

A COMMEMORATIVE
SPECIAL SECTION
OF THE *MARIETTA*
DAILY JOURNAL



CELEBRATING 75 YEARS

OF THE
GEORGIA
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA
IN COBB COUNTY





CONTENTS

A History of the GSO.....3

Conductor Timothy Verville /
Sensory Friendly Concerts ...4

Celebrating Soul of Jazz6

A Journey through Time ...8

Voices in Harmony /
Community in Concert10

GSO and Kennesaw State ...13

Church Street Chronicles ...14

INTRODUCTION

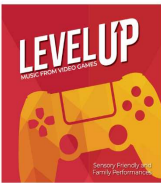
For seventy-five years, the Georgia Symphony Orchestra has been the heartbeat of our community — filling concert halls, schools, and hearts with the power of live music. From its humble beginnings as the Marietta Community Symphony in 1951 to its place today as one of Georgia’s most vibrant regional arts organizations, the GSO has inspired generations of music lovers, nurtured young talent, and broken down barriers to make the arts accessible for all.

This milestone anniversary is more than a celebration of notes on a page — it is a tribute to the people of Cobb County and beyond who believed that a small group of musicians could grow into a cultural institution. As we look back on decades of triumphs, challenges and unforgettable performances, we also look forward with pride and anticipation.

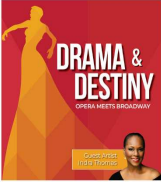
The GSO’s 75th season is not just a moment in time, but a living legacy that continues to uplift, connect and transform lives through music.



Presenting Season Sponsor
The City of Marietta



Level Up! Music from Video Games
Get ready for a high-energy, family-friendly concert that brings the thrilling worlds of your favorite games to life —on stage and in surround sound!
Saturday, Oct. 11, 2026 | 2:00 PM & 4:00 PM



Classics I: Drama and Destiny: Opera Meets Broadway
A sweeping musical journey where opera's grandeur meets Broadway's charm, featuring internationally acclaimed soprano Indra Thomas.
Saturday, Oct. 25, 2025 | 7:30 PM



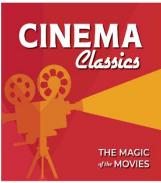
Holiday Pops!
Start your season with festive cheer, familiar favorites, and a visit from Santa in this beloved family-friendly holiday tradition.
Saturday, Dec. 6, 2025 | 7:30 PM
Sunday, Dec. 7, 2025 | 3:00 PM



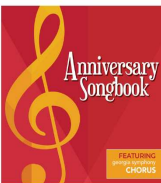
Classics II: Big Band and Beyond
The GSO and GSO Jazz! unite for a thrilling fusion of symphonic sound and swingin' jazz, honoring legends like Charlie Parker and Duke Ellington.
Saturday, Feb. 7, 2026 | 7:30 PM



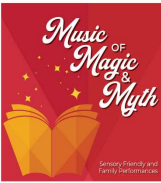
Jazz 2: Mas Que Nada: The Music of Sergio Mendes
Feel the rhythms of Brazil with the irresistible bossa nova, samba, and jazz of Sergio Mendes in this lively GSO Jazz! performance.
Friday, February 28, 2026 | 7:30 PM



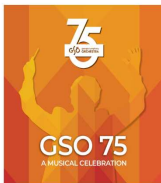
Cinema Classics
Experience the magic of the movies as The GSO brings Hollywood's most iconic themes to life in the historic Strand Theatre.
Sunday, March 15, 2026 | 2:00 & 5:30 PM



Georgia Symphony Orchestra Chorus: Anniversary Songbook
A choral celebration of favorites past and present led by Bryan Black, honoring the GSO Chorus's rich legacy and musical spirit.
Sunday, March 22, 2026 | 3:00 PM



Music of Magic and Myth
Featuring classical music's most exciting and imaginative works, get whisked away on an unforgettable journey through enchanted forests, daring adventures, and legendary lands!
Saturday, Mar. 28, 2026 | 2:00 PM & 4:00 PM



Classics III: GSO 75: A Musical Celebration
A monumental concert featuring movements from Mahler's Resurrection Symphony, Holst's The Planets, and a massive combined chorus and youth orchestra.
Saturday, May 23, 2026 | 7:30 PM

For more information and tickets visit GeorgiaSymphony.org.

By Suzanne Tucker
and Deanna Smith
GSO Contributors

FROM MUSIC CLUB
TO SYMPHONY
(1951-1955)

The story of the Georgia Symphony Orchestra begins in 1951, when Mrs. Howard Miller and members of the Marietta Music Club established an orchestra committee to bring live symphonic music to Cobb County. This committee, first managed by Erma Miller, brought together a handful of amateur musicians and created the Marietta Community Orchestra.

Their first public performance took place in June 1952 at Larry Bell Auditorium, with Donald Everett as conductor. The concert featured just 25 musicians and was supported by community patrons who dreamed of a permanent symphony for the area.

In 1955, a remarkable young conductor, Betty Shipman Bennett, was appointed music director. Her arrival marked the beginning of a new era of stability, growth, and community building.

GROWTH UNDER
BENNETT
(1955-1990)

For the next 35 years, Bennett guided the orchestra with extraordinary vision and leadership. The ensemble evolved from a modest volunteer group to a respected community symphony with over 50 musicians. She became one of the few female conductors in the nation to lead a symphony of this size, and her leadership made her a cultural trailblazer in the state of Georgia.

Highlights include a 1958 performance of Handel's Messiah before 1,500 audience members, collaborations with local churches and schools, and regular subscription concerts that became community traditions. The orchestra partnered closely with the Marietta Choral Guild, directed by Jeanette Sheeler, to present sacred works and operettas, such as The Mikado.

The Symphony Women's Guild, founded in 1972 by the Marietta Junior League, provided vital fundraising support. By the late 1970s, the ensemble was renamed the Cobb Community Symphony to reflect its expanding reach, and it began performing in the new Cobb Civic Center Cultural Arts Theater.

By the time Bennett retired in 1990, the symphony was the oldest performing cultural organization in Cobb County, deeply rooted in both the volunteer spirit and professional aspirations of its musicians.

FROM COMMUNITY ROOTS TO REGIONAL LEGACY

A History of the Georgia Symphony Orchestra

TRANSITIONS AND
CHALLENGES
(1990-2004)

Following Bennett's farewell concert in April 1990, which featured her daughters, Sally, Barbara and Susan performing, the orchestra entered a period of transition. Steven Byess became the third conductor in the orchestra's history, bringing new energy and ambition.

However, the 1990s and early 2000s were marked by financial struggles. The orchestra faced financial deficits and was forced to cancel concerts. Byess, along with key members of the Board of Directors and Women's Guild appealed to the community for stronger corporate sponsorship, pointing to Cobb's growing wealth and cultural appetite. Campaigns like "1,000 New Patrons" provided some relief but underscored the fragility of arts funding in suburban Atlanta.

Byess resigned in 2002, the year the orchestra celebrated its 50th anniversary with a performance of Beethoven's Ninth Symphony alongside the Georgia Festival Chorus.

Guest conductors such as David Stahl, Claire Fox Hillard, and Andrew Lane kept the orchestra moving forward while the board searched for new leadership.

A BROADER VISION
(2004-2011)

The appointment of Michael Alexander as music director in 2004 marked another turning point. Under his leadership, the orchestra expanded its educational and community engagement initiatives. The Georgia Youth Symphony Orchestra (GYSO) was established in 2006, expanding high-quality ensemble experiences for hundreds of young musicians. The Georgia Symphony Chorus, founded in 2007 under the direction of Bryan Black, attracting exceptional amateur singers while broadening the orchestra's repertoire.

By the end of the decade, the organization's identity had expanded

beyond the boundaries of Cobb County. In 2011, the Cobb Symphony Orchestra officially became the Georgia Symphony Orchestra (GSO), embracing its regional reach.

