

SUSAN LAMB COOK

Cellist, Sacramento
Philharmonic

Asked what she might consider for an alternate career, Susan Lamb Cook states emphatically, "What? Me not in the music business? You have *got* to be kidding!"

Indeed, it is difficult to imagine her doing anything else. She earned a bachelor's in music and master's from the University of Iowa, has a performance degree from the Hochschule für Musik in Vienna (where she lived for nine years) and is an artist affiliate in cello and chamber music at the University of California, Davis. She is extensively involved with the Sacramento Youth Symphony as program director and coach and has many recordings to her credit, including a recent release by the Gold Coast Trio. She also plays cello for the Sacramento Philharmonic, whose 2006–2007 season opens Oct. 14 with André Previn's *Night Thoughts*.

"He was kind enough to offer a smile," Lamb Cook recalls about the day she passed Previn on a Vienna sidewalk. "I remembered this each time I was able to see him conduct the Vienna Philharmonic."

Back in the States, Lamb Cook played for a few years with the Sacramento Symphony before it went bankrupt in 1997 and has been a steady presence with the orchestra that succeeded it. "The Sacramento Philharmonic has done well to maintain a small but stable season over the past 10 years," she says. "However, ideally it should reflect the growth of the Sacramento area with an expansion of its season."

Meanwhile, she will stay busy with a myriad of other musical experiences and, at home, continue her passionate pursuit of pesto. "My family gives me a hard time about the amount of basil that I plant in the garden," she says. "One year, each of these plants looked like a shrub the size of an exercise ball."



"Every day is different, whether it be practicing, rehearsing, performing, teaching, coaching, organizing programs; it all has to do with music."

LAMB COOK'S NEIGHBORHOOD: Greenhaven/Pocket

FAVORITE CELLO CONCERTOS: They include those by Edward Elgar, Antonin Dvořák and Dmitri Shostakovich.

FIVE CLASSICAL MUSIC PIECES EVERYONE SHOULD TRY TO HEAR: The adagietto movement from Gustav Mahler's fifth symphony; the Goldberg variations by Johann Sebastian Bach; etude Opus 10, No. 3 by Frédéric Chopin; the quintet in C major, Opus 163 by Franz Schubert; and the humming chorus from Giacomo Puccini's *Madame Butterfly*.

HOW TOUGH IS IT TO MAKE A LIVING AS A PERFORMING ARTIST IN THIS CITY? "Very difficult to impossible. Performing artists must have great flexibility in their schedules and in what sort of work they are willing to take on. [Some] have what we call 'day jobs.'"

WHAT SHE SEES HERSELF DOING 10 YEARS FROM NOW: "Exactly what I am doing now."

FAVORITE FOOD: Pesto, roasted vegetables, Gruyère and a glass of *vino rosso*

FAVORITE MOVIE: *Shakespeare in Love*

FAVORITE BOOK: *Tender at the Bone* by Ruth Reichl

WHAT OTHERS SAY ABOUT HER: "She's a reassuring face to see among the players. Always full of warmth and joy, and at the same time possessing tremendous musical skill and taste." —Michael Morgan, conductor and music director of the Sacramento Philharmonic