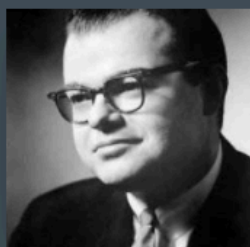


Howard Weiss, RPYO's first permanent Music Director, passed away on Dec 31, 2021. This shares Howard's obit, a Channel 8 WROC TV Feature Story and tweets written in honor of Howard. His legacy lives on in the many music students and music professionals he inspired. View his obituary, a story honoring him broadcast by Channel 8 WROC, some thoughts on Twitter and a recent photo of Howard still delighting in wearing his RPYO T-shirts.

Howard A. Weiss



Violin Soloist, Chamber Musician, Teacher, Conductor. Howard passed peacefully on December 31st, 2021, with good friends present. He is survived by his sister, Penny Weiss Kleinman. Howard's love of music began at age three when he identified Bach on the radio. By age four, he had fallen in love with Jascha Heifetz's recording of "Hora Staccato," and pestered his parents for violin lessons. Howard finally started violin class at age seven and was given a full scholarship after several lessons. Howard's most important violin teacher was Morris Gomberg at the Chicago Music College of Roosevelt University, where he was also on a full four-year scholarship. During college, Howard was in the first violin section of Chicago's Lyric Opera, where he accompanied Guisepppe Di Stefano and Elizabeth Schwartzkopf, among other great singers of the era (1960-1961).

Howard also performed with many top musicians, including Duke Ellington, who played a 20-minute program privately for Howard in 1967. He recorded two albums with Frank Sinatra, and also recorded with Ella Fitzgerald, Mel Tormé, Chet Atkins, Henry Mancini, and toured with Johnny Mathis. Howard also performed with David Oistrakh, Leonid Kogan, and Arthur Rubenstein.

Before coming to Rochester, Howard was Assistant Concert Master of the Cleveland Orchestra under George Szell (1965 – 1967). He performed the Beethoven Violin Concerto in 1967, conducted by James Levine.

Many recall Howard's 20 years as Concert Master of the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra (1967 – 1987). He was a soloist with the RPO more than 100 times, including as soloist in the premiere recording of David Amram's "Elegy for Violin and Orchestra." During his tenure, he founded and was Music Director of the Rochester Philharmonic Youth Orchestra (RPYO). The RPYO traveled the world and recorded 21 LP albums.

Graveside Services will be held TUESDAY, January 4, 2022, at 1:30 PM in Mt. Hope Cemetery. Friends are asked to gather at the main entrance.

Donations in Howard's memory may be made to a [charity of one's choice](#).

by: [Dan Gross](#)

Remembering Howard Weiss: Founder of RPYO 50 Years Ago, Former RPO Concertmaster

Posted: Jan 6, 2022 / 05:34 PM EST / Updated: Jan 7, 2022 / 05:30 AM EST

View this Story on Video-- <https://www.rochesterfirst.com/news/local-news/remembering-howard-weiss-founder-of-rpyo-50-years-ago-former-rpo-concertmaster/>

ROCHESTER, N.Y. (WROC) – Howard Weiss served as the concertmaster for the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra for twenty years from 1967 through 1987. But his greatest legacy may be the founding the Rochester Philharmonic Youth Orchestra. A full-time orchestra for advanced students in our area over 50 years ago.

Weiss passed away at the age of 82 on December 31st, 2021. A service was held Tuesday as he was laid to rest in Mt. Hope Cemetery. The pandemic may have canceled the 50th anniversary celebration in 2020, but they are planning on celebrating next year, including by playing the same symphony from the RPYO's first ever concert.

43 year-tenured RPO violinist Willy Delgans, who "retired with good behavior" after the RPO's last season, sat next to Weiss, when Weiss was serving as the concertmaster.

"It was truly my first orchestra job, and actually my only (job)," Delgans said. "And I had some experience, but when I sat next to Howard.... I was so wet behind the ears. He mentored me, (and) as a concert master, he was on top of everything."

Irene Narotsky, the current manager of the RPYO, said he left at the chance to help create an orchestra for the youth.