NEW LEADERSHIP
AND REGIONAL IMPACT
(2011-PRESENT)

The GSO continued to flourish as a multi-faceted organization. Under the leadership of the board and Alexander, the orchestra developed programming that blended classical works with contemporary pieces and community-focused performances.

In 2015, Alexander stepped down, and in 2016, Timothy Verville was appointed as the new music director. Verville emphasized innovation, thematic programming, and accessibility. Our ongoing America Concert Series showcases American repertoire and broadens audience appeal.

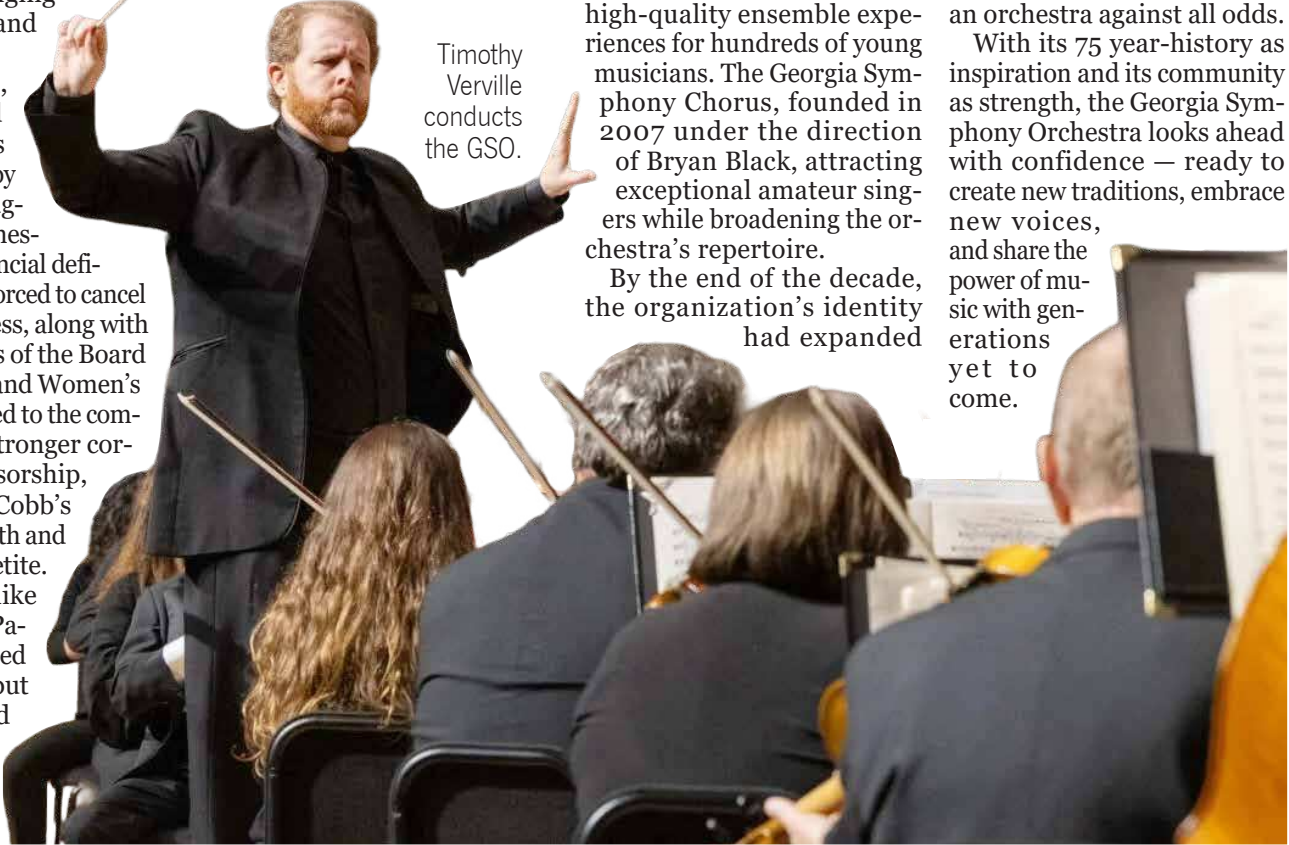
The GSO's mission also deepened: pioneering sensory-friendly concerts for neurodiverse audiences, expanding family programming to introduce children to classical music, and highlighting the chorus's international reach, including a recent UK tour under the direction of Bryan Black.

AN ENDURING LEGACY

From its roots in the Marietta Music Club to its present status as a thriving regional arts institution, the Georgia Symphony Orchestra reflects the determination of its volunteers, the vision of its leaders, and the transformative power of music.

Names like Erma, Betty, Franklin, Marnie, Jim, Theresa, Michael, Susan and Timothy and innumerable others tell the story of a community that continually rallied to sustain an orchestra against all odds.

With its 75 year-history as inspiration and its community as strength, the Georgia Symphony Orchestra looks ahead with confidence — ready to create new traditions, embrace new voices, and share the power of music with generations yet to come.



From the Archives



The Thursday, Oct. 5, 1967, edition of the Marietta Daily Journal carried the above article, titled "'Little Acorn' Saying Fits Marietta Symphony." The beginning of the story read: "Grown up now into a corporation with a board of trustees, the Marietta Community Symphony starts its 16th season this month, still with the spark of spontaneity that marked its founding. Spontaneous combustion describes its beginning, for its founder, Mrs. Howard Miller, didn't mean to start a symphony. Back in 1951, as a member of the Marietta music Club, Mrs. Miller thought it would be a good idea to get a group together 'in my living room for fiddlin' hymns.' No one was more surprised than she when a story appeared in The Marietta Daily Journal headlined, 'Music Club Organizes Symphony.' But, in a way, the story caused the Symphony as musicians in the area began to call Mrs. Miller to volunteer and ask about rehearsal times. 'They came to the first meeting not just to talk about music, but they brought their instruments,' Mrs. Miller, now Symphony manager, said. With odds and ends of donated music the Symphony got started and in the first year or two grew to about 40 members. Not long afterward the musicians found themselves without a conductor and membership dwindled until there were only six or seven stalwarts left. That's when the director's job was offered to Mrs. Betty Bennett. She took it and, apparently, liked it because she holds it still."



The Georgia Symphony Orchestra began in 1951 in the Church Street home of Arthur F. Moor, where the Marietta Music Club gathered local musicians to share their talents with the community. Under longtime conductor Betty Shipman Bennett, the group evolved into the Marietta Community Symphony, laying the groundwork for what would become a treasured cultural institution.



Under the steadfast leadership of Betty Shipman Bennett from 1955 to 1989, the ensemble grew steadily in both size and artistic quality, evolving into the Marietta Community Symphony and setting the stage for future expansion.



Conductor Timothy Verville marks 10 years with the Georgia Symphony Orchestra

By Kim Ellet
GSO Development Director

When Dr. Timothy Verville first stepped onto the podium of the Georgia Symphony Orchestra (GSO) 10 years ago, he was drawn to two things: the orchestra’s long history and the promise of its community. “The GSO had already been in the community for over 60 years,” he recalled. “That kind of longevity spoke volumes about its staying power. And when I looked at what the organization was doing — and the opportunities still ahead — it was clear this was a place where music could make a deep impact.” A decade later, Verville has become the face and heartbeat of the GSO, leading it into its milestone 75th anniversary season while shaping the organization into a cultural force that both entertains and serves.

