

Leadership at Springfield Symphony Orchestra

Overview: I served on the Board of the Springfield Symphony Orchestra for 12 years. During the last 6 years I have been First Vice President/President Elect, President/CEO, and Board Chair. During my tenure, I ran a nationwide search for an Executive Director, negotiated a new contract for the Music Director, led fundraising among physicians for the Endowment Campaign, and took part in musicians' union contract negotiations.

The Springfield Symphony Orchestra is a professional regional Symphony of exceptional artistic quality that is the largest Massachusetts orchestra outside of Boston. Founded in 1944 and composed of over 80 musicians from all over the Northeast and Canada, the orchestra is now in its 76th year. Concerts take place in historic Springfield Symphony Hall (seating capacity 2600), which was built over 100 years ago by the same architect who designed the facility in Boston. A typical season consists of 7 classical concerts, 3-4 pops concerts, and multiple chamber music performances in a variety of settings. The current music director is internationally recognized Maestro Kevin Rhodes, who has been with the orchestra since 2001.

The mission of the SSO is to maintain a high-quality professional symphony which entertains, educates, develops, and expands its audience, and sponsors programs and concerts that enhance the musical life of the region. The SSO is deeply committed to the musical education of Springfield area youth through a number of special programs. These include the Springfield Symphony Youth Orchestra (SSYO) for high school students and the Springfield Youth Sinfonia for younger students. Both of the ensembles offer young musicians a chance to play in a full orchestra, an option not offered in many schools. In addition, there are Education Connection Youth Concerts in which thousands of elementary students are bussed to Symphony Hall to see special performances, a mobile Musical Petting Zoo in which a variety of instruments are brought into the schools, and a Meet the Musicians program in which high school music students are invited to watch rehearsals followed by dinner with musicians who play their same instruments.

The SSO is run by a 15-member volunteer Board of Directors, an Advisory Board of 25 members, a professional staff that includes Executive, Marketing, Development, Financial, and Education directors, and the Musical director/conductor.

- **David Gang**
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