

# Williamsport LIVING

A SOCIAL NEIGHBORHOOD PUBLICATION FOR THE RESIDENTS  
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**Celebrating Williamsport  
Symphony Orchestra's  
50th Anniversary & 100th Birthday**

Eric Stashak, Eric Stashak Photography



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## Happy 50th Golden Anniversary & 100th Birthday To *The Williamsport Symphony Orchestra*

**HEAR IT, LIVE IT, LOVE IT!**

Article by [Veronica Muzic](#)

### *Celebrating the Birthdays...*

On the July cover are representatives of the several aspects of the 50<sup>th</sup> & 100<sup>th</sup> Celebrations: Lyneah & Michael Hudock, who serve as Honorary Chairs, and Maestro Gerardo Edelstein, who in his role of Music Director is responsible for all “musical” activities, and Fred Gilmour, 50th Anniversary artist. Gilmour’s art work “Urge to Provoke” underscores the role of art with the custom-created art piece functioning as a set piece for the season in its publications and advertising. The painting will be available for purchase as the premiere 2016-2017 season fundraiser. The vibrant colors and the modernist style represent the modern Williamsport Symphony Orchestra.

Behind the scenes, the staff will be heavily involved this season: Janet Harris, WSO Executive Director; Hind Jabbour, WSO Business Manager, and Rebecca Ciabattari, the Orchestra Manager/Librarian. Finally, representing the volunteers and board are Dianne Peeling as Chair of the Planning Committee; Greg Smith, the outgoing President of the WSO board; Joyce Hershberger, the incoming WSO President, and Christine Kaiser, who represents the Friends of the Symphony.

The 50th Planning Committee is organizing a Golden Gala – October 14 – which opens the formal Golden Anniversary celebration, preceding the first concert on October 18 when former WSO Maestro Robin Fountain will re-appear as a guest conductor on the WSO stage. At that opening season concert, musicians from the past years will be recognized while another “from the past” performer Dan Kamin will return as guest artist for the December 13th holiday concert. The season ends on May 16th with a new composition by American composer Christopher Theofanidis, being commissioned by the WSO.

“Haydn’s early Symphony No. 6 in D major, Le Matin, the piece played by the first Williamsport Symphony in 1915, happily returns for the season finale! And, we could not finish our season without another big splash with Ravel’s Daphnis and Chloe, Suite No. 2, being the perfect choice to celebrate Life, pure love, and Joy,” states Maestro Edelstein.

Finally, a “50 for 50 Campaign” will recognize the WSO as it aims to build its reserve fund to ensure continued music-making for the next 50 years while fulfilling its mission. See the WSO website – [www.williamsportsymphonyorchestra.com](http://www.williamsportsymphonyorchestra.com) – for details on this celebratory 50 years & Counting Campaign... Watch the thermometer at the CAC to chart the progress in reaching the goal of 1,000 contributors. Season ticket buying has begun already with early action ensures choice seating... Be part of this special birthday celebration!

You are cordially invited to subscribe to the  
WILLIAMSPORT SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA  
2016-2017 SEASON  
*Hear it, Live it, Love it!*

*50 & Counting!* Tuesday, October 18, 2016

*Holiday Concert* Tuesday, December 13, 2016

RESURRECTION Tuesday, February 14, 2017

BROADWAY *Celebration* Saturday, March 18, 2017

HAPPY 50th! Tuesday, May 16, 2017

Concert Times 7:30 PM  
Community Arts Center  
220 West Fourth Street | Williamsport, PA 17701

GERARDO EDELSTEIN, MUSIC DIRECTOR

**WSO 50!**

WILLIAMSPORT SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Celebrating the past,  
Looking forward  
to the *Future...*

WILLIAMSPORT SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

2016 - 2017 SEASON

### *One Hundred Years or Fifty?*

Both “birthdays” accurately represent the organization: 100th or 50th! The first Williamsport Symphony Orchestra was born in 1915, under the direction of E. Hart Bugbee, a violinist and then had a brief hiatus before re-appearing later with different names (like the Civic Orchestra) and venues. That first concert on May 20, 1915 was a success as the newspaper account noted that it was a “splendid concert [with] most difficult works played in finished style.” Bugbee himself was a seasoned performer as well as a teacher. He studied at the American Institute of Applied Music in New York where he performed with both the New York Symphony and the New York Philharmonic, playing under the batons of Toscanini and Mahler among other notables. At one point, it was part of the national 1930s music entertainment scene as the Works Progress (or Projects) Administration Orchestra.

Two World Wars interrupted the orchestra, as many of its members changed from their concert attire to military uniforms. In 1947, the orchestra returned to the stage under the direction of Osborne Housel, a member of the Williamsport School District faculty. The Williamsport Symphony Society with its board began operations in support of the orchestra, which opened its first sponsored season on November 30, 1948. Performances were centered in Williamsport, in school auditoriums. During this era, two musicians – Patricia Shannon and Richard Campbell, whom are current season subscribers – lent their talent to the orchestra in the violin and bassoon sections, respectively. This orchestra ceased its operations in 1957.

Many of today’s WSO activities had their birth in this first fifty years: Young Peoples’ Concerts, outdoor concerts in Brandon

Park, opportunities to meet the Maestros, and the pre-concert lectures among them.

### *The “Modern” Orchestra Celebrates Its 50th Birthday!*

Beginning in the mid-1960’s, a group of like-minded musicians and music lovers began to dream and plan, being from Lewisburg, violinist Dorothy Baumwoll and bassoonist William Barrison initiated the discussion. The group launched the Susquehanna Valley Symphony Orchestra in 1966 with each concert being scheduled in both a North and South venue: Williamsport area was the “North” and Lewisburg to Selinsgrove represented the “South.” Conductors were faculty members at Penn State, Susquehanna, and Bucknell Universities, with Bucknell being where the SVSO was founded and hosted its “South” concerts. Locally, Carol Sides, of Robert M. Sides Family Music Center in Williamsport, and Lester Murray, of Koppers, Inc. in Muncy, were the were major supporters of the orchestra.

With the hiring of Rolf Smedvig as conductor in 1984, the orchestra’s name shifted to the current Williamsport Symphony Orchestra; all performances were in the Williamsport area. Smedvig held that post through 1989. After a season with visiting conductors, Robin Fountain took the podium until 2007.

