



The Topeka Symphony Society  
P.O. Box 2206  
Topeka, Kansas 66601-2206

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**PAID**  
Permit No. 272  
Topeka, Ks.

**PLAYER PORTRAITS  
SPECIAL EDITION**

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"Allegro" is published by the Topeka Symphony Society.

The Topeka Symphony is sponsored in part by the Kansas Arts Commission, a state agency; the National Endowment for the Arts, a federal agency; Washburn University, and .ARTSConnect. The Topeka Symphony is grateful to Washburn University for the use of rehearsal and performance space.



**National Symphony Orchestra**  
**Leonard Slatkin, Music Director**  
**8:00 p.m. Friday, March 23**  
*White Concert Hall*  
**Tickets: \$25 or \$30 (full-time students half price)**  
**Call Kathy or Molly at 785-232-2032**  
 Presented by the Topeka Symphony Orchestra and the Kansas Arts Commission  
**Have you purchased your tickets?**

### Annual Meeting Notice

The Annual meeting of the Topeka Symphony Society will be held at 7:00 p.m. April 17, 2007  
Petro Allied Health Center—Room 226  
Washburn University Campus

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## Music for Northeast Kansas

Volume 48, Issue 5

Topeka Symphony Orchestra

John Wesley Strickler, Ph.D., Music Director and Conductor

March 2007

### **Final 2 Concerts!**

*The Wild, Wild West*

**March 31, 2007**

*Judy Coder & Pride of the Prairie*

Pre-Concert Chuckwagon Buffet

(Reservations Required!)

*Mediterranean*

*Holiday*

**April 21, 2007**

*Coming Soon...*

*2007-2008*

*Season Info*

*We are pleased to present the fourth "Player Portrait" available only to you—our loyal season ticket subscribers. Included in this edition are some of the families who perform in the TSO. We are also excited to include a very special portrait of the National Symphony Orchestra.*

*As you know by now, Kansas has been selected as the site of the National Symphony Orchestra's 2007 American Residency from March 22-30. Inspired by our own Music Director and Conductor, John Strickler, and at the invitation of the Kansas Arts Commission, members of the NSO will participate in education and performance activities throughout the state. They are initiating the residency right here in Topeka on March 23 with a full orchestra concert at White Concert Hall.. So, we thought...why not give you a portrait of this premier orchestra from Washington D.C.?*

*Don't forget to call Kathy or Molly at 785-232-2032 to purchase your tickets for this special concert!*

*Dave Azwell, violin*

He has been blowing a lot of hot air for a long time. A member of the TSO's **trumpet** section for 27 years, **Peter** Stern has been playing trumpet since age 12. He is a founding member of the Topeka Brass Quintet which began in 1979. Peter has a BA in Psychology with a Music minor from Northwestern University. He completed post-graduate work in Music Therapy at Willamette University and earned a Masters of Business Administration from Kansas University. Peter was a Music Therapist at the Menninger Clinic for eight years. For the past 15 years, he has been Executive Director of the Kansas Independent Pharmacy Service Corporation. Peter is married and has a son and daughter. He enjoys **fly fishing**, playing tennis, attending concerts (jazz or classical) and theatre productions with his family. Peter is also an Orchestra Representative to the TSO Board, representing the Brass section.

She's been bangin' around for some 20 years on various percussion instruments. For eight of those years, **Andrea** Michel-Cox has been playing in the TSO **percussion** section. She has a BA in Music from Washburn University and works as a retail supervisor. Andrea has two children and enjoys reading, music, art, horses and **farm life**.

You can count the number of instruments on one hand that **Rob** Banks plays...harp, piano, organ, clarinet and saxophone! For 21 years, Rob has been the TSO **harpist**. Rob earned a Bachelor's degree in Music Education from KU where he majored in voice and minored in piano. He also has a Masters in Library Science from Emporia State University and is currently Deputy Director of Operations for the Topeka and Shawnee County **Public Library**. Rob has been married for 30 years, has two children and enjoys cooking.

At the age of twelve, **Melissa** Robinson began playing the **French horn**. At fifteen, she won her first competition and has since been featured soloist with bands and orchestras worldwide. Melissa has pursued many different aspects of horn performance from soloist to teacher to clinician. She received degrees in Horn Performance from Northern Iowa and Yale and is currently working on her PhD at Kansas University as well as teaching and performing. This is Melissa's first year with the TSO but she is a 21-year veteran horn player. It's not all work with Melissa, as she enjoys cooking and **Martial Arts**.

