

SKAGIT SYMPHONY



*Board of Directors
Handbook*

History



Skagit Symphony - McIntyre Hall

2014-2015 edition

The History of Skagit Symphony

As early as December 1961, the Skagit Valley College Community Orchestra was under the direction of Charles Easton, music director at Mount Vernon High School. Mr. Easton conducted the orchestra until May 1976. The orchestra then was mostly strings and they rehearsed one night a week. For special occasions, Mr. Easton brought in wind players for a full orchestra.

From the fall of 1976 until May 1979, the orchestra was under the direction of Mr. Norm Graham, another music instructor with the Mount Vernon School District. The orchestra continued to rehearse once a week as a chamber orchestra.

During the summer of 1979, David Phipps and Vicki Archer solicited musicians for a tri-county orchestra to perform a summer concert. They named themselves, the Skagit-Island-San Juan Orchestra and included woodwinds, brass and percussion players.

In the fall of that year, David Follingstad (head of the SVC Music Department), Vicki Archer, David Phipps and Norm Graham met to discuss the continuation of the orchestra that had been formed in the summer. David Follingstad appointed Vicki Archer as the new conductor and the Skagit Valley Symphony was born.

From the fall of 1979 until the summer of 1989, Ms. Archer conducted and served as Executive Director of the symphony. The organization at that time was under the auspices of the Musical Arts Board, a branch of the Skagit Valley College Foundation. The symphony hosted such guests as Gary Karr, Glen Yarborough, Cliff Lenz, the Morca Dance Theatre and Victor Borge in 1985 for the opening of the new college pavilion. In the fall of 1989, the Musical Arts Board disbanded when Ms. Archer resigned. Upon her resignation from her position of conductor, Dr. Paul Stoner, an emeritus music professor from Western Washington University, was hired as her replacement.

In 1992, Dr. Stoner retired as conductor and the symphony separated from the SVC Foundation to form an independent, nonprofit organization managed by a volunteer board of directors. Ms. Kathleen Ash Barraclough was then hired to serve as music director/conductor. During her time at the podium, Skagit Valley Symphony became Skagit Symphony.

Upon the departure of Ms. Barraclough at the end of the 2004-2005 season, the Board of Directors hired Roupén Shakarian as interim music director/conductor. Following an exciting and successful season that featured Skagit Symphony's "Opening Night" at the new state of the art, McIntyre Hall, on the campus of Skagit Valley College, Mr. Shakarian accepted the Board's offer and dropped the "interim" from his title.

The rest of the history of Skagit Symphony is yet to be written. With its new home, McIntyre Hall, and new director, the Symphony is starting a new chapter. Over 50 musicians from Whatcom, Skagit, Island and Snohomish Counties join together to meet the Symphony's goal of bringing wonderful music to this beautiful area of the state.