

South Whidbey Record

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Strings are Jenny Ruthensteiner's life

by Sue Frause, staff writer

Jenny Ruthensteiner is poised and controlled as she tunes up the musicians of the Everett

Youth Symphony Orchestra. She has to be. As concertmaster for the 82-member ensemble, under the direction of Dr. Paul-Elliott Cobbs, her presence on the podium is important.

It is also the result of musical ability and plenty of practice, practice, practice.

"It's really fun and gives me a chance to be in a leadership position," said Ruthensteiner. The South Whidbey High School senior shares the coveted position with first violinist Philip Watts.



Ruthensteiner has been attending weekly rehearsals of the Everett Youth Symphony for the past seven years. Other Whidbey Island musicians in the symphony include Teo Benson, Jennifer Johnson, Willa Fristad, Emily Godsey, Karin Hastings, Jessica Johnson, Michiko Jones, Hannah Liddell and Ella Vanderbilt.

It was a very young Jenny who began plucking the strings of a small, rented violin when she was only four years old. By age 12, she purchased her own instrument and continued to hone her skills with Island Strings. Today, in addition to the Everett Youth Symphony, Ruthensteiner is a member of the South Whidbey High School String Ensemble.

But last Monday's South Whidbey performance by the Everett Youth Symphony marks the end of an era for the Freeland musician. Ruthensteiner graduates in June with the Class of 1995. She travels to Austria this summer, where she'll work in her family's youth hostel, and in the fall she'll attend the University of Puget Sound on a music scholarship.

But the excitement will begin sooner than that. Next Monday, Ruthensteiner and other members of the Northwest School Chamber Orchestra journey to Japan. The young musicians, under the direction of Dr. Paul-Elliott Cobbs, are featured artists for the 35th anniversary celebration of the Kamimura Gakuen School.