A MUSICAL PATH LESS TRAVELED

Born in western Oklahoma, Verville’s earliest stage was a farm where his family raised and trained show horses. His first encounter with music came through public school, where he discovered not only orchestral playing but an eclectic array of styles. “I wasn’t on a straight path,” he admitted. “I loved orchestra, but I also played in a strolling strings group, percussion in marching band, and electric bass in whatever we were listening to on the radio — I also took up bluegrass, jazz, reggae. For me, the best way to learn music was always just to play it.” That restless curiosity eventually led him to conducting. Unusually, Verville landed his first conducting job before formally studying the craft. Three years on the podium convinced him he had found his calling. Since then, he has become both an award-winning conductor and a composer. Last season,

“Music has the power to bring people together, to help them see themselves and one another in new ways. That’s the heart of what we do. And I couldn’t be prouder to be doing it here, with this community, as we celebrate the GSO’s past and look toward its future.”

the GSO premiered his Requiem Americano, performed with tenor Timothy Miller, the Atlanta Boy Choir, and the GSO Chorus — a work that exemplifies his passion for creating new art alongside established masterpieces.

MUSIC AS PUBLIC SERVICE

For Verville, an orchestra is more than a concert-giving ensemble — it is a public service. “Education, enrichment, and entertainment,” he said, “that’s how we serve our community.” That philosophy has guided some of the GSO’s most impactful initiatives, including pioneering sensory-friendly concerts. Designed for individuals on the autism spectrum or with other sensory sensitivities, these performances invite audiences to experience music in a supportive environment. “It’s about asking who isn’t in the audience or on the stage, and then

opening doors,” Verville explained. “For some, music provides a space where they see themselves, where they feel connected and accepted.” The impact can be immediate — or felt years later. Verville often invokes the image of planting trees whose shade will benefit future generations. “Sometimes you don’t know how a concert will affect someone until much later in their life,” he said.

MOMENTS THAT MATTER

One of Verville’s most vivid memories came early in his GSO tenure, following a concert with the Morehouse and Spelman College Glee Clubs. The program included William Grant Still’s And They Lynched Him On A Tree, performed at the Ray Charles Performing Arts Center. As the crowd thinned, a Morehouse student approached. He had never been to a symphony before. “He said, ‘I didn’t know it could be like that,’” Verville recalled. “He felt seen — that this was something for him. That’s what you live for as a musician, those moments of connection.” It’s why Verville makes a point of mingling with audience members after every concert. “It’s my own customer feedback survey,” he joked, “but more importantly, it’s about making sure people know this music belongs to them.”

INVESTING IN THE FUTURE

This season, the GSO celebrates not only its 75th anniversary but also the 20th year of the Georgia Youth Symphony Orchestras (GYSO), one of the largest youth orchestra programs in the Southeast. For Verville, the milestone underscores the importance of investing in the next generation. “Students today aren’t the same as they were five or 10 years ago, so the program has to keep evolving,” he said. “It’s about supplement-



GSO/Special

Dr. Timothy Verville

ing school music programs, giving young musicians the hours and experiences they need to grow — not just as performers but as people.” The results speak for themselves: GYSO seniors earn more than \$2 million in scholarships annually, with 99% accepted into college. “Our students gain the skills to succeed in any career they choose — whether as professional musicians, doctors, lawyers, or community leaders. Ultimately, we’re not only creating great music together, we’re helping them grow into better human beings.”

LOOKING AHEAD

As orchestras nationwide grapple with questions of sustainability and relevance, Verville believes the GSO’s adaptability is its strength. “Our greatest asset is our flexibility,” he said. “We can offer a different perspective on repertoire, bring in new and engaging works, and still honor traditions. And we’re committed to listening to our audience and evolving with them.” To those who think they know what a symphony orchestra is, he offers a challenge: “Have you actually been to a concert? Come try it. There’s no substitute for the live experience. Everyone feels it differently, and every response is the right one.”

A SEASON OF CELEBRATION

As he marks his tenth year with the GSO baton, Verville is relishing

the season ahead. Highlights include guest soprano Indra Thomas in Drama and Destiny: Broadway Meets Opera on October 25, an orchestra and jazz Big Band concert featuring GSO Jazz Director Sam Skelton, the beloved Holiday Pops, and even music from films and video games. The season will culminate in a spectacular 75th Anniversary Grand Finale in May 2026, when the GSO joins forces with the top students of the Georgia Youth Symphony Orchestras for a once-in-a-lifetime side-by-side performance. More than 200 musicians will fill the stage alongside a 200-voice chorus, uniting the GSO Chorus with guest choirs from across the region. “It’s hard to pick favorites,” he admitted. “It’s like trying to pick your favorite child. Each performance has its own fantastic thing.” What excites him most, though, is the opportunity to keep connecting — whether with first-time concertgoers, seasoned music lovers, or the students of GYSO. “Music has the power to bring people together, to help them see themselves and one another in new ways,” he said. “That’s the heart of what we do. And I couldn’t be prouder to be doing it here, with this community, as we celebrate the GSO’s past and look toward its future.” For tickets, subscriptions and opportunities to support the GSO’s 75th Anniversary Season, visit georgiasymphony.org.

Opening Doors through Music

GSO’s Sensory Friendly Concerts

By Kim Ellet
GSO Development Director

For 75 years, the Georgia Symphony Orchestra has been a part of life in Cobb County — bringing music that inspires, educates, and connects. One of the most meaningful additions to that legacy is the Sensory Friendly Concert series, which began in 2015 and has since become a hallmark of the orchestra’s commitment to accessibility. The idea was sparked by Jennifer Schwenker of Marietta and her twin sons, Benjamin and Samuel, who both have autism. When they were young, Jennifer loved exposing them to music,

but traditional concerts weren’t always a good fit. Sitting still and staying quiet was a challenge, and she often worried about disrupting other patrons. That all changed in December 2014, when Jennifer brought her boys to a GSO Christmas concert at the Marietta Performing Arts Center at Marietta High School. Then-principal Leigh Colburn helped them get settled and introduced Jennifer to GSO’s then-Executive Director Susan Stensland. Jennifer shared her idea: why not create concerts with the same kinds of sensory-friendly accommodations that movie theaters were beginning to offer?



Ben Schwenker playing violin at the Instrument Petting Zoo before the performance.



Jennifer, Sam and Ben Schwenker.



Sammy on trombone at the Instrument Petting Zoo before the concert.

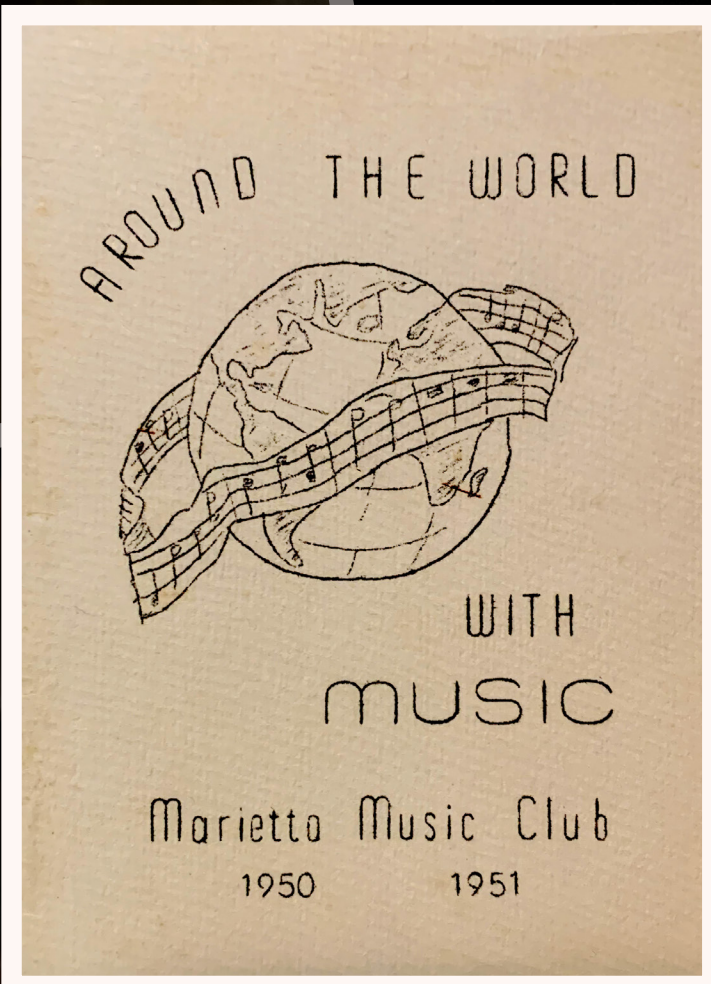
Just months later, the GSO launched its first Sensory Friendly concert, in partnership with Autism Speaks. What began as a single annual performance has now grown into a beloved twice-yearly tradition, with

