



# Tributes for **STEPHEN & MELISSA OSMOND**

*Jackson*  
SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

2017

"Maestro, you got swing"  
Dizzy Gillespie, July 3, 1984  
Potter Center Music Hall

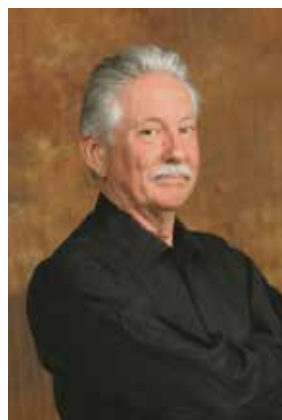


## Jesus Alfonzo

When my wife, my children and I moved to the beautiful State of Michigan in August of 1997, our purpose was the culmination of my doctoral studies at Michigan State University. We never thought that in the city of Jackson, a place where we lived for two and a half years, we would find a man and his family to give us guidance, help and generosity for the beginning of our future life in the United States. I met Stephen in October of that year when I played for the first time in the viola section of the Jackson Symphony Orchestra, and since that first meeting until today, we, the Osmond's and Alfonzo's have become a larger family, full of love, affection, understanding and sincerity.

Stephen: Today, when you successfully complete your mission as educator, promoter of music, and musical director with the Jackson Symphony Orchestra, your musicians, your friends and your audience, we only have words of thanks and admiration for your work, for your struggle and your constancy in the search of the best for this Michigan community.

*Assoc. Professor of Music in Viola, Chamber Music & Music History; Stetson University*



## Bruce Brown

Stephen, over three decades ago you asked me to compose a piece of music based on the words of Martin Luther King, and writing *Legacy of Vision* changed my life. Your willingness to take a chance then, and your receptive spirit toward all the pieces I had the privilege to write for the orchestra, gave me the safe and encouraging place that all creative artists need.

You never stopped working to make the JSO an integral part of our community, and that effort has paid huge dividends. You and Missy have provided so many thrilling moments for those of us lucky enough to be in the audience. There are many I will remember, like the

stunning performance of *Tosca*, with your powerful interpretation and her soaring voice.

Our lives are much richer because of the music, the joy, the meaning and the beauty you have brought to us. Mille grazie my dear friend!

*JSO Composer in Residence; Professor of Music and Music Department Chair - Spring Arbor University*

## Jan Butterfield Brown

The years of having a different conductor for each season or each concert were unsettling. Then you and Missy came along with new ideas, inspiration and a wealth of musical and business knowledge.

The first night you came to the JSO rehearsal. I remember thinking, "Wow cute. I hope he is as good a conductor as he is good looking". And you turned out to be that and more.

I remember the day I told you I would no longer organize and prepare food for rehearsals. You were devastated and said "What!! One of the reasons we draw musicians from other communities is because of your food." How sweet. However, you understood when I said I would rather spend time practicing. You were also understanding when it came to me bringing my grandbaby to work in an infant seat.

Stephen, I can't thank you enough for giving me a chance to share my music with the JSO for all these years. The orchestra has always been a constant in my life and the friendship with you and Missy will continue to hold a special place in my heart

*Long Time JSO Member and Supporter*



## John Cross

Truly Unique, Stephen demonstrates the classic traits of an "artist" including the ones we enjoy and those we learn to accept. Yet he somehow maintains a strong dose of "common sense" and practicality which he applies to issues resulting in great success for the JSO and his professional career. Thank You Stephen, for all your contributions to better our lives.

*Past JSO Board Chair; Financial wizard and entrepreneur*



## Joan Cummings

My words cannot adequately express the appreciation and love I have for Stephen Osmond, both as the Conductor of all the beautiful music performed by the Jackson Symphony and the Executive Director who has supported, humored and occasionally irritated me these past 16 years.

*JSO Business Manger*





## Robert C. Davey

Steve Osmond's tenure as Music Director of the Jackson Symphony Orchestra has been a blessing to all who love good music. Beyond that, Cynthia and I have enjoyed our friendship with Steve, Missy and their children. They are all remarkably talented, charming people.

