

# The best medicine...

*Escape. Meditate. I forget my cares. It takes me to a beautiful place. I leave feeling uplifted. I can't stop smiling.*

Each of us has our own relationship with music. But there are common threads – or *refrains*, to use a musical word – that continually come up when I speak with listeners of our concerts about the effects our performances have on them.

It's interesting to contrast these sentiments with those that one hears about the global and local situation as it relates to finances.

If I were a doctor, I would be tempted to make the analogy that our world is like a patient with some health issues expressed by worry, anxiety and uncertainty – and I might suggest that the best medicine for alleviating those symptoms can be found at a Springfield Symphony concert. (An added benefit, of course, is that there are no side effects or drug interaction concerns.)

You might say that a key component of our national and global recovery is a renewal of the spirit. And you might say that the SSO is playing a potent role in that collective effort here in the Pioneer Valley.

But when I speak of the SSO, I mean more than the people on stage who make the music and the people behind the scenes who keep the Symphony going. The SSO is every person who buys a ticket, comes to a concert, and listens, applauds, and contemplates. It's every child and adult who participate in our lunchtime concerts and our Music Matters youth enrichment program. It's every person who makes a generous contribution to our Endowment Campaign or our Annual Fund.

The SSO is you.

And now, perhaps more than ever, your support makes the difference for us. Your generosity makes it possible to present concerts of beauty and passion and vision, reminding the people of our region of the greatness of the human spirit. You keep our orchestra alive – so that we can keep providing the best medicine for the people of the Pioneer Valley.

On their behalf, I thank you. 🎻

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



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# Forever Symphony!

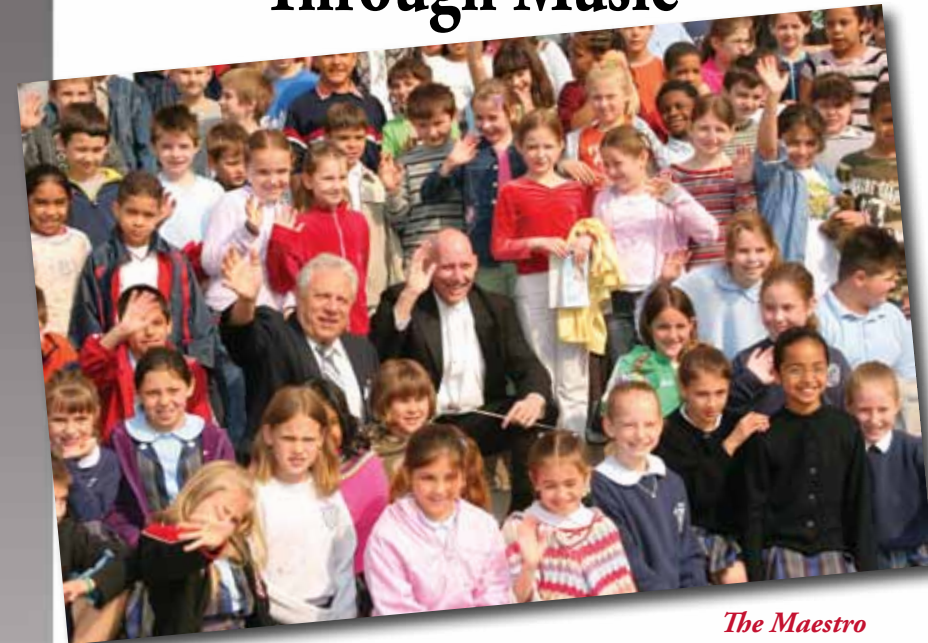
The Campaign Newsletter for the Springfield Symphony Orchestra SPRING 2009



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## SSO Enriches Young Lives Through Music



*The Maestro and friends at Symphony Hall.*

### It takes commitment to be in the band at Van Sickle Middle School in Springfield.

There's morning rehearsal, after-school rehearsal, and music director Laurie Simpson-Plouffe's benevolent but firm expectation of diligent practice at home. Instruments must be transported to and from school – which can be a challenge for 12-year-olds who walk a couple of miles each way. Then there's the peer pressure that comes of being a classical musician in a hiphop world.

But it's a beautiful thing when the only middle school band in Springfield comes together – on stage, in concerts in Tower Square and other venues, as well as in the audience at lunchtime concerts at Symphony Hall.

As part of its youth enrichment program, the SSO offers \$5 tickets for lunchtime concerts to students in grades 7 and up. The 50-minute concert – featuring colorful commentary from Maestro Kevin Rhodes – gives students a unique educational opportunity, says Simpson-Plouffe, who serves as Department Chair for Fine and Performing Arts at Van Sickle.

“It's great for my students to see their instruments being played by professional musicians,” says Plouffe. “They can observe the musicians' demeanor, how they interact with each other and with

*(cont. on page 2)*

(cont. from page 1)

the music director, how they watch him for cues. It's also important for them to learn how to behave as audience members – learning, for instance, that classical concert etiquette is different from popular music etiquette.”