dedicated showtimes for sensory-sensitive audiences. “I’ll never forget that first concert,” Jennifer recalled. “Every time we go, I’m so full of joy. I watch Ben and Sam’s faces—and the faces of so many in the disabled community—and it fills me with gratitude on top of the beautiful music.” Now 22, Ben and Sam are still regulars at the concerts. Sam can name every instrument and often announces them out loud during performances. Ben doesn’t speak as much, but his delight is obvious. Both love the hands-on pre and post concert instrument petting zoo, provided in partnership with Notes of Impact,

and Jennifer says it means the world that GSO musicians now greet her boys by name. “Things we take for granted—like attending concerts or learning about music—are often very difficult for families in the autism community,” she explained. “The Sensory Friendly concerts make it possible, and they give parents like me a safe, welcoming place to connect with each other, too.” This season, the GSO will continue the tradition at the Jennie T. Anderson Theatre at the Cobb Civic Center. On Saturday, October 11, the orchestra presents Level Up: Music from Video Games, with the Sensory Friendly Concert at 2:00 p.m. and the Family Concert at 4:00 p.m. Later in the season, on March 28, 2026, the theme will be Music of Magic & Myth. As the GSO celebrates its 75th Anniversary Season, programs like these stand as a powerful reminder of what the orchestra has always been about: not only world-class performances, but also community service through the transformative power of music. Jennifer sums it up simply: “It’s a risk-free environment. Parents can relax, kids can be themselves, and everyone gets to experience the joy of music. Even if you can only stay for part of the concert, it’s worth it — it will enrich your life.” The Georgia Symphony Orchestra is proud to be a CultureCity Sensory Inclusive™ Certified Organization, ensuring that every family continues to feel welcome, accepted and celebrated in the years to come.

Happy 75th Anniversary, GSO!

*Marnie "Grandma" Gresh,
Pianist, Marietta Music Club*



S.A. White is grateful for GSO's ongoing legacy of music, connection, and community. We're proud to honor our special link through President Kim Gresh, who has proudly supported the orchestra for years—continuing the legacy of her grandmother, Marnie Gresh, a dedicated member and pianist with the Marietta Music Club, which later became the GSO.

Thank you, Georgia Symphony Orchestra, for inspiring generations and enriching Cobb County for 75 years!



sawhite.com
590 Atlanta Street, S.E.
Marietta, GA 30060
770.427.1387



Celebrating the Soul of Jazz

GSO Jazz! and GYSO Jazz mark milestone seasons

By Rebecca Strojan Weaver
GSO Board Chair

As the Georgia Symphony Orchestra celebrates its 75th season and the Georgia Youth Symphony Orchestra marks its 20th, one vibrant thread runs through both milestones: jazz. Under the masterful direction of Sam Skelton, GSO Jazz! and GYSO Jazz have become cornerstones of musical excellence, community engagement, and artistic inspiration.

From the swinging sounds of big band classics to cutting-edge compositions inspired by video games and anime, these ensembles have redefined what it means to bring jazz to life in Georgia.

A Vision Born in Sound
Sam Skelton, a Conyers native and longtime fixture in Atlanta’s music scene, envisioned GSO Jazz! as a repertory jazz orchestra modeled after Jazz at Lincoln Center. “I wasn’t interested in forming another dance band,” Skelton explained. “Atlanta already has so many great choices for that. I wanted a group that performed the most challenging and up-to-date compositions for jazz ensemble.”

With the support of GSO leadership, including then-Music Di-

rector Michael Alexander, the idea quickly became reality. GSO Jazz! now stands as a dynamic force, delivering powerful performances that honor tradition while embracing innovation.

GYSO Jazz followed naturally. “It just made sense to create an environment for kids to experience jazz in a safe and low-pressure setting,” Skelton said. His goal was to provide young musicians with a space to experiment with improvisation and explore historically significant jazz works. Today, GYSO Jazz is a thriving ensemble that performs two to three concerts per season and offers combo opportunities for its members.

The Sound of Growth
Over the years, Skelton has witnessed a remarkable evolution in jazz education and performance. “The level and depth of compositions for jazz ensembles has increased greatly,” he noted. “So much music for video games and anime is being arranged for big band. Student interest has increased as a result of ‘their’ music being available to perform.” That connection between personal relevance and artistic challenge has helped GYSO Jazz flourish. And for Skelton, the rewards are



Under the masterful direction of Sam Skelton, GSO Jazz! and GYSO Jazz have become cornerstones of musical excellence, community engagement, and artistic inspiration.

deeply personal. “I can say that 99% of my former students are performing or teaching in their field of study,” he said. “I love being able to hire these amazing students for performances with GSO Jazz. I am a proud jazz papa!”

A Legacy of Inspiration
Rachel Ragan, lead trumpet in the inaugural GYSO Jazz ensemble, is one of those students whose journey reflects the program’s impact. “GYSO Jazz was the key to keeping me in music,” she shared. “I was at a point with my more classically oriented bands that had me reconsidering if I wanted to pursue music in college or even keep playing at all.”

Thanks to GYSO Jazz and Skelton’s mentorship, Ragan went on to earn multiple degrees in music and now performs with local jazz bands and the Georgia Symphony Orchestra. “Sam’s knowledge of jazz and his joy in the music, combined with his teaching style that demands excellence while helping students learn to be the best musicians possible, is unparalleled,” she said. “I would play with him again any day!”

Ragan also credits the ensemble with broadening the appeal of GYSO. “It brought a whole new flavor,” she said. “The addition of



Karla Harris sings with GSO Jazz!

the jazz band encouraged people to attend concerts or audition for spots that might not have been interested in a strictly orchestral program.”

Jazz as Community
GSO Jazz! is not only a musical powerhouse but also a cultural ambassador. Its size allows it to perform in diverse settings - from summer concerts at the Chattahoochee Nature Center and the Woodstock Lantern Festival to small combos bringing jazz to audiences who might never set foot in a concert hall.

“The Georgia Symphony Orchestra is proud to celebrate not only our deep roots in Marietta and Cobb County, but also the ways our music connects with

audiences across the region and beyond,” said GSO Executive Director Suzanne Tucker. “We’re excited to spotlight GSO Jazz, whose artistry and energy set the stage for a season filled with memorable performances and to celebrate the 20th season of GYSO Jazz.”

GSO Artistic Director Timothy Verille added, “Opening our 75th season with the power and spirit of jazz honored the joy and energy that this music brings to audiences.”

Sam Skelton adds a message for GYSO Jazz alumni, current members, and the community, “We could not have done any of this without them.”

A Lasting Note
As GSO Jazz! and GYSO Jazz celebrate this milestone year, they do more than mark time - they make music that matters. From seasoned professionals to aspiring young artists, the ensembles continue to inspire, educate, and uplift. In the words of Rachel Ragan: “Keep playing. Even if it’s a community band or at home for fun.”

With Sam Skelton at the helm and a legacy built on excellence, the future of jazz in Georgia sounds brighter than ever.





Congratulations, Georgia Symphony Orchestra on 75 wonderful years!

At Chattahoochee Tech, we’ve dedicated over six decades as a proud community partner to building a vibrant place to live and work.



