

# Musical Maestro

*Steven Karidoyanes has been the conductor of the Plymouth Philharmonic Orchestra for the past 22 years. The orchestra is celebrating its 100th anniversary this season.*

***After standing on the podium with the Plymouth Philharmonic for so many years, how do you keep things exciting and fresh?***

When I was in my seventh year with the Phil, I decided to throw down the gauntlet to myself. I set a goal that I would go 15 seasons with the Phil without repeating a song. The reality is that the orchestra has gotten so much stronger and so musically curious that even after 22 years we seldom repeat anything from our history.

***How do you determine what the orchestra will perform each season?***

Programming is as important to me as execution. I grew up in the restaurant business so you'll have to forgive the comparisons to creating a menu. It has to be a balanced meal. It has to be something you want to eat. You

need to find that core and balance. When I'm programming our concerts, I'm programming for our audiences. I know that it's the songs with emotion that really move them. I need to make sure that everything we play reaches listeners at their core.

***What is a typical day like for you during the Phil's concert season?***

My day is spent studying the music and taking phone calls for fundraising or friend raising. Trying to read music to evaluate if it's the right thing for us. I always work on the current concerts and the next season's concerts. We're usually 18 months out with our planning.

***What is the biggest challenge of your job as conductor?***

One of the hardest things to do is start an orchestra, harder still is keeping

it going. It's hugely expensive to do the things we do, and the only way it works is if well-meaning neighbors collectively put their money where their mouths are. So between rehearsals and concerts I make sure that I thank our donors and show them what their money did.

***Is it difficult orchestrating so many musicians?***

The big misconception people have is that they look at an orchestra and they see this big organic beast that breathes and plays together. It's important that we do that technically but more important that we never forget that we're dealing with individuals. When rehearsing, it's important to always treat people well and make sure nothing you say is personal unless it's praise, because we're all in this together.

BY MARIA ALLEN | PHOTOGRAPHY BY DENISE MACCAFERRI





*What have you done to help capture the attention of young people/community members?*

Lots of things. Years ago, I learned it's not just about going to a concert, it's about audience engagement. We find lots of ways to get children to participate. We do a family concert each year. We founded the Plymouth Children's Chorus in partnership with the music teachers of the Plymouth public schools. "Take 5" is something we started last year that engages students (usually during the morning announcements/homeroom block) by having them listen to five minutes of orchestral music, five days a week for five years. I defy anybody to find an orchestra with twice our budget that has the things we offer for education.

*What do you have planned for the Holiday Pops this year?*

In December, we're doing something we've never done before. The orchestra is going to accompany a 26-minute animated feature film called "The Snowman" that is based on a British children's book. South Shore children's author Brian Lies is going to be the narrator. We're supersizing everything that we're doing for the centennial and this is one example of that.

*Do you always have songs running through your head?*

What's that term? Ear worm? My favorite composer is the one we're performing next, and that's what I hear in my head. I have to know everyone's part, and how the music is going

to project in a concert hall. It is very funny. I laugh at what's in my head. It's visceral for me. I walk to a beat when there's no beat.

*What are your goals for the future?*

I believe that music can make a difference to the community. My goal is to make sure that every concert we do is about audience development and that we choose pieces of music that grab people's attention and make them come back. While I am ambitious and I enjoy guest conducting for other orchestras, the Plymouth Philharmonic is going to be my career job. Unless they throw me out, I want to see how far I can take it. I am invested in the Phil and the communities we serve, so we're good for a while. 🌱



### **Holiday Pops Featuring "The Snowman"**

The Plymouth Philharmonic Orchestra and conductor Steven Karidoyanes present Holiday Pops, a festive program featuring a wide variety of seasonal favorites. Local children's book author and illustrator, Brian Lies, narrates "The Snowman," a short, animated holiday film set to live orchestral music—a magical experience for all as the music and story come to life. The Federal Furnace School Treble Chorus lends their angelic voices to three festive holiday concerts, while an annual March of the Toys charity toy drive and jolly guest from the North Pole round out this special holiday treat. Performances are December 12 at 3 p.m. and 8 p.m. and December 13 at 3 p.m. \$20-65. Memorial Hall, 83 Court St., Plymouth, 508-746-8008, [www.plymouthphil.org](http://www.plymouthphil.org)