## Family Portraits

This musical husband and wife duo, **Stephen and Ginger** Patterson, have been long time members of the Topeka Symphony—Ginger since 1976 and Stephen for a total of 27 years. Stephen plays trumpet and Ginger plays **bassoon**. Both are very active in local music groups, having played in numerous brass and woodwind quintets, Marshall's Civic Band, and the North Topeka Community Band, which was founded by Stephen. He is also its principal conductor. Ginger earned a Bachelor of Music degree from Washburn University and is an active member of **Sigma Alpha Iota** International Music Fraternity. Also a graduate of Washburn, Stephen has a Bachelor of Music degree in **trumpet** Performance and Music Education as well as a Masters of Music Education and Doctor of Musical Arts from Kansas University. Both Ginger and Stephen have taught music and related music courses. Ginger has been a faculty member at St. Matthews Catholic School and a substitute in USD 345. Stephen is adjunct music professor and teaches music theory and general music courses at several colleges in the area. Ginger's full-time job is as the Executive Secretary for the Kansas Department of Agriculture and Stephen is a full-time **Commander** of the 35th Infantry Division Band of the Kansas Army National Guard. It is a musical family with both children also involved in various forms of music from singing to playing instruments.

**Steven and Larisa** Elisha, met and married right here in Topeka. **Concertmaster** Larisa and **Principal Cellist** Steven perform throughout the world with chamber and festival orchestras, as individual soloists, and as the Elaris Duo. The Elaris Duo was awarded "Musicians of the Year 2003" by the Kansas Federation of Music Clubs. Russian born Larisa holds degrees from the Academy of Music in Minsk, Belarus and a Doctorate from the Academy of Music in Wroclaw, Poland. Steven studied at Indiana University School of Music and has a Master of Music degree from Yale University School of Music. At Washburn University, Steven is **Director of String Studies** and Larisa is **Artist in Residence**. Steven conducts the Topeka Symphony Youth Orchestra and is Music Director of the Lawrence Chamber Orchestra. Larisa has been TSO Concertmaster since 1999 and Steven has been Principal Cellist since 2002. Both conduct master classes, present workshop sessions, and record CD's. Larisa and Steven have just completed a new CD of romantic favorites entitled "Amore."

Where do you begin? When it comes to family participation, this is it! Art "The Music Man" Sandquist, wife Carolyn plus daughters B.J., Signe and son-in-law Jeff Torrez have all played in the TSO at one time or another. Art, Carolyn and B.J. are current members of the orchestra while Signe and Jeff assist on occasion. They all played on the same concert most recently last season. Members of the Symphony for over 30 years each, Art and Carolyn play viola, both having started out on violin. After graduation from Topeka High, **Carolyn** toured Europe and spent a year in Germany before returning to Washburn University to complete a Bachelor of Music Education and Bachelor of Arts degree in German. **Art** graduated with a BS in **Biology** from Bethany College and a Masters of Natural Science from Oklahoma University. They both have been long-time educators in music and the sciences in the Topeka area. After retiring from teaching at Topeka High School, Art is now an adjunct professor at Washburn University; Carolyn has been active for years teaching Suzuki lessons for violin, **viola** and cello. Along the way, they have managed to participate in an assortment of music groups from quartets to orchestras. Art (remember "The Music Man"? ) is the TSO's music librarian and is responsible for preparing the music that TSO musicians use for every performance. Of course, Carolyn helps out!

**B.J.** started violin at age three, started **cello** at age five and has been playing cello for some 24 years. B.J. also graduated from **Topeka High School** and earned a Bachelor of Science in Anthropology in 1999 from Kansas State University where she was principal cellist for the KSU orchestra her junior and senior years. She went on to receive a Bachelor of Science in Biodiversity, Ecology and Biological Evolution from Kansas University in 2004. B.J. played in the TSO for several years while in high school, took a break while attending college, and returned to the orchestra in 2000 for a total of approximately 10 years with the TSO.

The Sandquist family consists of three grown children and two younger ones (under the age of 6!) Art enjoys traveling and gardening while Carolyn enjoys tennis, **sewing**, traveling and photographing their two youngest children. B.J. enjoys reading, being outdoors, cooking and playing with her cats. What can one say? Keeping it in the family is the watchword for the Sandquists! Music, Topeka High and Science.