We offer over 50 programs in Health, Technical, Business & Computers, Arts & Sciences, and Public/Professional Services, including

Accounting
Commercial Truck Driving
Criminal Justice Technology

Environmental Science
Horticulture
Marketing-Real Estate

Paralegal
Precision Machining and Manufacturing
Social Work Assistant

Apply Now at
www.ChattahoocheeTech.edu

A Unit of the Technical College System of Georgia. Equal Opportunity Institution.



AS PROUD SPONSORS
OF THE ARTS
THROUGHOUT THE COMMUNITY
WE CONGRATULATE THE
GEORGIA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA
ON

75

YEARS
OF ARTISTIC
EXCELLENCE



THE MANELY FIRM, P.C.

All Family Law, All Around The World.

866-595-9654 | www.allfamilylaw.com

A JOURNEY THROUGH TIME

From its very first concert in 1952 to today’s dynamic performances, the Georgia Symphony Orchestra has grown hand in hand with our community. Step inside to explore a timeline of unforgettable moments, remarkable leaders, and the music that shaped generations.

This special section traces the GSO’s story — a legacy 75 years in the making.

Marietta Community Symphony begins under the auspices of the Marietta Music Club	Practice begins with 16 musicians; Don Everett becomes the first conductor	Betty Shipman Bennett joins as conductor serves until 1989	Woman’s Guild of Marietta Community Symphony composed of members of the Junior League	Marietta Music Club ends
1951	1952	1955	1966	1972
Name changes to Cobb Community Symphony, Inc.				Georgia Council for the Arts names CSO “best community-based ensemble in Georgia”
25th Anniversary Season - 50 members, five concerts (1975-76)	Name changes to Cobb Symphony Orchestra, Inc.	Steven Byess selected as new conductor	Season moves to Stillwell Theatre at Kennesaw College	
1975	1985	1991	1993	1995

Love

the way
you hear with
**personalized
hearing care.**

Your hearing is as unique as a fingerprint. That’s why at HearingLife, we provide personalized hearing care and custom solutions to help you get the most out of your hearing — and life.



Book a
FREE
Hearing
Test*



ASK ABOUT OUR SPECIAL FINANCING OFFER†

 **HearingLife**
866.299.7899
hearinglife.com

*See office for details. †Subject to credit approval.

Visit one of our 7 convenient locations:

Douglasville • 8657 Hospital Dr., Suite 101
Douglasville • 3415 Hwy. 5, Suite A
Kennesaw • 3940 Cherokee Street, Suite 407
Marietta • 999 Whitlock Ave., Suite 8
Roswell • 600 Houze Way, Suite B-3
Smyrna • 4585 South Cobb Drive S.E., Suite 400
Woodstock • 300 Creekstone Ridge

When calling, mention code AH0Q-11

CSO performs in
Super Bowl XXXIV
halftime show

2000

First Celebrity
Luncheon

2001

Michael Alexander
selected as new
conductor

2003

Georgia Youth
Symphony Orchestra
(GYSO) begins

2006

Establishes CSO
Chorus with Bryan
Black Director and
CSO Jazz with Sam
Skelton Director

2007

Name changes to
Georgia Symphony
Orchestra, Inc.

2011

Establishes
educational
partnership with
Marietta City
Schools

2015

First Sensory Friendly
Concert

Timothy Verville
named new
Music Director

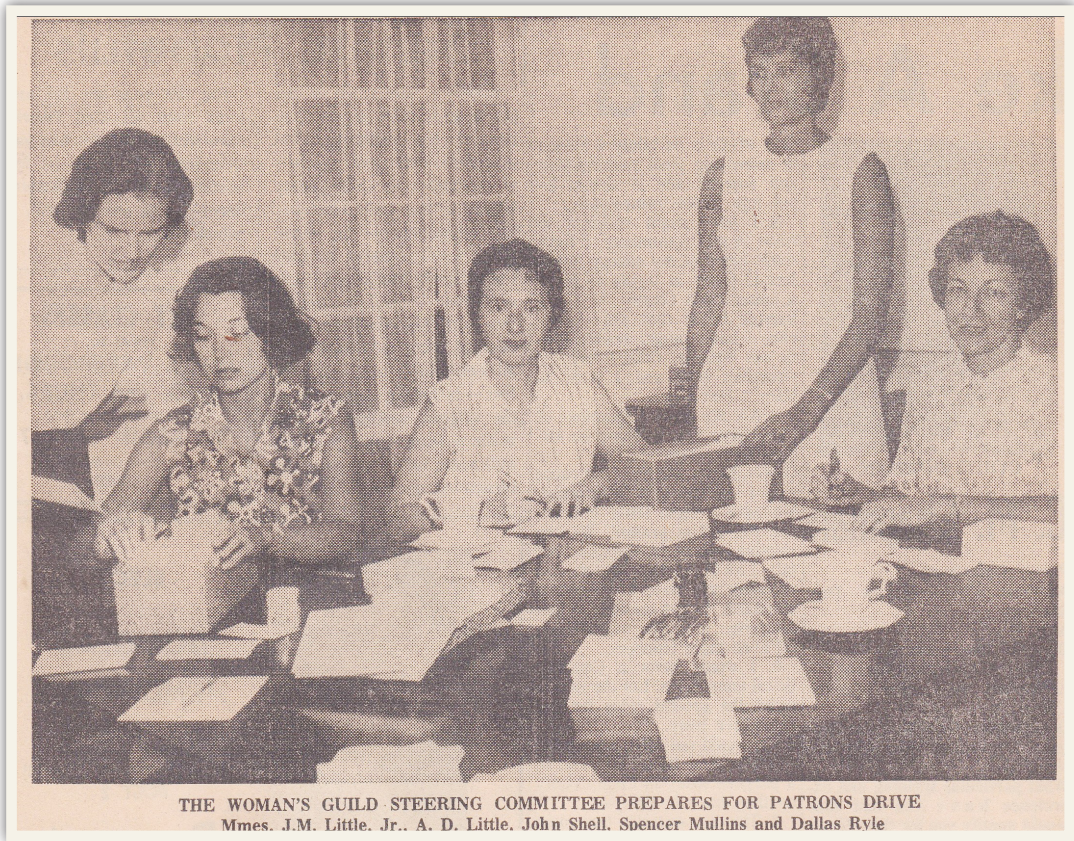
2016

GSO creates
season-long 30+
episode Symphony
in the City

2020

GYSO receives
\$1 million
endowment from
the Bobbie Bailey
Foundation

2021



THE WOMAN'S GUILD STEERING COMMITTEE PREPARES FOR PATRONS DRIVE
Mmes. J.M. Little, Jr., A. D. Little, John Shell, Spencer Mullins and Dallas Ryle

MDJ File Photo

The Marietta Symphony Womens Guild steering committee, featured in the Sept. 4, 1966 edition of the Marietta Daily Journal.

GSO Classics Series
moves to Bailey
Performance Center

2023



75 YEARS
STRONG

Congratulations GSO

75TH

on Your Anniversary!



JIM GLOVER,
REALTOR®
*Former Chairman of the
Georgia Symphony*
c. (770) 630-6477

JEFF DeJARNETT,
*Sr. VP, Managing Broker &
Former Music Educator*
o. (770) 422-6005

Luxury
Living,
Orchestrated
Flawlessly.

Like a symphony,
your real estate
journey should
be harmonious,
seamless,
and perfectly
composed.



