, *Cremona Summer Series*, *Istituto Boccherini Musicale* in Lucca, *Chiesa di Sant'Agnese in Agone* in Rome, and the *Schönbrunn Palace* in Vienna. In 2017, MTSC was accepted to perform in the *National Youth Concert* in the world famous *Carnegie Hall* in New York City.

The Summer 2019 Italy concert tour has scheduled concerts at the *Pantheon* in Rome as well as a festival along the Tiber River, *Il Lungo Tevere*. Additional stops include *Chiesa di San Filippo Neri* in Florence, *Duomo di Orvieto*, as well as a special concert at *Palazzo Ducale* with the *Filarmonica Sestrese* in Genova. MTSC will conclude their concert tour with a contemporary concert of light rock, jazz and film music at the *Piazza San Fedele* in Como.

The MountainTop Strings are most known for their unique performances of a wide range of eclectic musical styles. Performances may range from 4 to 24 musicians, and repertoire consists of the Baroque music of Vivaldi, Corelli and Bach, as well as folk music from around the world. Also, they may frequently be seen playing rock music of Led Zeppelin, Coldplay, Sting, The Beatles, Journey and more, to create delightful programs to share with many types of audiences.

MTSC musicians are held to very high standards of work ethic and professionalism. In addition to long rehearsal hours in the evenings and on weekends, different combinations of musicians can be seen across the mountain performing at over 50 concerts and community events per year. The musicians raise much of their funds for tours and extensive music education expenses through the utilization of their skills by performing in the community.

Musicians have developed lifelong friendships and a unique bond with each other through the successes and challenges of music, world travel and hard work. In addition to music, MTSC musicians juggle heavy academic commitments and are also extremely high achievers in many other areas. Director Rizzo is proud to share her students and their performances with Italian audiences in the Summer of 2019.

The MountainTop Strings of California is a non-profit organization under the Lighthouse Project of Big Bear, California. Please visit [mountaintopstrings.org](http://mountaintopstrings.org) to learn more about MTSC.