



# OVERTURE

PICKING UP WHERE WE LEFT OFF 🎵 MARCH 2021

## DEAR FRIENDS OF THE KVSO

**While we remain steadfast in our commitment to filling our community with beautiful music, we have undoubtedly missed so many people and events over this last year**

Our last in-person concert was at Olivet's Centennial Chapel on February 29, 2020. The program was "Romantic Classics" and the orchestra played selections from Beauty and the Beast, Phantom of the Opera, Romance #2 in F and Bohemian Rhapsody. It was a magical evening and who among us would have guessed that the world was about to change? It did and here we are, one year later.

KVSO viewed the year 2020 as an opportunity to be creative. Many of our orchestra members performed at the popular "Concerts in the Parks" series during August and September in Kankakee and Manteno, at the Kankakee Farmer's Market and at two churches. Regretfully, with COVID-19 restrictions, rollbacks, etc., we were not able to perform indoors during the winter months.

However, the sounds of spring are starting to fill the air and we have GREAT NEWS TO SHARE... KVSO quartets and/or quintets will perform hour-long concerts at Cobb Park in Kankakee on June 27, July 11, July 25 and August 8 and at the Kankakee Farmer's market on July 3. The best news is that, in partnership with Kankakee Community College, we are planning a tentative program for the 4th of July 2021. Full details of all performances will be posted as soon as they are available. Find and [Like us on Facebook](#) and please continue to check our website at [kyso.org](http://kyso.org) for updates. Thank you for your support!



**Lynn Ahlden** **Allan Dennis**  
*President* *Music Director*

### From the Women's Guild

The Kankakee Valley Symphony Orchestra Women's Guild, with 13 active members and a few dedicated and helpful associates, has managed to stay afloat during this period of inactivity, having cancelled our spring style show last year along with the ever-popular Symphony of Sweets in December. In lieu of these events, we sponsored a "No-Show Dinner", which generated a profit of \$4,600 to date. We were delighted with the success of the fundraiser. Look for a similar non-event of this type in the future, at least until we can gather again, vaccinated, masked and safely.

It is our hope that a future update will find the Women's Guild still thriving and anticipating getting back to active participation in raising funds for the orchestra, the purpose of our existence. We have conducted business by email and Zoom but look forward to an in-person meeting soon and a return to gathering safely to support the KVSO in every way we can.

**Vicky McBurnie**

### From the KVYSO

We have celebrated 20 seasons of the Kankakee Valley Youth Symphony Orchestra and now its 2020-21 season has been called a "Season of Exploration".

New ways to rehearse were introduced. The strings were separated from the brass and woodwinds and sectional rehearsals were held in Olivet Nazarene University's band room or tent while social distancing or via Zoom. Taking temperatures, disinfecting stands and mask wearing became part of the routine. Our KVYSO musicians and conductor, Katrina Cessna, made the best of this situation.

Then on Sunday, December 13, string players, as well as a montage of flautists, trumpeters and trombonists, performed a concert to an empty St. Paul's Lutheran Church sanctuary.

Thankfully, our videographer, George Kwain, caught these skilled performers and you can still enjoy this performance by [clicking here](#).



KANKAKEE VALLEY  
SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

## NEWSLETTER



**Dr. Allan Dennis**  
KVSO Music Director



**Katrina Cessna**  
KVYSO Music Director



**Lynn Ahlden**  
KVSO President



**Vicky McBurnie**  
Women's Guild



**Barbara Schwark**  
KVYSO Committee  
Co-Chair



**Junell Hoekstra**  
KVYSO Committee  
Co-Chair

The performance was dedicated to the memory of KVYSO's first conductor, Maurice Wright. His boundless enthusiasm and vision helped make the Kankakee Valley Youth Symphony Orchestra what it is today. He will not be forgotten for his dedication and passion to making great music!

Thank you for your continued support of KVYSO. We look forward to providing quality music for your enjoyment!

