



Born: May 29, 1936

Died: February 02, 2017

Obituary for Sidney Rothstein

ROTHSTEIN

Sidney Rothstein, a nationally known conductor whose professional career spanned a 50 year period, died at the age of 80, in Wyomissing, Pa. on February 2nd 2017. Rothstein's specialty was working with metropolitan orchestras with whom he used his extensive repertoire to build the artistic level of their musicians. His expertise in developing new corporate involvement, funding resources, and showcasing both American soloists and composers, resulted in each orchestra becoming a vital artistic force within its community.

Born in Philadelphia in 1936, his life was a musical journey. He began lessons on his grandfather's violin at the age of 9, becoming an accomplished violinist and violist of professional stature. At the age of 25 Rothstein received formal training from the legendary Pierre Monteaux at the Domaine School in Hancock, Maine, and in Europe. In 1964 he founded the Orchestra Society of Philadelphia and was their Music Director from 1964-1976. In his final year with that orchestra he conducted the Symphony No.8 by Gustav Mahler (The Symphony of a Thousand) to officially open Philadelphia's Bicentennial celebration. The performance was broadcast nationally and widely acclaimed as a spectacular accomplishment. "At the close of the concert, the audience went wild and joined the sea of performers in cheering their brilliant, masterful conductor, Sidney Rothstein" (Philadelphia Bulletin, March 27, 1976.) In recognition of his innovative programming for the public of Philadelphia and for

his offering opportunity and exposure to American artists, Combs College of Music, Philadelphia PA awarded Maestro Rothstein an Honorary Doctor of Music Degree in May of 1975.

In 1976 the Reading Symphony Board (RSO), Reading PA, invited Rothstein to conduct the RSO. Several months later he became associate conductor of the Honolulu Symphony and he commuted from Reading to Honolulu for four years. In 1980 he became Music Director and Conductor of the West Virginia Symphony in Charleston and in 1983 he added Music Director and Conductor of the Florida Symphony in Orlando to his workload. Until 1987 he conducted all 3 orchestras. Because of scheduling conflicts, he eventually gave up the Florida and West Virginia Symphonies and moved to Reading. In 1983 Albright College, Reading PA conferred the Doctor of Humanities degree on Maestro Rothstein. In 1996 he accepted the post of Conductor of the Ridgefield Connecticut Symphony Orchestra, which he held until 2006.

In April 2006, Rothstein brought to a close his 30 year tenure as Music Director of the Reading Symphony, dedicated his final performance, "Ein Heldenleben" (A Hero's Life), by Richard Strauss, to all of the supporters of the orchestra, calling them his "heroes". With the Reading Symphony's 100th Anniversary celebrated in 2013, Rothstein stated he was always proud to be one-third of their history. A newspaper tribute from Susan Pena, Music Critic of the Reading Eagle, noted "No one has done more to shape the fabric of this orchestra, or indeed, music in our community, through the past three decades, while under his leadership, the RSO entered a period of unprecedented growth."

Notable Quotes during Rothstein's career: For the official opening of Philadelphia's Bicentennial celebration, James Felton, Music Critic of the Evening Bulletin, wrote "It was a rare privilege to be there. It was one of those sublime moments in a lifetime when the sheer mass of sound and sight were of such magnitude and quality as to be remembered always."

And in January of 1984, James Roos of the Miami Herald wrote the following "there was a new and healthy solidity to the Florida Symphony's playing. Rothstein is a man who can get maximum results. I had never heard the orchestra playing with such professional point and style, and fullness of sound. Rothstein knows his business. He wants clarity, precision and musical line from an orchestra and what is far more important he knows how to get them."

After hearing Mahler's Symphony No. 6 at the Ridgefield Symphony in May 2004, Howard Tuvelle reported in the Ridgefield press "writing as a musician and reviewer, it was one of the most soul stirring and breath taking, perhaps once-in-a-lifetime, live performances I have experienced in more than half a century of listening to music.

Rothstein is survived by his brother, Dr. Edward Rothstein and his wife Christine, 2 nephews and a niece