Voices in Harmony

GSO Chorus's journey from local roots to global stages

By **Bryan Black**
GSO Chorus Director

The sound of an orchestra combined with symphonic chorus is a unique artistic partnership that has delighted audiences and inspired composers across the centuries. Over the past seventy-five years, the GSO has partnered with various local school, church, and community groups to present beloved choral and orchestral masterworks. After such a collaborative performance of Brahms' Requiem, conductor Michael Alexander approached Bryan Black with the idea of establishing the GSO's own chorus to attract exceptional amateur singers and broaden the orchestra's repertoire. Since its launch in 2007, the chorus has grown rapidly, evolving in both artistry and size to number over 100 voices. The chorus's recent tour to the UK and Ireland in partnership with the Uzee Brown Society of Choraliers exemplifies this evolution, showcasing the GSO Chorus's ability to unite diverse singers, collaborate across cultures, and create transformative musical experiences both locally and internationally. Chorus member Bliss Peterson described the anticipation before the tour, noting a mix of excitement and trepidation — the two ensembles were limited to only a handful

of combined rehearsals, and members did not know each other well. Yet at the final rehearsal before departure, she sensed “the birth of an energy that would define the entire experience.” Over delicious food at the last group potluck lunch, she reflected, “I knew we were going to have fun; I did not yet understand the transformation that was about to occur.” From the first moments abroad, the ensemble, together with supportive spouses and friends, merged musically and emotionally into a unified whole, all sharing “the singular goal of using our music to spread a message of unity, inclusion, and peace wherever we went.” By the end of the trip, many echoed Bliss's feeling: “I've never been so exhausted and so happy at the same time.” Beth Collier, another chorus member, highlighted the connection between performers and audiences. In Wales at Llandaff Cathedral, she spoke with a local couple who explained that many concert attendees came “because this is our neighborhood,” welcoming the chorus as guests. In Dublin, the Cuore



Bryan Black

DID YOU HEAR?

You'll have many chances to experience the GSO Chorus in concert throughout the orchestra's 75th anniversary season — visit georgiasymphony.org for details.



Singers from the GSO Chorus and the Uzee Brown Society of Choraliers



Michael Alexander and Dr. Oral Moses

abroad, she recalled: “To see these audiences from the UK and Ireland singing along with us... sometimes with tears in their eyes, is an experience I will never forget.” The tour was remarkable both on and off stage. Bliss noted the goodwill among nearly 100 people traveling together in two enormous buses: “It seemed unusual to have spent 10 days trying to move 100 people around the UK and for there to be truly no issues... no complaining, no cliqueness,

no drama. Just a lot of love, new friendships formed, and memories to last a lifetime.” Beth reflected on the professional inspiration the tour provided: “In our combined rehearsals, we explored new strategies for sound production and diction under the direction of Dr. Brown and Dr. Black...performing in historic spaces with acoustics that revealed many more layers of the performance.” Bliss added that the bonds formed allowed the ensemble to delight not only in performing together but also in cheering each other on as separate ensembles presented their pieces in concert. Although the tour's ending was bittersweet, the deep connections have endured and set the stage for a landmark occasion next year: the GSO Chorus and Uzee Brown Society of Choraliers will reunite at the Woodruff Arts Center for Mahler's Resurrection Symphony under Maestro Timothy Verville. The combined 2025 Tour celebrated the joy of singing together, the bonds forged through shared purpose, and the profound impact of music beyond the stage. As the GSO celebrates 75 years—and nearly two decades of the GSO Chorus—the tour embodied the shared legacy of excellence, inclusivity, and community. Together, the orchestra and chorus demonstrate that music, in the hands of dedicated singers and visionary leadership, is both a gift to audiences and a powerful bridge across cultures, generations, and communities.



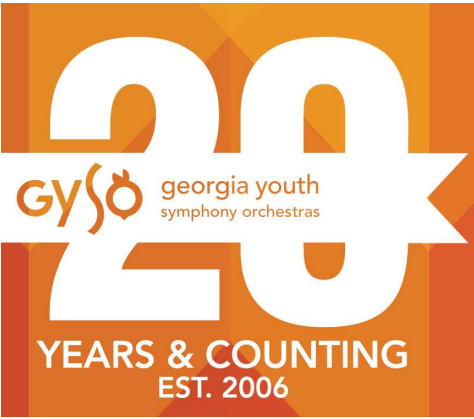
Dr. Uzee Brown conducts combined singers from the GSO Chorus and the Uzee Brown Society of Choraliers.

A Community in Concert

20 years of student impact at GYSO

By **Adam Stensland**
GSO Board Member

When the Georgia Youth Symphony Orchestra takes the stage, it resonates with more than sound. Each performance reflects decades of community building, shaping youth lives through the gift of music. The mission is clear: to “inspire young people to discover their full potential through creativity and performance.” Now in its 20th year, GYSO stands as both an inspiration and a launching point for its members' futures—whether in music or beyond. GYSO began in 2006 as a bold experiment, hoping for 50 students and welcoming nearly 200. From the start, its difference was clear: young musicians could perform



across diverse ensembles, from symphony and chamber groups to jazz and string quartets, while working with instructors of the highest caliber. Since then, more than 2,000 students have passed through its ranks, making it the largest youth symphony in the South. Yet the measure of GYSO's impact is not in size but in transformation. Behind every polished performance lie hours of rehearsal, resilience, and collaboration — lessons that serve students for life. Students often describe GYSO as a turning point in their personal growth. One alumna shared, “When I joined GYSO, I thought I was just signing up to play music. What I found was confidence. Standing in front of hundreds of people taught me to believe in myself.” A clarinetist reflected on the friendships forged through rehearsals and sectionals: “It was the first place I truly felt part of a community. We weren't competing—we were building something together.” Even alumni who pursued non-musical careers say the skills endure. A 2007 graduate, now a product designer at Google, ex-



DID YOU HEAR?

Don't miss the excitement as the Georgia Youth Symphony Orchestra kicks off its season with two dynamic concerts on November 2 at 3:30 and 7:00 p.m. Tickets are available for just \$10 at gyso.org!

Fall Auditions are open now through October 19! Discover your potential through creativity and performance, and build the discipline and spirit to accomplish your musical goals! Audition information can be found at gyso.org/audition



As GYSO celebrates two decades, its story is not just one of musical excellence, but of lives changed. **Above:** Michael Alexander conducts the GYSO.

Confidence, Belonging, and Hope For many, GYSO is more than an ensemble — it's a safe place to belong. One alum put it simply: “In middle school, I didn't feel like I fit anywhere. GYSO gave me a home. It showed me that what I loved had value.” Others emphasize how music became a way to process life's challenges. “High school is stressful. GYSO was where I could breathe, focus, and remember why I loved music in the first place.” The impact extends into careers. Whether alumni become educators, engineers, artists, or doctors, they carry with them a toolkit built in rehearsal rooms: confidence, collaboration, and the courage to take the stage. As GYSO celebrates two decades, its story is not just one of musical excellence, but of lives changed. Thousands of young musicians have discovered their voice, their confidence, and their community here. The notes may fade at the end of a concert, but what endures is the strength students carry forward—the ability to listen, to lead, and to believe in themselves. That is GYSO's true legacy: not only shaping musicians, but shaping people.



Life is a Symphony. Join ours.



Good Mews is metro-Atlanta’s first **cage-free cat shelter**—a safe haven for cats to roam freely until they find their forever homes.

Adopt Donate
Volunteer



THE GREAT CATSBY GALA
Every cat deserves a great story.

A UNIQUE WAY TO SUPPORT GOOD MEWS

We’re counting on Atlanta’s music lovers to help us hit a high note!
Step up as a sponsor or donate a unique auction item to make our event unforgettable!





Capital City Bank has helped to build stronger communities through the arts since 1895. Our bankers proudly support Georgia Symphony Orchestra’s 75th anniversary season of musical excellence.

www.ccbg.com



More than your bank. Your banker.

A LASTING PARTNERSHIP

The GSO and Kennesaw State University

By Suzanne Tucker
GSO Executive Director

From the days when Betty Shipman Bennett first balanced her duties as conductor of the community symphony with her teaching at Kennesaw Junior College, the Georgia Symphony Orchestra has shared deep ties with what is now Kennesaw State University. Over the decades, as the college grew into a major university, the orchestra evolved alongside it — both shaping and reflecting the cultural life of Cobb County.

