

love between the characters Anne and Diana. Spontaneously leaning into these particular books created a bond in and of itself. As voracious readers, we are both drawn to strong female characters facing deeply human challenges. Our nonfiction reading lists highlight our commitment to human dignity and kind-spiritedness, ranging from workplace dynamics to historical and modern social issues.

### Advocacy

When the *Dobbs* decision was leaked in June 2022, we anxiously texted about the risks to pregnant patients and colleagues. When the decision was rendered, we realized voices like ours weren't included in anesthesiology in the ways we had assumed. We needed to stand up for our patients and colleagues who need ongoing access to comprehensive reproductive care, including access to excellent anesthesiologists. The Venn diagram of our bicoastal professional relationships led us to combine forces and gather as many people in anesthesiology as possible to amplify like-minded voices. We quickly learned from dozens of other seasoned

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leaders in anesthesiology how to navigate the ASA system: writing resolutions and supporting colleagues in presenting at the

Board of Directors meeting. With lightning speed, we jointly wrote an article for MedPage Today with Harriet Hopf, Christina Menor, and Linda Hertzberg, educating colleagues on the potential fallout for large swaths of society due to the *Dobbs* decision ([asamonitor.pub/31M-mx0d](https://asamonitor.pub/31M-mx0d)). Nearly 100 anesthesiologists publicly supported the work, calling for access to all aspects of reproductive health care.

Nothing about taking this stand was easy – it was our strong friendship that made it possible.

### A vocation ... and avocation

*“While medicine is to be your vocation, or calling, see to it that you also have an avocation... some intellectual pastime which may serve to keep you in touch with the world of art, of science, or of letters. Begin at once the cultivation of something other than the purely professional.”* – Sir William Osler (Aequanimitas: With Other Addresses to Medical Students, Nurses and Practitioners of Medicine. 1932).

William Osler understood that an enduring medical career requires more than clinical skills and technical knowledge.

Humanism in medicine is rooted in connection – one person to another, one interaction after another – repeated across the breadth of one's life and profession. In a too-often segmented professional world, we choose to bring our whole selves to the table. This is the great common strength we find in each other.

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The fact that we are both pediatric anesthesiologists feels almost outside the core of our relationship. We are more than physicians. We are musical friends. We are parents. We have a deep and abiding relationship founded on mutual joy and respect for meaning-making. In embracing a fully human existence, we have connected and created so much joy spanning thousands of miles.

We look forward to meeting in person one of these days... ■

## Musings from a Musician-Anesthesiologist

Jennifer R. Basarab-Tung, MD

**M**y musical journey began with the piano, and although I have been out of practice for many years, I still enjoy playing pieces from the classical and romantic eras. Piano was my gateway into singing, as I served as the accompanist for choral groups and played in the pit orchestra for musicals in high school. But it was in college that I discovered my passion for singing the great choral masterworks of composers such as Mozart, Vivaldi, and Fauré. From then on, whenever I moved to a new area and started a new chapter of life, one of the first things I would do is find a community choir to join. Years later, through the contacts I made in choral and theater groups, I found a voice teacher who elevated my singing to new heights as a dramatic coloratura soprano. I continue to sing with choral groups but have more recently also begun to perform as an operatic soloist, favoring the intricate and high-flying passages of Mozart, Rossini, and Bellini's soprano heroines.

Singing (especially in a choir) brings me joy, peace, growth, and a connection to my community. There is something magical that happens when dozens of human voices blend together to create harmony; the whole emerges as something



complex, beautiful, and much greater than the sum of its parts. Singing and listening to choral music brings me into a state of flow and mindfulness like nothing else can. Learning new repertoire can be an exciting challenge, and I enjoy working toward the goal of a performance and witnessing the growth in my skills with

deliberate practice (even if that practice involved working with my voice teacher over video chat rather than in person). Working together with musicians from all walks of life toward a common goal feels like a symbolic step toward a better future. It's actually quite similar to the well-oiled machine of an OR team – each person



**Jennifer R. Basarab-Tung, MD**  
Anesthesiologist, Palo Alto Foundation Medical Group, and Adjunct Clinical Assistant Professor, Stanford University, Palo Alto, California.

knowing and executing their part with skill and care, and the conductor keeping us together as a strong team leader.

On a more everyday level, my musical interests have deepened my connections with the people around me. It's a great conversation starter and particularly exciting to find someone who shares a similar interest. I've even performed at talent shows and parties with other musically inclined colleagues and have been to concerts and productions with those who appreciate the arts. It serves as a reminder that the people we see primarily as coworkers (and by extension, the patients we care for) also have their own complex lives with plenty of interests, talents, and activities. We are all so much more than just another face hidden by a mask and scrubs.

For these reasons, the pandemic-related shutdowns were particularly difficult for ensemble musicians, but I am ecstatic to be able to rehearse and perform again, finally! ■