

A question

What do the following people have in common?

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|-------------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| A plumber from Westfield | A retiree from Easthampton |
| A police officer from Springfield | A lawyer from Northampton |
| An X-ray technician from Holyoke | A doctor from Enfield, CT |
| A 15-year-old from West Springfield | A fourth-grader from Wilbraham |
| A secretary from East Longmeadow | |




Kevin Rhodes Music Director

What these people have in common is the Springfield Symphony! These are people whose lives have been touched by the incredible power of live orchestral music. They have chosen to be a part of what is one of the most positive and life-affirming organizations in our Pioneer Valley. These people choose to come together on a regular basis in downtown Springfield to experience some of the greatest artistic creations of mankind.

Why?

All of these people have discovered that the soul-nourishing quality unique to live musical performance is something which makes the difference in their lives. When I finish a concert and go to the incredibly beautiful Mahogany Room in Symphony Hall, in themselves two incredible works of art, I find a group of people who are energized, happy and ready to go back out into the night taking something very singular with them. It is an honor and a privilege to be a part of this experience for those people and to serve as a conduit between music and listener.

Music has obviously affected and changed my life in ways too numerous to mention. Music led me to be the first person in my family to attend college. Music has taken me from the 24-hour trucker diner which my parents ran in southern Indiana to many of the musical capitals of the world, and combined with an incredible amount of luck, to the podiums of some of the finest orchestras. Music can do so much. I could list example after example of how much more than a pleasant diversion music is and how the Springfield Symphony Orchestra serves its community in ways so much more meaningful and deeply felt than many would imagine. 

For more information about the *Forever Symphony!* campaign, please contact Endowment Campaign Director Janet Egelhofer at 733-0636, ext. 22 or jegelhofer@springfieldsymphony.org.

Springfield Symphony Orchestra
1350 Main Street
Springfield, MA 01103



Forever Symphony!

The Campaign Newsletter for the Springfield Symphony Orchestra FALL 2008

Falling in Love with the SSO

IRENE AND GEORGE SERGENTANIS REMEMBER
A SPECIAL NIGHT AT SYMPHONY HALL

It was October 1962. Tony Bennett had left his heart in San Francisco. *The Music Man* was in theaters. And Frank Sinatra crooned “Night and Day” on the radio.

But, for the two young people running hand-in-hand up the steps of Symphony Hall that Tuesday night, the soundtrack would be provided by the Springfield Symphony Orchestra.

“George picked me up and drove 60 miles to Springfield, 120 miles round-trip,” remembers Irene Sergentanis, who was 19 years old at the time and living in Middletown, CT. “And it took a little longer in those days, because Route 91 between Middletown and Hartford hadn’t been completed yet.”

“I thought Irene was very beautiful, charming, and intelligent, and when she finally agreed to go out with me, I was thinking of a wonderful place to take her,” George Sergentanis recalls with a smile.

So he hopped into his black ’59 convertible and headed for destiny. Hair twisted into a chignon, Irene wore a classic black dress and pearls. “George wore a dark suit and a starched white shirt,” Irene remembers. “He was very debonair.”

A 20-year-old college student at the time, George hadn’t secured the best seats in the house. But he had arranged for an irresistible swirl of SSO magic.

“It was so beautiful. The music was wonderful, and everyone looked so festive. It was just a lovely environment,” says Irene.

George and Irene dated steadily after that and married on June 7, 1964.

George had discovered the SSO as a teenager, and it was important for him to be able to share one of his favorite experiences with this young woman who was rapidly becoming one of his favorite people.

“The Symphony was something that George really loved,” says Irene. “It’s obviously important to us personally, and over the years, even when we had a young family, we always supported the Symphony. And now George is on the Board. We’re so honored and privileged to have been part of the SSO’s growth.”

Both Irene and George are also co-porporators of the Springfield Museums. “Springfield’s always had a symphony, and it gives the city cachet,”

says George, who is also active in the Massachusetts Historical Society. “Cultural assets, such as our museums and the Symphony, are very important for society as a whole. They represent such a positive, uplifting part of our environment.

“It’s been particularly rewarding to see the SSO grow the way it has,” George continues. “Kevin Rhodes brings such energy and confidence to the performances, and the musicians are wonderful. Everything is just world-class.”

Forty-six years, two children, and six grandchildren later, that long-ago evening at

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Irene and George Sergentanis

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(cont. from page 1)

Symphony has taken on historical significance in the story of the Sergentanis family. It's also significant for another reason.

