

# 'Study Group' Grew Into Philharmonic Orchestra Unit 29 Years Ago

Apart from the frailty of human memory, perhaps one of the real reasons why the origin of the Tuscarawas County Philharmonic Orchestra is so obscure is the fact that the organization, now celebrating its 29th consecutive season, was never a mobilized group.

According to charter members Lucille Mann, Mrs. Al Boffo and Charles Barkett (who incidentally are still active in the orchestra) the Philharmonic blossomed as a full-fledged performance group during the summer of 1935 in Tuscora Park.

Prior to appearing publicly, the orchestra personnel as early as 1933 had contented themselves with playing mostly for their own amusement and edification as a "study group."

## Clockmaker Had Problem

In 1936, Doverite Charles Harmon had the urge to build a grandfather clock. He wound up with 3,100 separate pieces in a clock made of walnut cedar, poplar and hedge wood. Not entirely satisfied with his first work, he built a second one consisting of 250 pieces.

The 2 were valued at nearly \$1,500 at that time and described as being extremely beautiful, standing 7 feet 6 inches tall. Various designs, such as one depicting Father Time, were inlaid. He purchased the fine works, tiny electric lights and other delicate parts.

Married and the father of 3 children and employed by the WPA, Harmon stated he was interested in finding a market for the 2 clocks before beginning a third.

Reports, in addition, were presented on various musical topics by the members and technical difficulties peculiar to the stringed instruments were discussed.

Officers were elected from

the ranks in those early days, and a Dr. Ollom became the orchestra's first president in 1933. Practices were held for a time at the Grace Lutheran Church and later moved to the YMCA.



Conductor Gilbert Roehm

Orchestra enthusiasts from Port Washington, Sugarcreek, Uhrichsville, Newcomerstown, Massillon and Coshocton made weekly treks to enjoy the pleasures of performing great music — even if there wasn't an audience to applaud their efforts.

The orchestra's first concert owing to public demand became nothing less than a command performance. This solid beginning is perhaps the biggest reason for the orchestra's long-lived popularity with local music lovers of all ages.

Statistically, after being founded in the mid-thirties by Gilbert Roehm, the Philharmonic Orchestra was briefly taken under the protective wing of Works Projects Administration and later by the United Community Fund. In 1940 it experienced its first re-organization.

An executive board was created, along with the entrance board, whose chief duty was to screen orchestra new-

comers. Rev. Paul Ebert became president of the society under the new organization.

Old programs stir up the dust of poignant memories. Listed are the names of many former players, among them the late Dr. C. L. Tinker, Dr. Earl Shaweker and Charles Knisély.

Dovers Mayor, LeMoyné Luthy and Police Capt. Joe Zahler once blew up a storm in the brass section.

Other personalities continuing to serve the orchestra include Mrs. C. Foster (Lucille) Flora, Mary Lenk and Hope Maus, also a charter member of the organization.

During the war years and up until 1963 Roehm continued to man the podium. A Philharmonic Camp was developed at Leesville Lake to encourage the area's young people to take an interest in the arts.

In 1963 a new conductor and artistic director in the person of Eugene Kilinski of Cleveland was hired to take over the

reigns of the Philharmonic Orchestra.

Kilinski, a skilled violinist, is assistant professor of music at Western Reserve University in Cleveland.

## Ugliest Woman

The following article — a kind of "Believe It or Not" item — appeared in the Iron Valley Reporter (Daily Reporter's ancestor) on Dec. 18, 1880.

"The ugliest woman in Dover Township has sent us word that she is going to give us a button. Soon as it arrives, we will give you her name, and if you don't agree with us that she is ugly enough to give a baby the cramp colic, we will treat. Send along your shirt-button, Sis."

The button probably refers to the once-popular button-type tin picture which could be pinned to a person's clothing, much like the political campaign buttons of today.

The new conductor received his bachelor of arts and master of music degrees from the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, and has also studied conducting at the Berkshire Music Center, Tanglewood, Mass. Formerly conductor of the Shreveport La. Symphony and the Lawrence College Orchestra in Appleton, Wis., he additionally served as director of the 9th Troop Carrier Command Band in Europe during World War II.

Since becoming a member of the Western Reserve teaching staff in 1957, Kilinski has directed the University Chamber Orchestra and Summer Symphony, and has conducted productions of modern opera at the 1959-60 May Festivals of Contemporary Music sponsored by the Cleveland Museum of Art.

Kilinski, along with being the conductor-artistic director of the orchestra is held directly responsible to the executive board and must report periodically. He is to arrange, pro-

gram and prepare notes for all the scheduled concerts and is responsible for the selection of prominent and capable guest artists for appearances with the orchestra.

Kilinski supervises all phases of activity relating to orchestra personnel, library and instrument maintenance and repair and is to be chief spokesman for the orchestra, its needs and projects in contacting real or potential supporters of the organization.

A few of the objectives of the Tuscarawas County Philharmonic orchestra is to enhance the cultural climate of the area, by providing the opportunity for people to perform and hear worthwhile, stimulating and edifying musical literature.

It is to provide adult, post-high and proficient high school musicians with a higher level of musical experience than they could ordinarily expect singly, in small groups or in public school organizations, and to heighten the appreciation and understanding of good music.