

Michael Krajewski, Music Director

Philly POPS Music Director Michael Krajewski's earliest memories of hearing symphonic music were summertime concerts in local parks in his hometown of Detroit. "My parents enjoyed music, but didn't go to classical concerts," Michael says. "My first tastes of hearing an orchestra live were in that informal setting and that's what probably steered me toward becoming a pops conductor."

He knew he wanted a career in music and always harbored the idea of becoming a conductor in the back of his mind. "I decided to get serious about myself as a musician and see how far I could push myself," he says. "It seemed like a pipe dream – no one around where I grew up even thinks about something like becoming an orchestra conductor, but I didn't want to live the rest of my life wondering what would have happened if I hadn't tried."

Michael's big break came when he was named Antal Dorati Fellowship Conductor of the Detroit Symphony in 1979 and gained experience conducting a major American orchestra. He went on to become assistant conductor of the Detroit Symphony, resident conductor of the Florida Symphony and music director of Modesto Symphony – all the while splitting his time between conducting classical, educational, pops and outdoor concerts, often before non-traditional audiences.

"Many people are interested in a symphony orchestra, but don't feel like classical music is for them. When we're playing the music of Frank Sinatra, movie soundtracks, Broadway and Top 40, audiences get a kick out of hearing a full orchestra with highly trained musicians playing songs that they feel is their music."

-- Michael Krajewski

He is now a full-time pops conductor and serves as principal pops conductor of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra, the Houston Symphony, and the Jacksonville Symphony Orchestra and since 2013, as Music Director and Conductor of The Philly POPS®.

Michael especially enjoys creating pops programs from scratch. "We're playing music that wasn't written for symphony orchestra – we create all new arrangements and match the right artists to the programs," he says. "It's really satisfying." His favorite experiences include pairing music with Cirque du Soleil-style acrobatics and creating tributes to American popular music legends like Simon & Garfunkel and Carole King.

"World-renowned composer and conductor Marvin Hamlisch told me that Michael Krajewski was one of the best in the business. We hired him and the POPS have reemerged with unprecedented success."

-- Frank Giordano, CEO, Philly POPS

"I feel that the Philly POPS is the best pops orchestra in the country and the best at doing these kinds of concerts," Michael says. "And I love Philadelphia – it has a wonderful history and tradition of excellence in music and the performing arts."

Michael has conducted throughout North America and around the globe, and has collaborated with a diverse group of internationally-renowned artists, including Art Garfunkel, Kenny Loggins, Ben Folds, Wynona Judd, Jason Alexander, Chicago, and Big Bad Voodoo Daddy.

Michael lives in Orlando, Florida with his wife Darcy. He enjoys solving crossword puzzles, photography and traveling – especially to Italy.