### The KVYSO Committee





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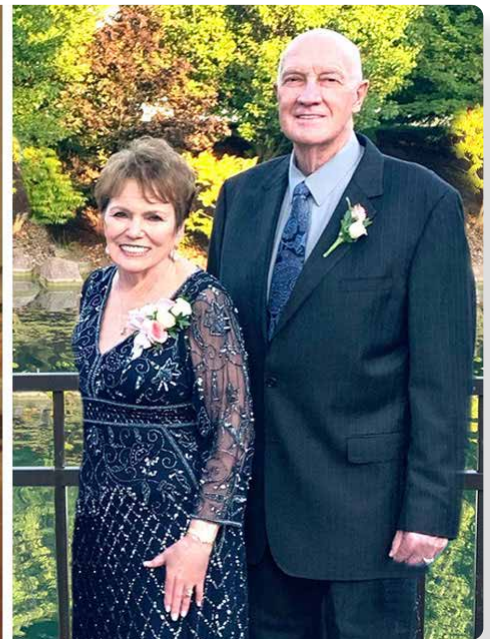


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supported by a grant from the  
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The Kankakee Valley Symphony  
Orchestra is a member of the  
American Society of Composers,  
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Kankakee County,  
the Illinois Arts Alliance and the  
Illinois Council of Orchestras.



## SYMPHONY SUPERSTARS

**The KVSO is eternally grateful to our featured benefactors,  
Warren and Sharon (Hamann) Ouwenga**

Sharon (Hamann) Ouwenga and Warren Ouwenga met in high school in 1962. Sharon and Warren began dating when Sharon was a junior and Warren was a senior at Manteno High School in Manteno, IL. They were married in March of 1965. Their first child, Ronald, was born in August of 1966. Over the next 9 years they had two daughters, Michelle (Sparrow) and Kimberly (Vilendrer) and another son, Dr. Michael Ouwenga (deceased 2019).

A tradition that Sharon started in their family was to create a Christmas card with a family photo and a short message about each person in their family. That was an easy task when there were just six people. Over the next 46 years, they were blessed with two daughters in law, two sons in law, 17 granddaughters, four grandson in laws and seven great grandchildren. Their family group now includes 37 people. They feel that it's a joy each year to send a Christmas card to their family and friends to share a tidbit of information about all 37 members of their family. They feel that they have been richly blessed. God is good.

During their 56 years of marriage, they started out in the vegetable farming business and diversified into a vegetable packaging business. After several years of packaging fresh vegetables for their company, Handi-Pak Foods and other companies, they started a business in 2014 in Manteno named Urban Farmer. Urban Farmer makes gluten free frozen products, mainly pizzas. Both Sharon and Warren worked tirelessly in all of the businesses for the past 56 years. In December of 2020, they sold Urban Farmer. They are not planning to start another business! When Covid 19 is no longer a threat, they are looking forward to attending and hosting symphony events, attending plays, grandchildren events, traveling and enjoying time with family and friends.

In 1984, Sharon was invited by a symphony women's board member to join the Kankakee Valley Symphony Women's Guild (formerly known as Kankakee Valley Symphony Women's Board). The purpose of the women's guild organization is to provide financial and organizational support for the Kankakee Valley Symphony Orchestra and to work with the orchestra in offering cultural and educational activities to the community. During the following 37 years of membership in the women's guild, Sharon was involved in a number of leadership roles in the women's guild and symphony fundraising activities.





Sharon served as president of the women's guild, vice president, secretary, treasurer, fundraising chair, style show chairman, event usher, etc.

For several years, Sharon chaired the committee for symphony of sweets, the major fundraising activity of the women's guild organization. She particularly enjoyed setting



up and decorating the sweets table with various heights of boxes underneath the table cloths to give the table a

dramatic appearance. She added sparkling lights under draping tulle situated over and around the boxes on the tables where desserts will be displayed. Lastly, about 30 of the most delectable homemade desserts were displayed for guests to bid on and take home. A memorable story comes to mind regarding the symphony of sweets fundraiser that was held at the Kankakee Country Club. The women's guild sweets tables were set up next to the kitchen. In looking at the tables, Sharon thought that the desserts were not being shown off as much as they should be. Sharon asked the club manager if we could change out the ceiling lights.

The Kankakee Country Club was very receptive. Sharon went to the store and purchased several high wattage spotlight ceiling light bulbs and installed them in the ceiling. It made a world of difference to show off the wonderful desserts. Of course, after the event was over, Sharon reinstalled the original light bulbs in the ceiling.