Fitting for an organization rooted in music education, many of the early activities of the Marietta Music Club centered around fundraising for scholarships. Recitals, luncheons and galas all helped send students to prestigious music camps and to local schools like Kennesaw Junior College. For countless students, Kennesaw became the gateway to orchestral music, with many continuing on to perform in or support the symphony itself.

One of the final acts of the Marietta Music Club was a donation of its remaining funds to Kennesaw Junior College to purchase a piano — a gift that symbolized a shared commitment to music education that endures today.



Above: A GSO concert at Kennesaw State in 2011. Right: Marietta Music Club seeks Kennesaw Junior College students to play with the symphony in this archived 1972 article.

ment to music education that endures today. Over the years, KSU sponsored free GSO concerts for children, welcomed GSO and Georgia Youth Symphony Orchestra (GYSO) ensembles into its facilities, and provided a home for the youth symphony's growth.

Faculty members from KSU frequently appeared as soloists with the orchestra and instructors for GYSO students, enriching performances and strengthening the bond between the academic and performing arts communities.

The partnership gained fresh momentum with the arrival of Michael Alexander. Hired in 2003 as Music Director of the then-Cobb Symphony Orchestra, Alexander quickly found himself at the center of a pivotal moment. At one of his first concerts, the concerto soloist happened to be the wife of Peter Wittey, then chair of KSU's Department of Music. Impressed by Alexander's performance, Wittey encouraged him to apply when KSU launched a search for its first Director of Orchestras. Before the program's creation, string students at KSU had played with the Cobb Symphony to fulfill their ensemble requirement. Alexander was instrumental in developing the orchestra program at KSU while also rebuilding and expanding the GSO-KSU collaboration, ensuring that both institutions would stand together as cornerstones of music in Georgia.

That partnership is thriving in the present. "Our relationship with the GSO shows what's possible when education and performance come together," said Jawshing Arthur Liou, Dean of KSU's Geer College of the Arts. "We're opening doors for students to learn, perform and lead, preparing them for meaningful careers in music

while also strengthening the arts across Georgia."

Today, the GSO calls KSU home for its Classics Series concerts and as the base for GYSO, one of the largest youth orchestra programs in the Southeast. "The Georgia Youth Symphony Orchestra is proof of the power of this partnership," said Nathaniel Parker, Director of Orchestral Studies at KSU, GYSO Artistic & Executive Director, and GSO Associate Conductor. "With KSU as its home, young musicians from across the region find not only a place to grow their artistry and technical skill but also a direct connection to higher

education and professional music-making."

The relationship extends beyond performances: KSU students gain hands-on training through the orchestra's internship program, while a new Fellowship initiative will give top-level KSU orchestra players the chance to sit side-by-side with GSO professionals, experiencing the real-world demands of a symphony career. Key figures at KSU continue to play leading roles in the GSO's artistic life: In addition to Nathaniel Parker serving dual roles at KSU and GSO, Sam Skelton, Director of Jazz Studies, leads GSO

Jazz! and GYSO Jazz and Edward Eanes serves as Professor of Musicology at KSU and has played with the GSO for over 25 years, currently serving as its Concertmaster. KSU music faculty still serve frequently as soloists with the orchestra, coaches and clinicians for GYSO and members of the symphony and jazz ensembles.

"The legacy Kennesaw State University and the Georgia Symphony Orchestra both share for music in this state really reflects a vision we both believe in: inspiring the next generation of musicians and helping keep the arts vibrant and alive in our region," added Dr. Nathan Nabb, Director of the Bobbie Bailey School of Music at KSU.

Together, the Georgia Symphony Orchestra and Kennesaw State University are building the next generation of musicians — and carrying forward a partnership rooted in history, education, and a shared vision for the future.



Michael Alexander conducts while he orchestra performs "Miss Saigon."

A tribute to Dr. Siegel

Cobb Symphony Orchestra performs concert

Olivia Noland
News editor

The Marietta Parks and Recreation Department sponsored a free concert by Cobb Symphony Orchestra as a tribute to Dr. Betty Siegel Aug. 27.

The concert, a Glover Park Concert Series, was held in downtown Marietta Square at 8 p.m.

"The event represents the Cobb Symphony Orchestra's desire to provide a free concert to the community and honor Dr. Betty Siegel for her years of service to KSU," Dr. Michael Alexander, conductor, said. "KSU has been a huge supporter of the GSO, and we want to show our appreciation."

Alexander is also the KSU Orchestra Director.

Many guests from the community honored Siegel throughout the night. She gave a short speech about mid-way through the performance and told the crowd about her first experiences in the community.

She said she and her husband, Joel Siegel, walked around Marietta Square and bought chocolates at a nearby



Siegel mingles with crowd before concert.

Siegel said. A few of the musical pieces played at the concert included "Liberty Fanfare," "Slavonic Dances," "Hymn and Triumphant March," "Concerto de Aranjuez" and "Miss Saigon."

"Dr. Siegel, we hope that in your retirement, you will be

ans stand when their affiliation was called out during "Stars and Stripes," "Washington Post" and "Armed Forces Salute."

The Cobb Symphony Orchestra will have 15 performances this year.

Guest artists will include Alan Baer, Principal Tuba of the New York Philharmonic,



Robert Henry, Director of Piano Studies at Kennesaw State, performs "Rhapsody in Blue" with the GSO in 2024.

Rediscover Music

For those aspiring technicians and technologists who have suffered the typical dwindling of musical experience after high school, the Marietta Community Symphony may provide a convenient return to a thoroughly satisfying avocation.

After a slow beginning as the Marietta Music Club in 1951, the Marietta Community Symphony began a steady growth in 1955 with the hiring of Mrs. Betty Bennett as conductor. The orchestra obtains funding from a regular Patrons Drive and now schedules five annual concerts usually performed at Kennesaw Junior College.

The orchestra practices weekly on Mondays from 8:00 to 10:00 p.m. at Wheeler High School in Marietta. Although the regular members of the orchestra are amateur musicians, some performances do include guest professionals. While an orchestra always needs good string players, there is a particular need for trumpet players at the present. For more information, call Mrs. Bennett at 428-5275.

Help us write the next movement.

For 75 years, the Georgia Symphony Orchestra has endured and thrived because this community believed in the power of music and came together to sustain it against all odds.

Today, it's our turn to be those heroes. As we celebrate this remarkable legacy, we invite you to rally once again—so that the music continues to inspire, uplift, and unite for the next 75 years.

Your gift today ensures that the story of our symphony is still being written.



Give Today.



A LOOK BACK

CHURCH STREET Chronicles

The Georgia Symphony Orchestra’s past, reimagined through historical fiction

By **Paige Perkins**
GSO Contributor

The girls and I were having brunch the other day at Phyllis. Have you been there? Oh, you must go — it’s lovely. Over a plate of biscuits, they asked me about the Georgia Symphony Orchestra turning 75. And you know, it’s hard to forget the day it all began.

Oh, where are my manners? I didn’t introduce myself! Just like the GSO, I’ve had many names, given at birth and twice at the altar. But, my friends call me Pert. That goes all the way back to my daddy who said I was “‘Pert near Perfect” and it just stuck. They say I’m the longest serving member of the Georgia Symphony Orchestra, and after all these years, I suppose I’ve earned that title.

THE VERY BEGINNING

Back in those early days, we met as the Marietta Music Club in Mrs. Arthur Moor’s parlor. Music clubs were a big thing at the time, and the Marietta Music Club was considered as fine as any in Atlanta.

At my second meeting, Mrs. Moor announced she’d like to invite a few musicians to the meetings so we could sing hymns. She put a small advertisement in the Journal, inviting musicians to the next meeting. I think we were hoping for maybe a trumpet player and a violinist to show up.

