



# EUGENE SYMPHONY

Contact: Lisa Andrews  
Marketing & Public Relations Director  
Ph: 541.687.9487, x.106 Cell: 541.510.7761  
[lisa.andrews@eugenesymphony.org](mailto:lisa.andrews@eugenesymphony.org)

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

March 25, 2010

## EUGENE SYMPHONY LOSES PRINCIPAL TIMPANIST CHARLES DOWD

---

EUGENE—Wednesday afternoon, Charles Dowd, principal timpanist of the Eugene Symphony died of pancreatic cancer. He was 61 years old. Dowd held the principal timpanist position with the Eugene Symphony for 35 years. He recently retired from the University of Oregon School of Music and Dance where he was a Philip H. Knight professor of music and a faculty performing artist.

“We are all saddened by the news of Charles' death and by the loss of such an immense talent. His contributions to the growth and development of the Eugene Symphony during his 35-year tenure are immeasurable. This is a loss for the entire performing arts community and our hearts go out to Christine Mirabella and his family,” said Eugene Symphony Executive Director, Paul Winberg.

“Charles has touched us all in many important and immeasurable ways,” commented Brad Foley, Dean of the University of Oregon School of Music and Dance. “Over the past 35, he developed one of the leading university percussion programs in the nation while inspiring his hundreds of students for more than a generation through thousands of performances, recording projects, and the writing and publishing of many important pedagogical materials. As a teacher and composer he served our students as a counselor, advisor, mentor, and supporter on hundreds of occasions. Charles was not only a great musician but a great friend. This loss is felt deeply.”

Music Director and Conductor, Danail Rachev said, “Charles has contributed immeasurably to the artistic growth and development of the Eugene Symphony. We are truly grateful for his dedication, enthusiasm and contributions to the orchestra. He will be missed.”

Born in New York, Charles was a scholarship graduate student of famed New York Philharmonic timpanist, Saul Goodman at The Juilliard School. Dowd holds a master's degree from Stanford University and a bachelor's degree from the San Jose State School of Music where he studied under Anthony J. Cirone of the San Francisco Symphony.

Charles' performed with the finest musical organizations in the Pacific Northwest including the Eugene Symphony, Oregon Bach Festival Orchestra, Oregon Mozart Players, Oregon Festival of American Music, the Peter Britt Festival, the Sunriver Music Festival, the Cascade Festival, the Oregon Coast Festival, Oregon Symphony, Oregon Ballet Theatre, and Chamber Music Northwest. Dowd has performed in Stuttgart, Paris, in Canada, and in most of the fifty United States. In New York, he performed at RCA "Studio A," National Studios, Carnegie Hall, Avery Fisher Hall, Alice Tully Hall, Paul Hall, and several off-Broadway venues, playing contemporary classical music and jazz.

Dowd has made many solo appearances, recently performing the Percussion Concerto by Joseph Schwantner, Concerto for Timpani and Orchestra by William Kraft, Concerto for Percussion by Darius Milhaud, 27'10.554" for a Percussionist by John Cage, Moonsticks for Solo Marimba by Meyer Kupferman, and many other works.

*The New York Times* called Dowd's playing "virtuosic," and maestro Dennis Russell Davies wrote that Dowd is "one of the finest timpanists and percussionists in the USA."

His publications include at least nine books that include warm-ups, technique builders, etudes and exercises to develop well-rounded percussionists in a wide range of styles and for a wide cross section of percussion instruments, published through Columbia Pictures Publications, Columbia Pictures Media Group, and Alfred Publishing Company. His numerous practical, insightful, and important pedagogical writings have appeared in the Percussive Arts Society's *Percussive Notes*, the *Oregon Music Educator*, and *Jazzscene*, to name just a few. His outstanding teaching reputation has led him to fulfill guest teaching and performing residencies at colleges and universities from Alaska, British Columbia, California, Idaho, Montana, Nevada, Texas, and Washington in the west to Illinois, Massachusetts, Michigan, Pennsylvania, and Tennessee to the east.

Dowd has recorded on Warner Bros., MusicMasters, Hänssler Classics, Black Saint-Soul Note (Milan), Soundspells (New York), PAUSA, cdm-USA, KM Los Angeles, and projects for RCA and Sony.

When asked about his most memorable Eugene Symphony experience in an interview last month, Charles replied, "For 35 years, I have really enjoyed all of the concerts; we play great music with great conductors."

###



Charles Dowd, Principal Timpanist, Eugene Symphony  
*Photo credit: Steve Smith, Imagine PhotoGraphics*