"Somewhere around the 60s, the youth said they really wanted a year-round orchestra... Howard at the time was a young concertmaster, and he raised his hands and said 'I think I can do something with this, give me a chance, let me be part of this,'" she recalled.

During his time as the conductor, the RPYO toured the world, recorded albums, and gave opportunities to thousands of kids. so many of whom have continued filled the world with music. The RPYO of course has robust and challenging programming,

masterclasses with members of the RPO, but every year is headlined by the side-by-side concert, when all of the RPO and RPYO cram onto one stage for a special show.

"I will ask students what they like about RPYO, what did it mean to them," Narotsky said. "And they invariably say that concerts means so much to me, because I get to talk to the musician and see that they're real people.

And in turn, those kids give something back to the musicians who played with them in their famous yearly side by side concerts.

"I absorb their energy. I have a lot of enthusiasm, but I will always take more," Delgans said. But beyond his own impact, his say the RPYO represents our area as well. "The arts are most important because it gives the town, the city, the county, the surrounding counties, something... I can't even name it."

But even outside the notes, and the staff lines, Weiss is remembered as a wonderful person. Narotsky got to know Weiss, as her own mother and Weiss shared a nursing home before both each passed. Her own musical journey flows through the RPYO.

Narotsky herself has no musical background. She got involved with the RPYO when her son, Andrew, played bass in the orchestra. Through her son's involvement, she grew to love music, and somehow translated her own decades of engineering experience at Kodak, into managing the RPYO.

But Weiss's legacy extends beyond the staff lines.

"Beyond the music, he was a great friend," Delgans said. He regales stories of Weiss meeting his parents, four-hour long conversations, and his ability to connect with anyone. "Howard was the life of the party, great conversationalist... He knew how to engage and talk with people.

"I cried... I was in tears. It was the same when I lost my teacher (or) my dad," he said. "I know he loved good wine, so every year, on the 31st, I will raise a glass, and drink in his honor."

Tweets by the Reporter Who Wrote the Story

← Thread

 **Dan Gross** ✓
@DJG_Music

How can you recap someone's whole life in a 2 minute video piece? Well, it's hard. And one probably can't, especially when you're on the restrictions of local TV news. Plus, none of your own opinions.

So I want to talk about Howard Weiss, the founder of the RPYO.



5:40 PM · Jan 6, 2022 · Twitter Web App

 **Dan Gross** ✓ @DJG_Music · Jan 6 ...
My first job was working in housekeeping for Midtown Athletic Club. Before he moved into a home, Howard was there almost every night.

And we chatted, often.

It was a running theme that he would chat so much that he would make us all late.

1 1 1 1

 **Dan Gross** ✓ @DJG_Music · Jan 6 ...
He got to know all of the other employees, most of whom in housekeeping were Nepali or Bhutanese refugees.

He got to know them when 90% of other members there would ignore them.


He even went out of his way to learn Nepali words and phrases, a habit that he had with everyone.

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 **Dan Gross** ✓ @DJG_Music · Jan 6 ...
We chatted quite a lot.

I think he even gave me his number, and I never followed up. I've been thinking about that a lot.

1 1 1 1

 **Dan Gross** ✓ @DJG_Music · Jan 6 ...
I have comfort in knowing that even though he never married or had kids, the thousands of students that have come through the RPYO have changed the world in an immeasurable way. @News_8 #ROC

You can read the story here:



rochesterfirst.com

Remembering Howard Weiss: Founder of RPYO 50 years ago, former ...
Weiss passed away at the age of 82 on December 31st, 2021.

 **Dan Gross** ✓ @DJG_Music · Jan 6 ...
Replying to @DJG_Music

I'm sure most people know the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra, the @ROCPhils , as one of the premiere orchestras in the country.

But the RPYO is held in the same regard as the RPO; and has served as an opportunity to shine the way for thousands of incredible young musicians.

1 4 2 1

 **Dan Gross** ✓ @DJG_Music · Jan 6 ...
But Howard was more than that. In my piece below, you can read about him from his colleagues.

But I wanted to take a rare moment of self-indulgence to talk about him.

I knew him; though certainly not as well as I would have liked.

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