On the day of my third meeting, I decided to walk the few blocks between my house and Mrs. Moor’s. As I got closer I began to notice more and more people walking with me carrying all manner of instrument cases. By the time I got to the house there had to be 30 or more people in the front yard! It seemed every musician in Cobb County had decided to take us up on the offer to play. Mrs. Moor asked me to help move more chairs into the front room so they’d all have a place to sit. Everyone quickly gave up their seat because it’s easier for a tenor to stand than a trombonist!

Now, it wasn’t perfect, but it was more than we had ever expected. We sang and sang that day and made plans for us all

to meet again. And, that’s how it all started.

THE MUSICIANS

As the years rolled by, the orchestra grew like a Tulip Poplar — fast and furious. In the first thirty years, nearly a thousand volunteer musicians passed through. They came from all walks of life and musical backgrounds. Music teachers and retired military band members...we had students and professors sitting side by side, with many going on to make a professional career of their talent. And, just because it was a volunteer didn’t mean they shied away from challenging pieces. Oh no!

There’s one performance I remember vividly. We were in the new Arts Theater, with Haydn’s Concerto in C Major featured. The cellist was a professor from Georgia State, and was quite notable. It was transcendent and by the end I found myself in tears. A handkerchief appeared from behind my right shoulder, which I gladly accepted. It wasn’t until the lights came up for intermission that I realized it was a man’s handkerchief.



Paige Perkins is a writer who was fortunate to be raised with master story tellers. A longtime Atlanta resident, she considers the opportunity to help tell the story of the Georgia Symphony Orchestra a true gift. It melds together her love of music along with the best of the Southern story-telling traditions.

More about that later!

Today’s orchestra is a rare hybrid — volunteers and professionals together. Truly the best of both worlds.

THE CHORUS JOINS IN

Now, I’d be remiss if I didn’t mention the GSO Chorus. The whole reason we invited musicians to Mrs. Arthur Moor’s house so long ago was because we wanted to sing hymns, and we thought it would be nice to have some musicians play along. It took a minute for the Chorus to arrive, but boy when it did it was something special.

They’re a volunteer group of talented folks who perform with both the orchestra and by themselves. A few years back they performed Carmina Burana and they brought the house down. We were all on the edge of our seats. You can’t help it! I

felt like I was in the middle of a movie it was so majestic. I can’t even remember how long that standing ovation was but I know I jumped to my feet immediately.

THE WOMEN’S GUILD

Of course, the music didn’t happen without a lot of behind-the-scenes work. From the moment I helped set up chairs at Mrs. Arthur Moor’s house for the Marietta Music Club, I was dedicated to the cause. In 1966, the Junior League helped form the Women’s Guild, and you’d better believe I signed right up. We set up chairs, folded thousands of programs, sold tickets, ushered and sometimes turned out the lights at the end of the night. My old Buick had an extra large back seat and trunk, so I was assigned to chauffeur Bassoonists and Bass players if needed! We called ourselves the “fifth section of the orchestra,” and we meant it.

SEVENTY-FIVE YEARS LATER

Now here we are, seventy-five years later. The orchestra has grown to include jazz, the largest youth symphony in the Southeast, and a world-class chorus. But through all the change, one thing has stayed the same: the people — onstage and off — who pour their hearts into every note, every program, every ticket, every smile in the lobby. Excuse me, but it just makes me emotional thinking about it. .

Now I don’t want you to think that I boohoo at every performance because I don’t! But, it does speak to the power of the music and the musicianship that this Georgia Symphony Orchestra and Chorus brings to every concert. Whether it’s their profession or their personal passion, every member of the orchestra and chorus brings a light to that stage that is just magical. Now, I’m tearing up again. Just know if you sit by me I always have Kleenex.

Until next time, stay out of treble! Pert



An archival photo from 1950.

DID YOU HEAR?

Whatever happened to the Cobb Symphony Orchestra?

By **Suzanne Tucker**
GSO Executive Director

If you’ve ever wondered, “Hey, whatever happened to the Cobb Symphony Orchestra?,” the answer is simple: we didn’t disappear...we just got a new name and a bigger family.

Back in 2006, a bright new idea was born — the Georgia Youth Symphony Orchestra (GYSO). It attracted talented young musicians from all over north Georgia. By 2011, GYSO needed a parent organization to help it grow. The Cobb Symphony Orchestra stepped up.

Here’s where things got confusing: two orchestras, two names, one organization. Audiences and parents alike scratched their heads. Were we Cobb? Were we Georgia? Were we both? (Yes!)

To clear things up — and to reflect that we’d grown far beyond Cobb County — we adopted one unified name: the Georgia Symphony Orchestra (GSO).

So if you hear “GSO” and think, “Oh, I used to go to your concerts when you were the Cobb Symphony!” — you’re right. That was us then, this is us now. Still your hometown symphony, still making music that moves you — only now with a wider reach, a bigger chorus, and a youth symphony family that’s thriving.

The Cobb Symphony Orchestra didn’t vanish. It just grew up, spread its wings and started answering to a new name.

From the Archives

Introducing ... the Georgia Symphony Orchestra

Name change signifies orchestra’s regional reach

By **Laura Braddick**
lbraddick@mdjonline.com

KENNESAW — The Cobb Symphony Orchestra is changing its name to the Georgia Symphony Orchestra.

It’s a change that has been in the works for years, said Todd Youngblood, chairman of the board of the nonprofit symphony. The new name — which will be

formally announced at tonight’s concert — signifies the orchestra’s regional reach, he said.

“We are very excited about it, obviously,” he said. “We’re ready to reach out to folks in other parts of the state not served by symphonies.” Next January, for instance, the orchestra is scheduled to perform at Reinhardt University in Waleska.

But the orchestra is not abandoning the county where it was born, music director Michael Alexander said. Its performance

home will remain at the Murray Arts Center on the campus of Mount Paran Christian School.

“Our home base is always going to be Cobb,” Alexander said. “Our goal is unquestionably to continue to grow. As an arts organization, one of the most dangerous things you can do is become stagnant. We want to keep pushing the envelope.”

As arts organizations across the country are facing financial difficulties due to declining numbers of patrons and donations, Alexander

said the local orchestra’s success can be attributed to its innovation.

“A modern symphony orchestra is different than what it was 50 years ago,” he said. “It’s important to get that message out. The symphony is an interactive experience. It’s not stiff. We hate the phrase ‘high art.’ We believe art should be accessible to all, and that’s reflected in everything we do.”

Since its founding in 1951 in the Marietta home of Arthur F.

See **Orchestra**, Page 5B

This article was featured in the May 7, 2011 edition of the Marietta Daily Journal.

KENNESAW STATE UNIVERSITY

GEER COLLEGE of the ARTS



2025-2026 ARTSKSU

PROFESSIONAL SERIES

Atlanta Symphony Orchestra

December 19, 2025 | Morgan Concert Hall

Delfeayo Marsalis & KSU Jazz Ensemble I

January 24, 2026 | Morgan Concert Hall

Hubbard Street Dance Chicago

January 30-31, 2026

KSU Dance Theater on Marietta Campus

Kronos Quartet

February 20, 2026 | Morgan Concert Hall

Tickets on sale now at
ArtsKSU.com



**KENNESAW STATE
UNIVERSITY**
ROBERT S. GEER FAMILY
COLLEGE OF THE ARTS

Proud supporter of
Georgia Symphony Orchestra
and **Georgia Youth Symphony Orchestra.**



BRAVO, GEORGIA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA!

POWERING THE SOUNDTRACK OF COBB FOR 75 YEARS

For 75 years, the Georgia Symphony Orchestra has enriched the cultural fabric of Cobb County and beyond.

From stirring symphonies to electrifying performances, their dedication to the arts has powered generations of inspiration.

As we celebrate this milestone, we're proud to honor their legacy – and reflect on our own. For 87 years, we've been privileged to serve our members, this vibrant community, and the people and institutions that make our community shine.

