

1995 Helwig Distinguished Artist

Doc Severinsen with Vanessa Thomas

Also featuring the IUP Keystone
Big Band and IUP Chamber Choir

**Tuesday, September 16, 2014
8:00 p.m.**

**Fisher Auditorium
IUP Performing Arts Center**

*The concert will be performed
with one intermission*

Doc Severinsen

"Heeeeere's Johnny!" That lead-in, followed by a big band trumpet blast, was the landmark of late night television for three decades. The 'Johnny' was Johnny Carson, the announcer was Ed McMahon and the bandleader was Doc Severinsen. Beginning in October 1962, *The Tonight Show with Johnny Carson* ruled the night air for 30 years, coming to an end on May 22, 1992.

Within a week of the final telecast, Doc Severinsen and His Big Band were on the road and, to this day, audiences across America love and respect Doc and his big band, not just because he shared their living room with them for so many years, but because of Doc's love of the Big Band repertoire. His musicianship keeps this iconic American music fresh. One of those many stops was on October 30 and 31 in 1995 when he performed at IUP as that year's Helwig Distinguished Artist.

Doc's repertoire includes Ellington and Basie standards, pop, jazz, ballads, big band classics and, of course, *The Tonight Show* theme. Severinsen can still blow hard with his horn, and hit the high notes, a result of



his continued commitment to the practice studio and the refinement of his craft. But as a band leader, Doc continues to surround himself with the best in the business, and he's only too happy to give them a turn in the spotlight.

A Grammy award winner, Doc has made more than 30 albums—from big band to jazzfusion to classical. Two critically acclaimed Telarc CDs with the Cincinnati Pops Orchestra showcase his multifaceted talents from Bach to ballads. *The Very Best of Doc Severinsen* reprises 15 of Doc's signature pieces. His other recordings include *Unforgettably Doc* with the Cincinnati Pops on Telarc and the Grammy nominated *Once More With Feeling* on Amherst.

He received a Grammy Award for "Best Jazz Instrumental Performance-Big Band for his

recording of *Doc Severinsen and The Tonight Show Band Volume I*. In 2006, Doc moved to San Miguel de Allende, in Mexico, ostensibly to retire from performance. Within weeks, he was jamming with the magnificent guitarist Gil Gutierrez. He now tours regularly with Gil in a quintet called The San Miguel Five, performing a mix of Latin and Gypsy jazz and standards, to exceptional acclaim. They just released their most current CD *Oblivion* in January 2014.

Severinsen's accomplishments began in his hometown of Arlington, Oregon, population 600. Carl H. Severinsen was born on July 7, 1927, and was nicknamed "Little Doc" after his father, Dr. Carl Severinsen, a dentist. Little Doc had originally wanted to play the trombone. But Doc Sr., a gifted amateur violinist, urged him to follow in his father's footsteps. Doc Jr. insisted on the trombone, which turned out to be unavailable in tiny Arlington's music store. And so, a trumpet it would be. A week later, with the help of his father and a manual of instructions, the seven-year-old was so good that he was invited to join the high school band.

At the age of 12, Little Doc won the Music Educator's National Contest and, while still in high school, was hired to go on the road with the famous Ted Fio Rito Orchestra. However, his stay with the group was cut short by the draft. He served in the Army during World War II and following his discharge, landed a spot with the Charlie Barnett Band. When Barnette's band broke up, Severinsen toured with the Tommy Dorsey and then the Benny Goodman bands in the late 1940s.

After his days with Barnett and Dorsey, Doc arrived in New York City in 1949 to become a staff musician for NBC. After years of playing with NBC's many studio bands, Doc was invited to play a gig in the highly respected Tonight Show Band. The band leader at the time, Skitch Henderson, asked him to join that band in 1962 in the first trumpet chair. Five years later, Doc became the music director for *The Tonight Show* and the rest is

history. His loyalty to Johnny Carson and Ed McMahon never faltered, and the warm camaraderie among the three was an enormous part of the show's success.

When Johnny decided to retire from *The Tonight Show*, Doc and Ed said their good-byes as well. Of course, free from the nightly grind of the TV studio, Doc Severinsen had far more time to expand his musical horizons and continues to keep an extensive touring schedule. In addition to his San Miguel 5 appearances, Doc tours regularly with his own Big Band and continues to perform with symphony orchestras all over the country. Over the years, he has been Principal Pops Conductor with the Phoenix Symphony, the Milwaukee Symphony, the Minnesota Orchestra, the Colorado Symphony, the Pacific Symphony, and the Buffalo Philharmonic.

Doc performs on a S.E. Shires Severinsen Destino III, a trumpet he developed with Steve Shires and the S.E. Shires Company in Massachusetts. The factory has 25 craftsmen who are professional, working brass players and totally understand what is involved in making great brass instruments. The S.E. Shires Company features a line of trumpets that includes the S.E. Shires Severinsen Destino III which was developed through Doc's supervision until his exacting standards of quality and sound were achieved. Doc continues to make regular visits to the factory.