**TSO musicians were born in or studied in many different countries.  
Keep track as you read Player Portraits!**

This  
Allegro!  
represents  
**217 years**  
of TSO  
participation

Most people dream of the Far East, but **Joanne** Field has lived it!! She started out on a farm in Osage, Iowa playing the **French horn** at age ten. During high school, she attended several music camps and took a tour to Japan. Following high school, Joanne enrolled at St. Olaf College in Minnesota and graduated with a Bachelor of Music degree in horn performance. Joanne returned to Japan, for the next few years, to study horn and **Japanese traditional music**. She also spent time in Taiwan, Hong Kong, Thailand and Graz, Austria. Joanne began advanced studies in horn performance as well as Japanese Language and Literature at the University of Wisconsin and also studied at the Japanese Language Institute at Middlebury College. Joanne has played horn in the TSO since 1984, played "in the pit" for Topeka Civic Theatre, and performed in brass and woodwind quintets as well as with the Washburn orchestra and symphonic band. She taught English as a second language, has been a reading teacher, worked at the Cat Association of Topeka and Topeka Natural Food Co-op. Needlework and gardening occupy what is left of her time! If you have to live life, Joanne's done it the right way.

## Featured Portrait: The National Symphony Orchestra

When Music Director Leonard Slatkin steps on the podium at White Concert Hall you will witness only the 5th NSO conductor in over 75 years. It all started when an ad hoc group of musicians played their first program on January 31, 1930 in DAR Constitution Hall, Washington D.C. Public response was overwhelmingly favorable and the NSO announced its first formal season of 24 concerts for 1931-32. Today the NSO is a full-time ensemble of 100 musicians, playing 175 concerts a year. Slatkin was preceded by Mstislav Rostropovich (1978-94), Antal Dorati (1970-77), Howard Mitchell (1949-69) and Hans Kindler (1930-49). The first NSO players were paid \$40 a week for three rehearsals and one concert every Thursday afternoon for five months of the year.

By all reports, the first conductor Hans Kindler was a difficult man. "He'd find your vulnerabilities and embarrass you in front of the whole orchestra," charter NSO violinist Milton Schwartz noted in a memoir of the orchestra's early days. Howard Mitchell was a very different character Ted Libbey observed in "The National Symphony Orchestra," his lively and authoritative history. Mitchell "personified the optimism that permeated Washington and America after World War II; he socialized, schmoozed and charmed the ladies of high Washington society..." Mitchell's conducting, however, was generally judged awkward and prosaic. Yet it was under Mitchell that the orchestra made its first overseas tour, spending the summer of 1959 in Latin America, playing 68 concerts in 19 countries.

By the time Mitchell stepped down as music director, relations between players and management were at an all-time low resulting in a bitter musicians strike. Antal Dorati to the rescue. A master conductor, Dorati set about promptly to remake the National Symphony Orchestra, instilling firm discipline and new pride. In 1971, Dorati oversaw the NSO's move from dowdy and acoustically challenged Constitution Hall into the brand-new Kennedy Center. But Dorati did not like the NSO board and the feeling was mutual. The board let him go, informing him of its decision only a few minutes before he was due to lead the orchestra in concert. There was a new prospect on the horizon who was widely considered the greatest cellist in the world and who had just made his American conducting debut with the NSO. The Rostropovich era is still controversial. Described as a brilliant and fitfully inspired amateur, the listener often had the sense that Rostropovich was operating on pure feeling. While emotional commitment is obviously an important part of making music, it could not compensate for a lack of technical control.

Four months after Leonard Slatkin took over in 1996, Kennedy Center Concert Hall was gutted for renovation. Previously the sound went out but it did not go across. It was entirely possible for two musicians to share the stage and never be able to hear each other, making it an enormous challenge for players and conductor to shape any kind of coherent performance. After the reopening, in late 1997, the NSO began to sound better than it ever had. Indeed, the early years of Slatkin's tenure will likely be ranked as essential periods of growth for the orchestra. It is a substantially different—and better—NSO than when he took over. So when it was announced that he would move on at the end of the 2007-08 season, Slatkin stated "The goals which I set when I began...will have been accomplished. The NSO now ranks amongst the world's great orchestras."

So, who will become the sixth music director of the National Symphony Orchestra? According to Tim Page, Washington Post Staff Writer, "the NSO will go for a conductor as different from Slatkin as Slatkin was from Rostropovich. An ideal conductor combines the best virtues of shaman, athletic coach, psychologist, casting director and traffic cop—planning programs, rehearsing the orchestra, inspiring the musicians to give their best, nurturing new talent and making sure that the various players' performances don't collide. ...May the orchestra's next 75 years be even more distinguished and exciting than its first.

*Excerpts from "The NSO: 75 and Counting Its Blessings by Tim Page, Washington Post Staff Writer; 9/4/05*