In the early years of the women's guild, we held the symphony of sweets event at local banks. In those years, we cleared out everything possible from the banks and set up our sweets stations. It was a great deal of work but lasting friendships were formed in those circumstances. Those were the times that our husbands helped enormously. We were thankful through the years to have the cooperation of our husbands, the local banks, KCC, BBCHS, Kankakee Country Club and Olivet Nazarene University. With the community working together, great things can be and are accomplished.

Since Covid 19 came, the Ouwenga's miss the beautiful music and working with and visiting with the people that they see at the events.

The KVSO is a very important element to the culture of the Kankakee River Valley. We are very fortunate to have an accomplished symphony orchestra in our area.

There are hundreds and hundreds of music students in our area. Many of them dream of being a part of an accomplished symphony orchestra in the future. On a personal level, we have 17 grandchildren who are all interested in music. We are sure that many of them will continue with music involvement in some form throughout their lives.

In thinking about the content of concerts that we would like to see the KVSO to pursue in the future, we feel that people attending the symphony concerts are very interested in the explanations that Dr. Allan Dennis, KVSO Music Director provides before some of the music selections. It is also enjoyable to hear some familiar music from musicals and of course the sing along of Christmas carols at the December concerts.

Submitted by Sharon Ouwenga



## UPCOMING CONCERTS

### MUSIC IN THE PARK

Join us at Cobb Park in Kankakee this summer!

June 27 | July 11 | July 25 | August 8

Performance times: 2 PM and 3:30 PM • Quartet or Quintet

Additionally, there will be a performance at the Farmers' Market in Kankakee on Saturday, July 3rd in the morning - time to be announced at a later date.



### Thank You to Our

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# MUSICIAN Q & A: Paul Germano

I miss making music with my friends in the orchestra.

I've been playing with many of these wonderful musicians for decades and miss the camaraderie we share in rehearsals and performances.



## Where do you live?

In the Riverview Historic District in Kankakee.

## What was your job?

I was Band Director at Limestone and Bonfield schools in the Herscher School District from 1980 until my retirement in 2010. Prior to that, I was Band Director in the Grant Park schools from 1977-1980.

## What are you doing now?

I deliver flowers for Busse and Rieck Flowers, Plants & Gifts, but like everyone else, I'm waiting for all of us to get the COVID 19 vaccine so we can all hopefully get back to some semblance of normalcy.

## Instrument you play in KVSO?

Trombone.

## How long have you been playing in the KVSO?

I joined in the fall of 1978.

## Do you have any memorable moments you would like to share?

There are so many memorable performances over the years that it's hard to narrow it down to just a few. I really enjoyed playing the Bartok Concerto for Orchestra in 2012, it has been a favorite of mine for years. I'm actually a sucker for patriotic tunes and the Armed Forces Medley that we do every July 4th so I'm looking forward to having a chance to play those again!

## What was the most difficult work KVSO performed from your point of view and why?

That would have to be the Stravinsky Rite of Spring that we did in the fall of 2019. Its one of those pieces that takes tremendous concentration due to the constantly changing meters and tempos and the fact that if you get the least bit lost, you're doomed! What was neat about it was that our concert performance was the best we had ever played it, so that was very rewarding.

## Since Covid-19 came, what do you miss most about KVSO?

I miss making music with my friends in the orchestra. I've been playing with many of these wonderful musicians for decades and miss the camaraderie we share in rehearsals and performances. Music is meant to be shared with others so no amount of individual practice can take the place of performing with other musicians. We were so happy and fortunate to be able to present the mini chamber concerts in the parks this past summer, but there's nothing like playing with and hearing the full orchestra. Once again, when all of this craziness is over, it will be great to make music for our wonderful audiences.

## Do you have any suggestions on what kinds of concerts/activities you would like to see KVSO do once we can get together again and perform?

Same as always, quality music performed at a high level.



## Contact the Symphony



THE  
KANKAKEE VALLEY  
SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

PO BOX 52 • Kankakee, IL 60901

(815) 214-9555

Email: [office@kvso.org](mailto:office@kvso.org)

Website: [kvso.org](http://kvso.org)



THE  
KANKAKEE VALLEY YOUTH  
SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

PO BOX 572 • Kankakee, IL 60901

(815) 334-7773

Email: [info@kvysyso.com](mailto:info@kvysyso.com)

Website: [kvysyso.com](http://kvysyso.com)

