

The Gresham Symphony Part One: A Journey Through Time, Passion, and Musical Excellence



Nestled amidst the vibrant tapestry of Portland, Oregon, the Gresham Symphony stands as a beacon of musical artistry, enriching the cultural fabric of the community for over six decades. From its modest beginnings as a small ensemble to its current status as a renowned orchestra, the symphony's journey has been one of unwavering passion, dedication, and musical excellence.

The Early Years: A Seed of Musical Inspiration Planted

The genesis of the Gresham Symphony can be traced back to the mid-1950s when a group of dedicated musicians envisioned a community orchestra that would bring the transformative power of music to the residents of Gresham. With unwavering enthusiasm and a shared love for music, they embarked on a mission to create an ensemble that would resonate with the hearts and minds of all who experienced it.



The Gresham Symphony, Part One by Melanie Zuben

★★★★☆ 4 out of 5

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In 1960, their dream became a reality as the Gresham Symphony Orchestra performed its inaugural concert. This momentous occasion marked the beginning of a remarkable journey that would span over six decades and leave an enduring mark on the musical landscape of the region. Under the guidance of its founding music director, Dr. Robert Gray, the orchestra quickly gained recognition for its high musical standards and its commitment to community engagement.

A Symphony of Growth and Transformation

Over the years, the Gresham Symphony has experienced significant growth and transformation, evolving into the vibrant and dynamic ensemble

it is today. The appointment of Dr. David Sabee as music director in 1985 ushered in a new era of artistic excellence, characterized by adventurous programming and innovative collaborations. Under Dr. Sabee's leadership, the orchestra expanded its repertoire to include a diverse range of classical works, contemporary compositions, and cross-cultural collaborations.

In 2005, the Gresham Symphony embarked on a bold new chapter with the appointment of its first female music director, Dr. Holly Ovenden. A visionary leader with a deep passion for music education, Dr. Ovenden dedicated herself to fostering a lifelong love of music in the Gresham community. Under her baton, the orchestra strengthened its ties with local schools and community organizations, creating innovative programs that brought the joy of music to audiences of all ages.

Celebrating Six Decades of Musical Legacy

In 2020, the Gresham Symphony celebrated its 60th anniversary, a testament to its unwavering commitment to musical excellence and community engagement. Over the past six decades, the orchestra has performed over 1,000 concerts, reaching a cumulative audience of over 1 million people. Its performances have graced the stages of prestigious venues throughout the Portland metropolitan area, including the Arlene Schnitzer Concert Hall, the Newmark Theatre, and the Gresham Arts Plaza.

Throughout its history, the Gresham Symphony has enjoyed the support of a dedicated group of musicians, patrons, and volunteers who have played an instrumental role in its success. Their unwavering passion and commitment have ensured the orchestra's longevity and its ability to continue inspiring and enriching the lives of countless individuals.

: A Symphony that Continues to Resonate

The Gresham Symphony is more than just an orchestra; it is a vital part of the Gresham community, a beacon of cultural enrichment, and a source of inspiration for generations to come. Its journey through time, passion, and musical excellence is a testament to the transformative power of music and the indomitable spirit of those who believe in its power.

As the Gresham Symphony looks towards the future, it remains committed to its mission of bringing the joy of music to the community. With a renewed sense of purpose and a deep appreciation for the past, the orchestra will continue to innovate, inspire, and enrich the lives of all who experience its enchanting melodies.



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