*Emeritus Assistant Professor of Political Science, Retired Dean of Arts & Humanities, Jackson Community College*



## Rick Davies

I have been involved in one arts organization or another almost continuously for over fifty years. As an arts producer, performer, administrator, board member and funder I have dealt with artist managers of small organizations. Of that group there has been one, only one, artist-manager who was outstanding artistically, administratively and as a fund raiser: Stephen Osmond. The JSO will miss his talent and leadership. I will miss it, the community will miss it.

*Former President, Comerica Bank, Jackson  
Former JSO Board Chair*



## Carl English

Stephen - Secondary to the importance of your friendship is the gift of the talents which you and Missy have shared with the Jackson community. Although I had always been impressed with the long success of the JSO and your incredible tenure, after moving to Columbus, Ohio, the realization of your talents and achievements became even more vivid. I was on the search committee, there, for a new music director and after reviewing a hundred, or more, resumes, I realized how truly remarkable it has been for an orchestra and music director, in these times, to have achieved such prolonged success in the Jackson community. Clearly, the distinguishing difference, for the JSO, has been the combination of your artistic, leadership and organizational talents. I trust that you and Missy will continue to share your gifts with the community, as well as your friendship, for many years to come.

*Retired President, Gas Div., Consumers Energy; Former Chair, JSO Board of Directors*

## Tom Evanson

I have had the good fortune to work with Steve Osmond for over 20 years. I think it is fair to say that the combination of his passion, skill, energy, vision, resourcefulness and effort on behalf of the Jackson Symphony Orchestra and Community has been nothing short of amazing. The Community of Jackson and the Jackson Symphony Orchestra are significantly better-off culturally, financially and structurally due to his efforts. Happy Retirement Steve.

*President, TKT Consulting, Inc.; Former JSO Board Chair*



## Georgia Fojtasek

“We also have a Conductor in Residence and a fine Symphony Orchestra for a community our size.” In moving to Jackson in 1989, little did Travis and I know how much this added “sales message” would come to mean to us over the years.

Stephen and Missy have given us the gift of their talents while also amazing us with the array of guest artists who are their friends and colleagues, and perform in Jackson because of respect for the Osmonds. This alone, would be enough, yet being the caring people they are, Stephen and Missy have invested in the community and enhanced our quality of life.

Stephen and Missy have loved us. And our love for them is returned ten-fold.

*President and Chief Executive Officer, Henry Ford Allegiance Health*



## Paul Ganson

All the supporters of the Jackson Symphony Orchestra: its musicians, its leaders, its listeners, its contributors and its patrons have now the enviable task of continuing the forty year tradition of the Osmond Era, insuring thereby its ever-burgeoning future.

*Detroit Symphony Member*

*Premiere Advocate for American Orchestras*





## Arthur Greene

My friend Stephen Osmond is the most passionate musician I know. Playing with him has been memorable every time, especially considering what has been happening with the classical music world in general; I perceive typical modern performances as standard and washed out - perfect, but lacking in meaning. Not so with Stephen! He gets to the heart of the music, and brings it to vivid life! Thank you, Stephen.

*Professor of Piano, University of Michigan  
Gold Medal winner, William Kapell and Gina Bachauer  
International Piano Competitions*



## Ron Griffith

Stephen has enriched our lives during his tenure at the Jackson Symphony Orchestra in so many ways one finds it a challenge to list them all. When first meeting him I was struck by his passion for the arts and how it benefits and enhances the individual. Stephen's ability to steer the orchestra in its creative programming, recording ventures, education and outreach activities, have indeed placed our community in an envious position.

When one looks at conductors who excel in their positions, they are respected for their talent and skill but first and foremost, their abilities to inspire not only the musicians but also the audiences. Stephen has done that for us! Our community continues to benefit from his vision for and value of an arts organization like the JSO and how it enhances the individual but also the economic impact on our community.

It has been an honor, joy and blessing to have served Stephen as a board member and chair emeritus of the Jackson Symphony Orchestra. Stephen truly exemplifies the title "Maestro", defined as a title of extreme respect.

