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pittsburgh symphony orchestra 2004 community report

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Languages and music flow naturally in Tatjana Chamis' house. Besides the language of music, Tatjana and her husband, composer and conductor Flavio, speak a multitude of languages fluently. For Tatjana, it's English, Portuguese, French, and German—while her husband speaks those same four plus three more—Hebrew, Spanish, and Italian. "Our children are bilingual, speaking English and Portuguese," says Tatjana of six-year-old Fabiana and two-year-old twin boys Ariel and Benjamin.

Tatjana was born in the United States to a French-speaking mother and multi-lingual father. Later, when they lived in Germany, she learned her third language. As an adult, she learned Portuguese after meeting Flavio, a native of Brazil. "I picked it up pretty quickly and speak it fluently now. I wouldn't mind learning some more languages," says Tatjana. She credits her musician's ear for her ability to learn languages easily, and says that knowing a number of languages has been beneficial while on tour with the PSO.

Tatjana met Flavio at the Tanglewood Music Festival before

she went to the Curtis Institute of Music at age 19. Several years later, in a stroke of serendipity, Tatjana was substituting with the PSO on a tour of Brazil when she ran into Flavio in a hotel lobby. "It was love at first sight—or I guess second sight," says Tatjana. Soon after, she had her first audition and was offered the job with the PSO. After the couple decided to marry, Flavio, a composer and conductor, left Sao Paulo for Pittsburgh.

Now living in Franklin Park, the Chamis family is committed to healthy, ecologically sound living. Tatjana shops regularly for organic foods and made the twins organic baby food. "I was raised in a natural way," she says. "My mother was a pioneer—sort of a freak at the time. She was one of those parents who didn't believe in giving kids sugar." Tatjana also loves the outdoors, and tries to squeeze in a run each day. "I'd love to run a marathon," says Tatjana. "I'm also thinking that sometime I'll participate in a triathlon when the kids are older and I have time to train."

Besides their exposure to languages, the three Chamis children

tatjana
chamis



Lorrie Flom, freelance writer for the PSO

Cellist Adam Liu grew up in the city of Tianjin in northern China. He began his musical studies on the Chinese traditional two-stringed instrument called the *erhu*. Later, Adam switched to the cello at the encouragement of his parents. Adam's three brothers live in Beijing, Sydney and London. They, too, were deeply influenced by western culture, eventually becoming professors of musical composition, English literature, and psychology. Adam says he's grateful for modern technology as a way to keep his far-flung family in close contact. "Email saves us hundreds of dollars in long-distance phone calls."

In 1986, Adam came to the U.S. to study music on a scholarship from the Piatigorsky Foundation. After six years at the Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore and at the University of Southern California, Adam joined the San Antonio Symphony, where he met

his future wife Annette, a violinist. Immediately following the birth of their two children, the family moved to Montréal, Québec, where Adam held the post of associate principal cello with the Orchestre symphonique de Montréal. The family was pleased to return to the U.S. in the fall of 2003 when Adam joined the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra. Adam says he is glad to be a member of the PSO and that his family is enjoying their new home. "Pittsburgh is a nice city," he says, "and the people are very sweet."

Daughter Karina, 7, and son Kevin, 6, both study piano and also train vigorously as competitive swimmers. Soccer is Adam's favorite sport. After work, the family enjoys outdoor activities together, including baseball, in which Adam is receiving lessons from his young son. The children also take great joy in correcting and teaching their father proper usage of

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