



OBSERVER FILE PHOTO

Henry Janiec, the Charlotte Symphony's music director from 1958 to 1963, leads a rehearsal in this photo from his time with the orchestra.

# 5 former conductors return for 1 special night



## Henry Janiec

**1958-63**  
**Home now:** Spartanburg. When he's invited, he occasionally conducts – such as a couple of numbers in a Fourth of July concert the Charlotte Symphony played in South Carolina in 2005. But he's retired from the Converse College faculty.

**Age:** 76.  
**During his tenure:** The players were paid, but not all made their living as musicians. The ranks were fleshed out by college students and occasionally even high school students. From 1956 to 1967, Janiec was also the music director of what is now Opera Carolina. He led the Brevard Music Center from 1964 to 1996.

**Memories:** His job with the symphony was “part-time – very part-time,” he recalls. The orchestra could tackle demanding pieces such as Richard Strauss tone poems, but it faced the challenge of rehearsing in “a little junior high school auditorium. ... It was crowded and cramped, and the acoustics were lousy.” The biggest accomplishment was getting out of debt. “It sounds ludicrous to even mention it, but it was somewhere between \$9,000 and \$12,000,” he says. At that time, “that was really a lot of money.”

**Another view:** “His challenge was to put the orchestra together again” after a financial crisis shut it down, longtime supporter Mark Bernstein recalls. “He deserves a lot of credit for that.”

**Will conduct:** Hector Berlioz's “Roman Carnival Overture.”

## Richard Cormier

**1963-67**  
**Home now:** Chattanooga, Tenn. Organizes and conducts chamber orchestras in Tampa, Fla., and Chattanooga. The groups play a total of about 15 concerts a year.

**Age:** 77.  
**During his tenure:** Cormier hired the orchestra's first African American players. Future Gov. Jim Hunt played the tuba.

**Memories:** When Cormier was new in town, a woman in a symphony volunteer group had advice for him: “She came up to me after the meeting and said, ‘Young man, I'm going to tell you something. Don't you try to educate us.’ So that was fair warning. But I never have failed to try to educate my audience.”

**Another view:** Cormier continued the rebuilding begun by Janiec, Bernstein says.

**Will conduct:** Finale from Antonin Dvorak's Symphony No. 8.

## Jacques Brouman

**1967-76**  
**Home now:** Pittsburgh. “I'm basically retired.”

**Age:** 75.  
**During his tenure:** The orchestra signed up its first full-time players.

**Memories:** Bringing in a nucleus of full-timers not only improved the orchestra but also made it possible to send a chamber group into schools for educational concerts, Brouman says. Then as now, schoolkids were bused to Owens Auditorium to hear the full-size group. At one point, the school system decided it couldn't continue the transportation, he recalls. Women from a symphony volunteer group stepped in and drove the buses themselves.

**Another view:** “He had the foresight” to recognize the need for full-time players, says Wolfgang Roth, the orchestra's principal second violinist, who was one of the first hired. “He pushed pretty hard. And he got the finances going.”

**Will conduct:** Georges Enesco's Romanian Rhapsody No. 1.

## Leo Driehuys

**1977-93**  
**Home now:** Shepherdstown, W.Va. He's retired, though he teaches a couple of conducting students at nearby Shepherd University, where he also fills in for faculty members occasionally.

**Age:** 74.  
**During his tenure:** The full-time roster grew to about 60 players, roughly where it is today. In 1989, spurred by an offer from the German region of Mecklenburg, the orchestra went on a four-concert European tour. The trip generated excitement at home, but strained the group's finances. The orchestra gained a new home when the Blumenthal Performing Arts Center opened in 1992.

**Memories:** Driehuys moved from Holland, where he was born and trained, to lead the Charlotte Symphony. “I really wanted to build this orchestra,” Driehuys recalls. “That's what I was hired for.” Being able to add about five full-time players a year boosted the quality, he says. His public relations work for the orchestra included speaking to civic groups and leading concerts in places outside the concert hall – such as department stores. His verdict: “It was fun altogether, I must say.”

**Another view:** Driehuys once celebrated his birthday by treating the whole orchestra to dinner at a restaurant, harpist Bette Roth recalls. The orchestra's principal French horn player, Frank Portone, notes that Driehuys started his career as an oboist. That gave him a kinship with his players. “He loved the musicians,” Portone says.

**Will conduct:** Nicolai Rimsky-Korsakov's “Capriccio Espagnol.”



## Peter McCoppin

**1993-2000**  
**Home now:** Victoria, British Columbia. He's helping plan a music festival in Guangzhou, China, where he will conduct the orchestra. As a parallel career, McCoppin – experienced as a broadcaster and speaker in his native Canada before he came to Charlotte – counsels business executives in communicating with one another and the public.

**Age:** 58.  
**During his tenure:** The orchestra went through hard financial times in the early 1990s, but it recovered.