In the words of Bob hope, "thanks for the memories" of your 40 years of leadership. You have and continue to enrich our lives.....wishing you the best!

*Special Assistant to President-External Relations, Spring Arbor University*

## Arthur Henrie

Steve Osmond is very talented musician in addition to being an astute business entrepreneur.

He has produced a product high in entertainment, a stellar source of musical education, and a most valuable asset to Jackson and the surrounding area. All this must be preserved and continued for as long as possible.

*Former CEO of CISCO; Long Time JSO Board Member*



## Diane Martin Johncock

No mere collection of words can adequately cover the scope of the importance Stephen has been to the life of the JSO. As one who was part of the rag tag handful of music teachers and local musicians, rehearsing in a Jr. High band room when he came aboard, I can only gratefully marvel at the growth, the enlarged community presence, the financial stability, and the excellent standard of music performance he developed and maintained over the past four decades. And, while doing that, he managed to keep the “community” spirit alive within the symphony, making rehearsals fun and enjoyable, as well as productive. He builds a relationship with his players, which inspires them to reach beyond their limitations to produce amazing performances for him.

It has been a great ride. A ride I feel privileged to have been on, and a ride I shall surely, surely miss.

*Retired Classroom & Music Teacher; Member of the JSO since 1976 (41 years)*

## Donna Lake

I have to admit, that there was a time when I did not care to listen to classical music. Then, some 25 years ago, Stephen and Missy came into our lives, and taught me how diverse and magical classical music is. Now, our entire family has turned into solid music lovers of all genres! The Lake Family would like to wish Stephen and Missy many years of happiness as they take leave of the JSO, and we look forward spending fun filled days together with them as the work load lessens for each of us.



*Jackson Public Schools Outstanding Educator of the Year, 2002  
Past President of the Jackson Symphony Guild, 2011-13*



## Bob LaZebnik

Stephen Osmond's passion for music has been a positive force in Jackson's cultural life for the last 40 years. He has been a catalyst for progress in Jackson County serving on the JPS school board for 8 years. While other great orchestras folded over the decades for lack of funding and audience, the JSO grew in size, stature and sold-out seasons under Stephen's baton.

One of Osmond's strengths is programming music for concerts. His creative seasons have educated JSO patrons in classical music, introduced them to live opera and ballet, to the works of local artists and composers, and to world-class musicians.

Stephen is blind to race, gender, sexual orientation, and immigrant status. Although he has a laser focus on skill and the professionalism of JSO musicians, he treats them with kindness and respect. Maestro Osmond organizes massages during rehearsals, supper before rehearsals and concerts.

His considerable people skills have attracted competent professionals to the JSO board, and have transferred ownership of the JSO to the people of Jackson. The JSO audience has responded by opening their homes to post-concert parties where listeners and musicians meet.

Stephen Osmond has created positive change in the community. With his very talented wife, Melissa who is a stunning performer in her own right, they continue to work to make Jackson a wonderful place to raise a family. He and Missy are great hosts and party guests and a loyal friend to many. And did you know this Eagle Scout directed Meryl Streep and performed on stage with Sigourney Weaver at Yale?

*Former CEO, Airmaster Fan; Real Estate Mogul*



## Louis Magor

Congratulations to the J.S.O.'s Maestro Extraordinaire. I've had the privilege of conducting the orchestra several times over the last four decades, and have always admired Stephen's devotion to excellence, both musical and managerial. His taste is impeccable, and his inventive programming have become a hallmark of this fine ensemble.

*Conductor, Pianist, Impresario and Teacher  
Seattle, Washington*



## Phil Mason

It was my good fortune to have played in the Jackson Symphony Orchestra during all of Stephen Osmond's tenure. In over a thousand rehearsals and hundreds of concerts I had the opportunity to experience Steve's great gift for creating an atmosphere in which music making can be both meaningful and fun. Year by year he increased the performance level of the orchestra and as a result was able to program works that previously would not have been possible. He also stretched the minds and ears of both orchestra and audience to accept non-traditional works, without forgetting the standard classical repertoire. He deserves a huge amount of gratitude and respect for all he has done.