Today, Doc has not lost his flair for the outrageous fashion statement or his trademark wit. But his gregarious nature has never interfered with the fact that he has been one of the greatest trumpeters and musicians of the last 60 years, respected in the worlds of classical music, jazz, big band, and now even world music. In the end, Doc Severinsen has transcended his celebrity and rejoiced in his remarkable ability to simply play his trumpet as well as he can. This has proven to be good enough for the millions of people who count themselves his fans.

Vanessa Thomas

Soprano and mezzo soprano Vanessa Thomas is a popular vocalist in the Kansas City area, and regularly performs in concerts and in recital all over the country. Thomas, known for her seamless 4-octave range, has an unusual versatility in a variety of musical genres including Jazz, Musical Theater, Opera, and other classical styles, such as operetta and oratorio. Recent credits include the world premiere of *John Brown* by Kirke



Mechem (composer of the famed *opera Tuffe*), and appearing as guest vocalist with Minnesota Orchestra, Milwaukee Symphony, Chatanooga Symphony, and Doc Severinsen and His Big Band tours, as well as holiday pops concerts "Jingle Bell Doc" and "Doc the Halls" with Severinsen.

Thomas has performed with such notable players as Severinsen, Ed Shaughnessy, Mike Metheny, Ernie Watts, Chip McNeil, and Gary Foster; and operatic baritones James Maddalena and Donnie Ray Albert. She has sung under the baton of James Conlon, Julius Rudel, and Robert Spano and has worked with arrangers Dick Lieb, Adi Yesaya, Alan Baylock, and Jay Chattaway.

The appearance of Doc Severinsen is made possible through the Helwig Distinguished Artist Endowment and additional funding provided by the Helwig Family.

The Keystone Big Band

Saxophone

Christopher Barrick•
Keith Young*
Ben Saylor•
Richard Firestone†
Roy Mitchell•

Trumpet

Kevin Eisensmith• *
Mike Wertz•
William Stowman•
Joshua Hillard•
David Ferguson*

Trombone

Geoff Durbin•
Bear Irwin•
Christian Dickinson*
Matthew Morse•

Rhythm

John Burgh, piano•
Alexander Price, guitar†
Nick Adams, bass†
Michael Kingan, drums*
Jack Stamp, percussion•*

Please visit the Doc Severinsen page on iup.edu/livelyarts for biographies on our musicians.

• alumni / * faculty / † student

Selected Members of the IUP Chorale

Alyssa Boxer	Wesley Caulkins
Jay Clinton	Ed Dorner
Riley Droney	Mariana Gonzalez
Lydia Hassell	Afton Herring
Nick Hudak	Amber Leitsch
Tyler Morgan	Katie Smith
Kelly Snyder	Mason Stiver
Lucas Sweeney	Nicole Tyger
Devon Vaow	Anna Very
Mackenzie Watkins	Hanna Wilson
Jessica Zelenack	

The Keystone Big Band was assembled and managed by Kevin Eisensmith. The choral ensemble was assembled by Ryan Beeken.

The Helwig Distinguished Artist Endowment

The Wilfred E. Helwig Distinguished Artist Endowment was established in 1987 by Florence Lattimer Helwig in memory of her late husband.



As we celebrate 25 years of the Live-ly Arts during our 2014-2015 season, we could not do it without including one of the most significant programs that has brought top performing artists to Indiana for over 25 years, the Helwig Distinguished Artist Endowment.

And what better way to open our celebration than with 1995 Helwig Distinguished Artist, Doc Severisen, one of the most beloved, giving, and electrifying performers ever to be perform on the Fisher stage.

Other Helwig Distinguished Artists have included Itzhak Perlman, Richard Stoltzman, Hal Holbrook, Andre Watts, Brian Bedford, Dave Brubeck, Cleo Laine and John Dankworth, Chita Rivera, Billy Taylor, Peter Nero, Rosemary Clooney, Olivia Newton-John, Roger Williams, Amy Grant, Marvin Hamlisch, and Bernadette Peters. In March 2013, the Helwig Endowment also provided support for the appearance of opera star and Indiana native, Renée Fleming.

Wilfred E. Helwig (pictured above), Indiana businessman and philanthropist, founded the Helwig Insurance Agency in Indiana in 1928. During his long and successful career, Mr. Helwig energetically participated in area civic, safety, and charitable organizations, actively supporting the Community Chest (now the

United Way), the Indiana County YMCA, the Shrine Crippled Children's Hospital and Burn Institutes, the Children's Home for the Blind in Pittsburgh, and the Penn's Woods Council of the Boy Scouts of America. He was a charter member of the IUP President's Council.



Florence Lattimer Helwig, a proud native of Punxsutawney, Pa., has carried on her late husband's philanthropic work in the Indiana community and in her winter home in Fort Lauderdale, Fla., where she is a member of the Fort Lauderdale Opera Society, the Florida Symphony Association, and the Broward Friends of the Miami Ballet. In Indiana, Mrs. Helwig has actively supported the university as a charter and continuing member of the President's Council and as a major benefactor through the endowment that supports this series.

She has energetically supported the Indiana Symphony Series, the YMCA, the Indiana Arts Council, and many other Indiana County charitable organizations as well as supporting the Lattimer House in Punxsutawney. She has received the Distinguished Patron of the Performing Arts Award from the Indiana Symphony Society for "long-term, consistent active support to the furtherance of the performing arts in Indiana."

