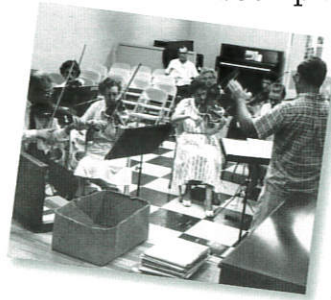




As Greenville has grown, so has the GSO. On December 6, 1948, 27 players performed the first of two annual concerts in borrowed space at the Women's College Auditorium on the old Furman campus. The orchestra's 63 musicians now play six Masterworks concerts a year in Greenville's own state-of-the-art concert hall at The Peace Center for the Performing Arts. In addition, they perform four Chamber Orchestra concerts, three Spotlight Series shows, and several other engagements, including "Holiday at Peace."

"PLEASE SIGN NAME AND INSTRUMENT IF INTERESTED IN FORMING A SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA."

It wasn't the most dramatic of beginnings, but with this notice tacked to the bulletin board at Payne's Music Store, the Greenville Symphony Orchestra was born. The summer of 1948 was a promising time to organize an orchestra in the Textile Capital of the World. The economy was booming and both Furman and Bob Jones Universities had music faculties ready to be tapped by a growing community of music lovers.



When the orchestra's first concert began on December 6, 1948, a young Furman instructor, Robert Cantrick, was on the podium. The audience on the old Furman campus got Wagner, Schubert, and a simple mimeographed program. Asked during the intermission whether they were willing to support an

orchestra, the audience responded enthusiastically, and the new Greenville Symphony Association soon planned a season of two

concerts a year with a modest budget of \$1,000.

In February 1951, the orchestra took to the road for the first time with a concert in Laurens. A few months later, the orchestra

began its long tradition of presenting free children's concerts.

Later that year, Cantrick was succeeded as conductor by Pedro Sanjuan, one of the founders of the Havana, Cuba orchestra. Sanjuan, whose wife was then teaching in Spartanburg, brought more than a strong Spanish accent to Greenville. His extensive experience enriched the orchestra's playing and his spirited manner charmed Greenville audiences.



December 1948
First Concert held in Women's College Auditorium at Furman

September 1956
Peter J. Rickett hired as first resident conductor



September 1958
The Guild of the Greenville Symphony formed

A CONDUCTOR IN RESIDENCE

By 1956, the orchestra was ready for a resident conductor, and it found one in Peter J. Rickett, a young Julliard graduate. At the princely sum of \$1,200 a year, Rickett began a 34-year reign that would transform the GSO from a volunteer symphony into a professional orchestra. At the beginning, however, Rickett had his work cut out for him. The

orchestra had no permanent rehearsal space. At one venue, the roof leaked during heavy rains, and one rehearsal was so cold that the musicians played while wearing hats, coats, and gloves.

With little money and an all-volunteer orchestra, Rickett dealt with everything from AWOL violinists and sick horn players to missing instruments. Having no stage manager meant Rickett unloaded drums and stands and set them up himself. Still, the orchestra was

growing, and in 1961 held its first Pops concert, soon followed by a performance at the first Greenville Arts Festival.

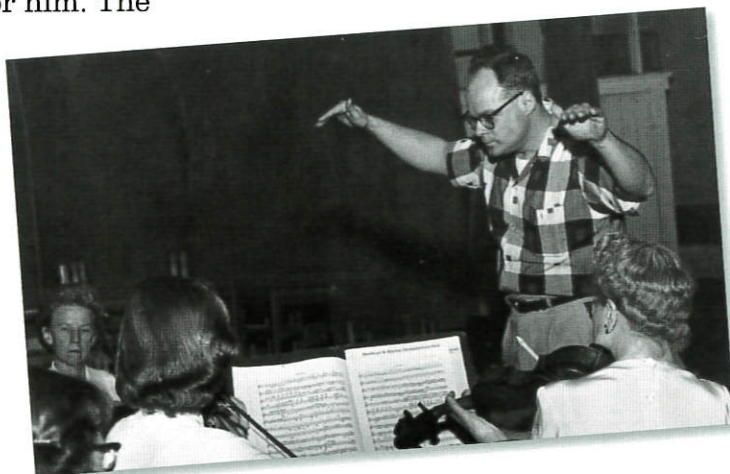
Rickett credited much of that growth to the formation in 1958 of The Guild of the Greenville Symphony, whose members became the GSO's most enthusiastic supporters. Guild

members sold season tickets, hosted music appreciation activities and post-concert receptions, and raised money to buy an English horn, bassoon, and grand piano.

They also started the Lollipops program to

offer music education to pre-

school children of Greenville County. The Guild was a crucial resource in generating widespread support for the GSO in the community.



November 1960

First concert at Furman's
McAlister Auditorium

May 1961

First Pops concert

March 1968

Magill Music Hall dedicated

