



SHREVEPORT  
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ORCHESTRA

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## **NEWS RELEASE**

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*FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE*

### **SHREVEPORT SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA FOUNDER JOHN SHENAUT DIES**

December 3, 2011, Shreveport, LA—It is with great sadness that we report the passing of Maestro John Shenaut, founding Music Director of the Shreveport Symphony Orchestra. He died in Shreveport on December 2, 2011.

A vigil will be held on Tuesday, December 6, 2011 from 4:00 to 4:30 p.m. at Rose Neath Funeral Home, 1815 Marshall St., Shreveport. Visitation will follow from 4:30 to 6:00 p.m.

A funeral mass will take place at 11 a.m. on Wednesday, December 7, 2011 at St. Joseph's Catholic Church, 211 Atlantic Avenue, Shreveport.

Maestro John Shenaut was the founding Music Director of the Shreveport Symphony Orchestra, conducting the first concert at Byrd High School Auditorium on November 9, 1948. He led the orchestra for an astonishing 30 years, building it from scratch into a well respected ensemble, with the help of many community partners and supporters. In addition to his skills on the podium, he displayed an uncanny knack for identifying and presenting talented young artists who would go on to major careers, including both Van Cliburn and Eugene Fodor before they won the Tchaikovsky Competition and then went on to achieve international stardom. He was a strong proponent of the educational mission of the orchestra and helped to develop the diversity of musical offerings by the orchestra that can still be seen today. He was Co-Chair of the Nena Wideman Piano competition and a talented violinist in his own right.

Shreveport Symphony Orchestra musicians, including Concertmaster Kermit Poling and Principal Oboe Theresa Zale-Bridges, will perform in tribute at the funeral on Wednesday.

~more~

Maestro Shenaut is remembered with great respect and fondness by those who knew him:

*“Maestro Shenaut's impact on the cultural life of the Arklatex was deep and enduring. His work in founding, building and guiding the Shreveport Symphony Orchestra for many years touched the lives of thousands upon thousands of people, immeasurably enriching our community. I appreciated his personal warmth and encouragement, and will never forget his emotional appearance as conductor at the SSO's 60th anniversary concert in 2008. It is our hope at the Shreveport Symphony that we will continue to be worthy of the legacy he has left us.”*

~Michael Buttermann, Music Director, Shreveport Symphony Orchestra

*“Everything that the SSO is now came from seeds planted by John. I'm amazed when I think about what he accomplished from the very start. Years later, while he was still able, I never failed to see him at Shreveport Symphony performances and he was the first to share his delight. He cared deeply for the SSO and we will miss him dearly.”*

~Kermit Poling, Concertmaster, Shreveport Symphony Orchestra

*“John Shenaut was a great man of vision. He never thought of today: he had already thought of today yesterday and today he was focusing on tomorrow and five years hence. He was indefatigable! Learning was his passion and music was the core of his soul. He loved the Symphony, the Wideman Piano Competition, Shreveport, talent, his friends and family and most of all his wife. The ripples of his life in making the Shreveport Symphony the best symphony it could be have flowed all over the world. He was my friend and great mentor.”*

~Dr. Lester Senter Wilson, Executive Director, Wideman Piano Competition

Since its founding in 1948, the Shreveport Symphony Orchestra (SSO) has become Louisiana's oldest continually operating professional orchestra and one of the most respected regional orchestras in the United States. In August 2005, Maestro Michael Buttermann was appointed the fourth Music Director in the orchestra's 64-year history. For more information, visit [www.shreveportsymphony.com](http://www.shreveportsymphony.com).

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