I am particularly grateful for the relationship which Steve helped develop between the JSO and Albion College, sharing concerts and giving our students the chance to experience more of the great musical literature.

Steve and Missy Osmond have been a major part of Coral's and my life for the past forty years, giving us countless musical high points and a personal friendship which we greatly appreciate. We wish them continued success and happiness in the years ahead and hope to see them often, using their exceptional talents in service to the community.

*Concertmaster Emeritus, Jackson Symphony*

## Dani Meier, PhD, MSW

I've had the pleasure of knowing Stephen since the 1970s when he studied conducting with my father, Gustav, at Yale University. As my father moved west to Rochester's Eastman School of Music and then on to U of M, Steve continued to work with him, landing Steve eventually with the JSO to the great benefit of the community.

After decades of our living many states apart, it was one of life's happy coincidences that when I moved to Jackson, I ended up living just a block away from the Osmonds. And our friendship was rekindled.

Many can attest to Steve's musical talents. Jackson has been blessed to have his creativity, artistry and leadership at the JSO. Paralleling



that work, Steve gave to the community in other ways as well. As a 19 year employee of Jackson Public Schools, I was also grateful to have Steve's leadership on the JPS School Board. When, in 2000, students formed a Gay-Straight Alliance at Jackson High (the first in Jackson county), Steve led the Board with courage, standing up for students' rights despite internal and external threats. In so doing, he helped this town evolve into a more tolerant and inclusive community.

Again in 2005, Steve extended his generosity of spirit (and space) to Jackson, allowing me to utilize the JSO's downtown building to host a nationally recognized photographic exhibit on the Sudan. It offered the community a powerful glimpse into a war-torn country on the other side of the world, something that Jackson residents wouldn't have otherwise experienced.

Shortly before my father passed away just 8 months ago, I arranged for Steve to pay him a last visit in the hospital. My father—a man who taught conducting for half a century to talented students from around the world—had a special place in his heart for Steve, and I know it brought them both bittersweet joy to see each other. My father reflected on that visit more than once in his final days.

I'm grateful to call Steve my friend, a friend who's much like a brother. Congrats on your retirement, Maestro. Bravo.

*Chief Clinical Officer, Mid-State Health Network; JPS Social Worker, 1994-2013*



## Craig Richard Nelson

I met Stephen Osmond in 1982 at a restaurant in Ann Arbor. At the time I was told I was recognized because I looked important! Later, it was revealed to me that it was actually because I appeared snooty and smug. In reality, I was looking for the buffet.

The important thing is, we met! And boy, am I glad we did. Steve gave me the opportunity to stage opera and narrate concerts and even try my amateur hand at conducting, while all the while giving

me the invaluable opportunity to observe at close range the workings of a world-class maestro, mentor and faithful friend.

The JSO may be losing a Music Director but it is gaining a Legend.

*Actor, Author, Raconteur*

## John Piper

I once heard that the profession with the most longevity and greatest overall satisfaction was the Maestro of an Orchestra. Conversely, I was told that the profession with the lowest self-esteem and highest suicide rate was a Dentist. It seems odd when I look back at my many years working with Steve Osmond since it was always like “pulling teeth” to get the concerts and events produced. But ahhhhhhh..... all those wonderful SMILES! It was well worth the hard work. BRAVO MAESTRO! BRAVO! -your LD, Tech Director, Concussionist, Forte Professor and forever friend, John Piper



*Vice President of Production, Parade Studio, Macy's, NY  
Supervisor for Many Years of the Potter Center Music Hall  
aka Professor Felix Von Forte; the Maestro's Favorite Left Hand Man*

## Mark Rosenfeld

Steve Osmond has always been a wonderful friend, and the cultural backbone of the Jackson community. He was not only the creative leader of the symphony, but was also instrumental in managing the symphony's financial success and worked hard to improve other educational and community cultural activities.



