

 *An interview with* 

HAMPTON & LAUREN MALLORY



Hampton and Lauren Mallory, both cellists with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra, retired at the end of the 2013-2014 season after a combined 81 years of service to the organization. They sat down to talk to us about their experiences at the Pittsburgh Symphony and their plans after retirement.

This photo of Hampton and Lauren Mallory was taken during the 2013 Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra European Festivals Tour in a 16th-century German farmhouse — the home of Peter and Wendy Moes, legendary instrument makers who crafted both of the Mallorys' cellos in 1990 and 1991 respectively.

Q: How did you win your positions with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra?

Lauren: I was a senior at Indiana University-Bloomington when a friend asked me to come with her to audition for the Pittsburgh Symphony. The audition was in February. "It would be good experience for you," she said. As it turned out, I won one of the three available positions and joined the PSO under the baton of William Steinberg in the fall of 1969. In 1979, I won the title of associate principal cellist, a position I held until 2001.

Hampton: I initially won a one-year position for the 1978-79 season and had to audition a second time that winter for a permanent spot, joining the cello section under André Previn after several years of freelancing in Philadelphia.

Q: What is your favorite Pittsburgh Symphony memory together?

Hampton and Lauren: In summer 1992, our children, Claire and Evan, were 9 and 7 years old. During this concert year, the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra took two European tours. During the second tour, we arranged for the family (along with a cousin) to join us and began our travels in Paris. We spent four weeks abroad traveling apart from the Orchestra and made memories that have lasted a lifetime.

Q: Looking back at your careers, what are you most proud of in your time with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra?

Hampton: After spending 36 years together with our orchestra, I am most proud of the long standing artistic growth of the organization.

Lauren: Being a part of the opening of Heinz Hall is a memory I will carry with me always.

Q: Are you staying in Pittsburgh after retirement?

Hampton: Yes, we love Pittsburgh and it is our home. We have a garden that keeps us busy and we both enjoy cycling on the bike trails. During retirement, I hope to become a beekeeper. We enjoy cooking and I collect and continue to learn more about good wine.

Lauren: And I plan to spend more time on my genealogical research.

Q: What was your favorite performance with the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra?

Hampton: Before Lorin Maazel was hired, he conducted a performance of Berlioz's *Symphonie fantastique* at Avery Fisher Hall in New York. He was on his game and the orchestra was electric. After the piece, the audience rocketed to their feet and looking out into the crowd I could see a man having trouble getting up out of his chair. It was Itzhak Perlman.

Lauren: My favorite performances are the ones we gave on tour in 1976 of the Mahler Symphony No. 3, conducted by William Steinberg, both at Carnegie Hall in New York and Constitution Hall in Washington, D.C. I can still remember the gorgeous horn playing of then-principal horn Howard Hillyer and the incredible audience response for both concerts. This piece remains one of my favorites to this day.

Q: What is your favorite Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra Education and Community Engagement program?

Hampton: I have fond memories of developing the relationship with the Wilksburg community and our many trips to their high school.

Lauren: My favorite Schooltime program has always been Peter and the Wolf.

Q: In your view, why should people support this great orchestra?

Hampton and Lauren: Music in any variety or form creates an emotional experience and touches you in a way words cannot. The patrons of our orchestra and especially our home audience of Pittsburgh support what they love. It is our job to make our patrons love the music we play.

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