

Gary Sheldon'70

Gary Sheldon graduated from Bay Shore High School in 1970. He subsequently attended the Juilliard School (B.M. 1974) and the Institute for Advanced Musical Studies (D.M. 1975) in Montreux, Switzerland. Four prestigious conducting fellowships followed, with the St. Louis Symphony where he studied with Walter Susskind and Leonard Slatkin; at the Aspen Music Festival where he studied with Jean Morel; at the Berkshire Music Center at Tanglewood where he studied with Leonard Bernstein and Seiji Ozawa; and at the International Music Seminar in Weimar where he studied with Kurt Masur.

Maestro Sheldon has held conducting positions with the Syracuse Symphony, New Orleans Symphony, Columbus Symphony, Marin Symphony, Syracuse Opera Theatre, Ballet Met and Spoleto Festival. He is currently artistic director of the Lancaster Festival in Ohio and principal conductor of the Festival at Sandpoint in Idaho. He is also principal guest conductor for the San Francisco Ballet.

Gary Sheldon has been especially dedicated to music education, presenting symphony concerts to children and families. In 1995, he developed a young peoples' concert series based on the popular Carmen Sandiego© software game and television show that has introduced classical music and the symphony orchestra to thousands of children across the United States and Canada.

As well, he has founded two youth orchestras which have given so many music students their first opportunity to play in an orchestra. The New Orleans Symphony Youth Orchestra counts among its alumni, the teenaged Wynton Marsalis and Branford Marsalis who performed under Maestro Sheldon's baton. In 2007, Sheldon founded the Jewish Community Youth Orchestra in residence at the Jewish Community High School of the Bay in San Francisco.

Gary Sheldon has also dedicated his career to supporting the work of American composers, many of whose works he has performed and premiered at composer's symposia with the Marin Symphony and Lancaster Festival Orchestra. He recently recorded a CD of music by Pulitzer Prize winner

William Bolcom, including two previously unrecorded works: *Ragomania!* and the Clarinet Concerto with soloist Richard Stoltzman.

Maestro Sheldon is the recipient of several awards. In 1996, he received the Bill Graham Memorial Award from the Marin Cultural Museum for *Distinguished Service To The Arts*. In 1986 he won fourth prize in the Stokowski Conducting Competition and in 1982 he captured third prize in the BBC-Rupert Conducting Competition in London.

Sheldon is also composer and arranger in his own right. His ballets *Cole* and *Butterfly* based on the music of Cole Porter and Puccini, have been widely performed. His *Klezmer Medley* for concert band and *Jerusalem of Gold* for chorus and orchestra are published by Transcontinental. He has arranged charts for pop stars including Kenny Loggins, JoDee Messina and Patti Austin.

Gary's wife Janet, *née* Hanks, is a former ballerina with the San Francisco Ballet School. They have two children together, Ruby and Jacob. His sister Leslie graduated in 1972. His mother Ruth, *née* Kline, graduated from Bay Shore High School in 1947. His father, Dr. Richard Sheldon, was chairman of the science department at East Islip High School for many years.