

NJIO

Backstage Pass!

Mary Babiarz

Meet **Mary Babiarz**, NJIO's Symphony 2nd Violin Coach, who brings years of experience and a deep love for music to her work with our orchestra. Mary's journey with NJIO began 30 years ago through her connection with Lorraine Marks, NJIO's founder, and has evolved over time. She's been part of the NJIO family on and off since the beginning, and now she is our Symphony Orchestra's 2nd Violin Coach. Mary leads sectionals and offers mini-lessons on anything the players need, from bow placement to achieving a big, bold sound.

Mary is passionate about sharing the joys of music with others, which is why she sends her own students to NJIO. She's seen firsthand how NJIO's inclusive and welcoming environment fosters growth—especially for those who may feel out of place in more competitive environments. She loves the structure of NJIO, particularly the way it offers three levels of play, making it an ideal fit for everyone—from beginners to more seasoned musicians.

Outside of NJIO, Mary is a busy professional. She teaches private lessons to a range of students, plays with the Paper Mill Playhouse when needed, and often performed with Johnny Mathis when he was in town. She's also an active freelance musician, always keeping her skills sharp.

When she's not teaching or performing, you'll find her power walking or running. She recently completed a half marathon and hopes to do a full marathon in 2026! She also adopts senior beagles, and has two 15-year old doggies to share her home with. She's also an adventurous cook, always testing out new recipes in her kitchen. And just to keep things interesting, Mary's recently taken up the ukulele—proof that she's always up for a challenge!

Looking ahead, Mary hopes to see more young players joining NJIO, continuing Lorraine's legacy of nurturing young talent while maintaining the balance of players at all stages of their musical journeys. It's clear that Mary's commitment to the orchestra and its community runs deep, and we love her warmth and patience that adds to the special feeling of being at NJIO.