*Chairman and CEO, Wilherst Developers, Inc.  
Former Chairman and CEO, Jacobson Stores Inc.  
Former Chair, JSO Board of Trustees*

## Greg Sandow

I've known Stephen for a long time — since we were both at the Yale School of Music, where he sang (wonderfully) a strange piece of mine. Then we reconnected when he invited me to Jackson to consult about the Symphony. I loved his conducting, loved spending time with him again, loved the others I met. You have a good thing going here, and who else but Stephen made it happen?



*Writer, composer, consultant, member of the Juilliard  
Graduate Studies Faculty*



## Richard Sherman

I have known Stephen Osmond since he graciously came to E. Lansing one day some nearly 20 ago and took me to lunch. He invited me to join the JSO as Principal flute to feature me as a National Endowment Visiting Specialist. He had this brainstorm that I would “serve as the concertmaster of the wind section”, conducting woodwind sectionals and the like. I had never heard of such a thing, but it sounded both innovative and intriguing, and so I agreed. Thus began my insight into Stephen’s brilliant knack for the whimsy of possibility.

Stephen entrusted me to lead the flute section in the JSO, filling out the rest of the section with talented students with promising careers. He fostered a Mentor/Apprentice model, which has proven over the years to be a singular educational experience for teacher and student alike.

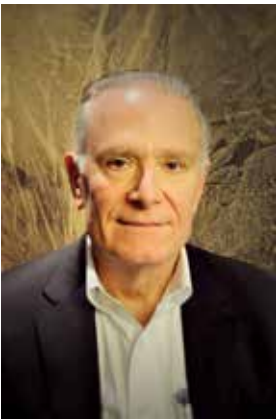
These are Stephen Osmond hallmarks, a passionate creative spirit, a sincere desire to build community, and a charismatic flair for eliciting the best from those around him.

I am grateful for every professional collaboration, and through his vision for the JSO, I am a better, more-expansive musician and person. This has been a golden era of inspired music making in the JSO under his leadership.

Stephen is my friend and trusted colleague, whose wry, self-effacing wit manages to crack me up during every rehearsal. There is no price one can place on a Maestro on the podium with that rare combination of talent and heart. His humanity and musicianship will resonate in our memories well beyond his passing of the baton.

*Professor of Flute, MSU College of Music*

*JSO Principal Flutist since 1998, Principal Flute, Lansing Symphony Orchestra*



## Robert Smith

I have known Stephen for over 10 years while serving on the JSO Board. Over the years, he and , Missy and Mary have become good friends. I have never met someone who is so passionate about his work, his community and the people in the community. Stephen has been a huge asset to the JSO the entire Jackson community and we all have benefited from his passion, dedication, energy and enthusiasm.

Mary and I had pleasure of hosting the “Symphony in South Haven Weekend.” Stephen and Missy (Erin, Marco, Ken, Rob and Joan) were lovely guests and we had an absolutely wonderful weekend.

*Managing Partner, Bond & Co.; Current JSO Treasurer*

## Viktor Uzur

Since my student years at MSU Stephen has been a great friend and a truly inspiring musician to work with! He has always made me feel at home in Jackson. It takes a great person to create a great legacy and enduring relationships! Congratulations, dear friend!

*Artistic Director, Bonneville Chamber Music Festival  
Professor of Cello, Weber State University  
Founding Member of the Richter Uzur Duo*



## Ralph Votapek

After so many collaborations with Stephen Osmond over some four decades it is a pleasure to reminisce about his distinguished career. In my experience Stephen is that rare conductor who always considered the needs and ideas of the soloist, but combined them with his musical ideas and had the skill to transfer them to the orchestra. Obviously not many music directors have had a 40 year tenure, and rarer still those who can leave the orchestra on such good terms with the musicians and respect from the community which he was happy to serve. No doubt his experience will still be of value in the future.