"George *shushed* me!" Irene remembers amid peals of laughter.

"It's true," George says, with a chuckle. "It was the first and last time I shushed her!"

Wondering what the program was that night? Don't ask Irene and George. For that performance, the magic between them overtook the music.

"I still remember it like it was yesterday," says George. "I remember going into Symphony Hall, and I remember that she sat to my right. I don't remember the program, but it was wonderful!"

Young Talent Shines at Symphony Hall

Two of the area's finest young musicians took to the Symphony Hall stage on May 18, during the Season Finale Concert of the Springfield Youth Sinfonia and the Springfield Youth Orchestra.

Nine-year-old Harrison Adams of Florence and 14-year-old Emlyn Van Eps of Deerfield, both violinists and winners of the 2008 concerto competitions sponsored by the two orchestras, performed as featured soloists during Vivaldi's Violin Concerto in A Minor and Bruch's Violin Concerto in G Minor, Opus 26.

The Springfield Youth Sinfonia, an introductory orchestra that develops ensemble skills, and the Springfield Youth Orchestra, an advanced orchestra that cultivates standard orchestral repertoire, were founded as SSO-sponsored orchestral groups in 1944. The two groups – which together featured 109 young musicians during the 2007-2008 season – draw their membership from more than 40 towns in Massachusetts, Connecticut, and Vermont.

"Nurturing young creativity is an absolutely imperative element of the SSO's mission," says Maestro Kevin Rhodes. "One of the most powerful contributions we can make to our community is helping to develop the talents of the next generation. We are all extremely proud of our young concerto competition winners, and of all of the young musicians who bring our youth orchestras to life."



Harrison Adams, then a fourth-grader at Smith College Campus School in

Northampton, started playing the violin when he was four years old.

Harrison – who just started the fifth grade – is currently studying classical violin, as well as fiddle, with Van Kaynor of Amherst. An award-winning fiddler, he is a veteran of local St. Patrick's Day parades and celebrations.

When he's not playing his violin, Harrison likes to spend time with his family and friends and play sports – especially golf and baseball. And he loves his Golden Retriever, Phoebe.

Emlyn Van Eps, then a 9th grader at the Bement School in Deerfield, has been playing the violin since she was five. She currently studies with Joel Pinchon, the strings director of Smith College in Northampton, MA.

At the Bement School, where she was on both the Honor Roll and the Merit List, Emlyn sang in the school choir and the female *a capella* group Lady Phoenix. She also commuted one day a week to Deerfield Academy, where she is now a member of the Class of 2012, to join the school's strings program.

Among Emlyn's favorite things, besides music, are her friends, her Great Dane, Willow, her hyperactive cat, Boo, and a range of interests from drawing and photography to swimming, tennis, and squash.

Events



Left to right, Barbara Bernard, Endowment Campaign Director Janet Egelhofer, Bobbie Blackwood and hostess Mary Ellen Scott.



Guests stroll through the Burkes' lovely gardens.



Forever Symphony! Honorary co-chairs Peggy and David Starr with SSO Executive Director Michael Jonnes at the home of Cindy and Bill Burke on June 14th.



The Blakes, the Rhodes and the Starrs enjoy dinner poolside at the Scotts' on August 9th.



The SSO's brass quintet entertains under the lights at the Burkes' home.

THE FUTURE IS UP TO US!

The Springfield Symphony is the shining beacon of our community's cultural life. Its quality and excellence rival orchestras in much larger cities like Boston and New York. What a jewel we have here that gives so much enjoyment and education to young and old alike.

In the past, the Symphony's endowment fund has been the recipient of the generosity of supporters who had a vision for the future. The income from those gifts is a vital part of our operation. However, with ever-rising costs, we need to increase the funds in our endowment.

I am very proud to be the Co-chair of the "FOREVER SYMPHONY!" endowment campaign along with Honorary Chairs Peggy and David Starr. Our goal is to raise \$3.5 million in order to sustain this wonderful orchestra now and for future generations.

When you are asked to contribute, I hope you will join me and the Starrs in making a meaning gift to this ambitious campaign so we all can continue to enjoy the marvels of live musical experiences in Symphony Hall. Future generations are counting on us!

Mary Ellen Scott



Mary Ellen Scott
Chairperson
Forever Symphony!
The Campaign for the
Springfield Symphony Orchestra