**Memories:** He remembers “exhilarating” concerts with the Oratorio Singers of Charlotte, the orchestra's chorus. Thinking back to the financial hardships, he draws a lesson related to his work in communications: In troubled situations, he advises, “be transparent and open. Acknowledge the things we can and cannot change. ... Stick to the truth.”

**Another view:** McCoppin put his background as a verbal communicator to use, Wolfgang Roth recalls. “He was very gifted,” Roth says. “The way he talked to the audiences – they loved it.”

**Will conduct:** Love Scene from Hector Berlioz's “Romeo and Juliet.”

## PREVIEW

### Charlotte Symphony

The orchestra commemorates its 75th anniversary with “The Return of the Maestros.”

**WHEN:** 8 p.m. Saturday.  
**WHERE:** Belk Theater, Blumenthal Performing Arts Center, 130 N. Tryon St.  
**TICKETS:** \$22-\$75.  
**DETAILS:** 704-972-2000; www.charlottesymphony.org.

## Living Here

YOUR GUIDE TO THE CHARLOTTE REGION

### Newcomer shares spiritual type of yoga with Charlotte

Adesh Gupta has found Charlotte to be very hospitable to the increasing diversity among its newcomers.

Got a question?  
 704-358-5058  
 or ldyer@charlotteobserver.com

Leigh Dyer



“It's a very spiritual city,” he said.

Gupta, originally from near New Delhi, India, moved to Charlotte from Denver three years ago to work in information technology. A recent Observer study found India is the No. 3 country of origin for newcomers to Charlotte outside the U.S. (behind Mexico and Germany).

Gupta, who practices Hinduism, is responsible for bringing a variety of yoga known as Kriya Yoga to Charlotte. It focuses on techniques passed down through a line of gurus that began in 1861. Gupta recently organized a weekend seminar in Kriya Yoga that drew more than 200 people, representing a variety of religions and ethnicities. It was the first event in Charlotte of its kind, and he plans future events.

“In the U.S. you have many kinds of yoga these days, and many of them focus on the physical part,” he said. But Kriya Yoga is more spiritual, focusing on the union of soul and body, he said. It uses concentration, posture and breathing techniques.

Anyone interested in learning more about it – and about future events – can reach him at 704-814-7476 or aguptal@carolina.rr.com.

“I am very fortunate,” he said, “to be able to bring this program to Charlotte as a newcomer.”



## New Around Here

### Adesh Gupta, 45

**From:** Denver in October 2003 (originally from India; also lived in Australia). **Why here?** Job in information technology. **Where's he living?** Matthews. **Tip:** “The local Indian community when I moved here was very welcoming. (I joined) the Hindu Center of Charlotte.”

## Tip of the Day: Women of Charlotte

Here's a way to connect with other people if you're new to town: [www.womenofcharlotte.net](http://www.womenofcharlotte.net). It's a free forum for all women “to go to to dish on different things, marriage, family, jobs, resources ... even networking,” e-mailed Jennifer Knoll, who was recently named the group's manager of charitable causes.

## Attention Newcomers: Free (sort of) lunch

I'm inviting 10 newcomers (anyone who's lived here two years or less) to meet me for lunch on Nov. 15 at 12:30 p.m. at the Observer, which is at Tryon and Stonewall streets in uptown. I want to hear your thoughts on what I should be writing about. If you're available or interested in future events, please get in touch (I prefer e-mails).

## Online Extras

The blog “New Around Town” and extensive resources from Living Here magazine: [WWW.CHARLOTTE.COM/living](http://WWW.CHARLOTTE.COM/living)

# With elections nearing, GOP can't resist an old, ugly tactic

Curtis from IE

same old one: “Listen up, white folks. Black people want everything you've got. Your jobs, your money, YOUR BLOND WOMEN. If we can't talk about issues, we'll scare you to death. Vote for us or else!”

Jesse Helms had his “white hands.” George H.W. Bush had his Willie Horton.

Corker said he didn't sponsor or like the ad, but he didn't stop it from running.

The conciliatory Mehlman of the RNC? He thought the ad was fair. He said that with a straight face. This saddens me because I do think the Democrats take African American voters for granted. Black voters want choices. But they deserve better ones.

I was raised by moderate Republican parents who were fans of GOP politicians like President Gerald Ford and – in our home state of Maryland – Sen. Charles Mathias. My mother was a party activist until Ronald Reagan declared his 1980 candidacy in Philadelphia, Miss., where three civil rights workers had been murdered, and talked to cheering crowds using the code words of “states' rights.” To her, it seemed Reagan only spoke about blacks to demonize them as welfare queens.

In its quest for Southern white votes, she felt her party had betrayed her.

Today in Maryland, the Republican candidate for the Senate is Michael Steele, a black man. Black Republicans are running for statewide office in Ohio and Pennsylvania.

While I see hope, I wonder where their voices are when their party plays on racial fears.

What have they given up for a seat at the table?

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