*Professor Emeritus of Piano, Michigan State University  
Gold Medalist of the First Van Cliburn International Piano Competition*



## Susan Waterfall

One of the highlights of my senior year in high school was performing in the musical "Allegro" with Steve Osmond. We sang in a trio together. His enchanting blue eyes and infectious musicality were irresistible! In the ensuing months and years I got to know his unusually creative family. His mother encouraged my piano playing and inspired me in many ways. We spent time with his remarkable uncle, Richard Condie, and heard him conduct the Tabernacle Choir in many settings. I learned a lot from all the behind the scenes joking and deep commitment to music. Thirty years passed and it was an extraordinary experience to connect with Steve and perform Beethoven's 4th Piano Concerto with the JSO. Twenty-five years later Steve conducted my son Julian Pollack's piano concerto, with Julian at the piano. Steve's



wonderful warmth, strength, humor, and musicality made both of these performances unforgettable, precious memories.

*Pianist; Assoc. Artistic Director, Mendocino Music Festival*



## Glenn Watkins

I first met Stephen Osmond as a colleague at the University of Michigan a thousand years ago. Yet, I shall never forget his final all –Wagner concert at Michigan before leaving for Jackson, and in many ways he remains one of my most memorable university colleagues to this day. When he left for Jackson, little could either of us have expected what finally came to pass in your wonderful city. One of his first concerts I attended there took place in the high school auditorium. The magnificent facilities that were to come, including the elegant concert hall and his offices and music school in mid-town Jackson, were but a dream. I met Missy the day she arrived in Ann Arbor from Chicago, later attended their wedding, knew both of their children from the day they were born, and have kept his entire family amongst my most cherished friends. That has been his gift to me. The city of Jackson and his many friends here can no doubt color this picture with other rich details, but surely with memories no richer than mine.

*Earl V. Moore Professor Emeritus of Musicology, University of Michigan; Distinguished Author, Editor and Educator*



## Xie Min

Maestro Osmond is one of my mentors and close friends. Playing with the JSO for over 20 years has provided me with many opportunities to witness Stephen leading JSO and working with musicians from many institutions and countries. In particular, Stephen never hesitates to provide a platform for young musicians to shine. My bond to the JSO has gradually become friends getting together, and family reunions, with so many unforgettable events. One of the highlights was our touring, teaching and conducting trip in the summer of 2015 to Guangzhou, Beijing and Xi'an in China, where faculty members and students express fond memories.

Because of Stephen and Missy, Jackson is another home to my family. We forever cherish the wonderful time we've experienced here and other friends we are introduced in Jackson.

As we celebrate Stephen's remarkable journey as Music Director of JSO, my appreciation reflects our concerts, afterglows, guild galas, fund-raising parties, road trip to NYC to visit our children, and the paramount "Manhattan."

*JSO Concertmaster Since 2004*

## Jeff Zook

As you anticipate your final chord with the JSO, I wanted to share with you my reflections of a time oh so long ago when an awkward teenager came to your door and expressed interest in the Symphony Orchestra. You were gracious enough to allow me to join the adults and through the humility of Susan Whitener I got to play first flute at times with the JSO. I knew then, at the ripe old age of 15, that this is where I belonged

The JSO was my playground and you were my hero. I watched carefully how you moved your stick, how you talked to people in the orchestra, how you interacted with soloists. I had no idea how you could do what you did, but everything you did inspired me. The seed was planted.

Now in my 26th year with the Detroit Symphony, everyday I watch carefully what each conductor does, how he/she interacts with me and our soloists. I'm still learning everyday, but my biggest reflection now is that it all began in some high school auditorium in Jackson with me watching you conduct the JSO.

One highlight of my soloist career was playing the Corigliano Pied Piper with you and the JSO. I remember being impressed at how the orchestra had grown and how the audiences were not only bigger but engaged in what was going on. The way that you and the board had gotten the community involved, it was clear to me that the orchestra was no longer something that happened to be in Jackson, but it had become something that defined Jackson.

I watch from the Internet now - checking out your programming and watching and listening to any clips that appear online or at JTV. I do this with pride and admiration - something I've always felt for you and your work in my hometown!

Bravo to you, Maestro. Good luck on the next movement. Thank you and congratulations!

*Piccolo - Detroit Symphony; Professor of Flute - Oakland University*