In addition to performance expectations, band students enrolled in Van Sickle's International Baccalaureate program are required to investigate, analyze, and evaluate music, notes Simpson-Plouffe. The lunchtime concerts are a powerful educational tool that affords students this opportunity.

“We're really cultivating future patrons of the arts,” she continues. “It's so important to instill music appreciation while people are young, and this may be the only opportunity for many of our students to go to a symphony performance. Kevin Rhodes creates a very welcoming environment, which sends a clear message that the Symphony is for everybody.”

“It's very important for students to come together as a community and enjoy the music,” says SSO Board member Vera Baker, the retired Director

of Visual and Performing Arts for the Springfield Public Schools. “It opens their minds to new emotional, social, and cultural experiences.”

“We need to make sure kids know that the SSO and the greater Springfield community care about them and think they're important,” says Baker.

The SSO carries its commitment to youth programming all over Springfield – from Symphony Hall to classrooms throughout the city – and out into the Pioneer Valley, into the homes of children who perform with the Springfield Symphony Youth Orchestras.

Our musical petting zoo takes instruments to classrooms throughout the area, giving children in kindergarten through second grade an opportunity to touch and listen. Our musicians regularly present ensemble performances in local schools. And, every April, at our special Music Matters Youth Concerts, Rhodes takes students on an exciting tour of the history of the orchestra – era by era and instrument by instrument – accompanied by the thrilling notes of some of the world's greatest music.

This year's Youth Concerts featured Mozart's *Marriage of Figaro*, Beethoven's Fifth Symphony, Rossini's *William Tell Overture*, and Wagner's *Ride of the Valkyries*. The concert is preceded by a planning and professional development session at which teachers receive a resource packet and a CD that samples the music to be performed in the upcoming concert.

Rhodes approaches the SSO youth mission with the passion of personal experience. “It was my first public school experience with music – singing around the piano in kindergarten – that inspired me to want to play the piano, and eventually led to everything else.”

“One doesn't need to know a B flat from a C sharp to live one's life – but music education should definitely be part of the picture,” he says. “Students come to our concerts and have a great time. They're exposed to active listening skills, which in turn enrich critical thinking skills. I wish we could do even more – but I hope that in some small way we are able to make a difference.”

## Celebrating the Joy of Symphony

Over the course of her long career in print and broadcast journalism, Barbara C. Bernard of Holyoke has interviewed more than a few of the glitterati including some of the biggest names in show business, politics, etc., but if you ask her to name favorites you'll run up against her characteristic discretion.

Well, there is one exception:

“I was on a trip to Eastern Europe last year which was to include a visit to Vienna, and Kevin Rhodes happened to be on the same flight. He was on his way to conduct *Romeo and Juliet* at the Vienna Opera House. When we arrived I attempted to get tickets only to learn that all performances were sold out. He is so greatly appreciated in Europe that it is almost impossible to get a ticket unless one is willing to pay scalper prices. One couple traveling with our group decided to do just that and told me that the concert



was worth every dollar. We are so fortunate to have someone of such international stature in our community conducting our extraordinary orchestra.”

An avowed devotee of Chopin and Beethoven but also loving SSO's Pops series, Barbara has been a fan of the SSO since arriving in the area in 1950. She and her late husband, George, began taking their now adult two daughters as

soon as they were old enough.

“I've always felt the SSO was spectacular and it's been wonderful to watch it grow over the years,” says Barbara. “I have never left Symphony Hall without a sense of contentment and joy with the performance and with being surrounded by others who are as enthusiastic as I about the concert we had just attended.”

A special bonus, she adds, is the opportunity to see friends at the concerts. “One of the nicest parts of the experience is meeting up with friends at intermission and comparing our enthusiasm.”

“I consider it a privilege to support the SSO both emotionally and financially,” says Barbara. “It's so important to ensure that future generations have the same opportunity which my family has had and which my friends and I still have. What a blessing to enjoy truly superb professional

## Events



Drs. Jim Rosenthal and Halina Wiczuk hosted a campaign event for the medical community, with a special, private piano performance courtesy of the Maestro.



Are you 70½ plus years of age?  
Do you have an IRA?  
Did you know you can donate up to \$100,000 without penalty?  
Act now while this federally approved opportunity is still in effect!  
It ends in December 2009.  
Call Janet Egelhofer, Endowment Campaign Director  
733-0636, ext. 22

## The Sweet Sound of Philanthropy

The gift of glorious live orchestral music that the SSO has brought to our community for 65 years continues to fill Symphony Hall. I am pleased to report that our generation, like those that came before, is responding generously to carry on that legacy.

It's inspirational that, even amid the challenges of today's financial environment, individuals in this community have contributed \$1.3 million to our *Forever Symphony!* campaign. Equally impressive is the work of the Campaign Committee members, who have devoted countless hours to engaging our friends in this important effort.

My deep gratitude goes to everyone who has contributed time, talent, and financial resources to *Forever Symphony!* I hope that everyone who reads these words will consider making a pledge to the campaign. The Endowment Fund underwrites the SSO's annual operations – and each and every gift is even more meaningful in these difficult times.

Thank you for helping to keep the music playing in Springfield.

Mary Ellen Scott



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