

# Columbia County

M A G A Z I N E

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## Dirk Meyer

People

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### Music Director, Symphony Orchestra Augusta

**Time in position:** 3 months

**Family:** My wife, Paula, and our two cocker spaniels, Teddy and Harvey. The rest of my family lives in Germany, where I am from originally.

**Why I'm Passionate About What I Do:** I truly believe that music can make us better human beings. Experiencing a concert together can connect total strangers in a shared experience – a shared emotional experience that may range from the melancholy to the exuberant. In a time of *virtual* realities, these are *true* social connections that create empathy for our fellow humans.



**Community Groups and Charities I Love to Support:** I like good journalism, and I like classical music. Therefore, National Public Radio and several of its classical music member stations are always on top of my list. In addition, both Paula and I are passionate about the enormous problem of plastic pollution that our modern world faces, and so we like to support environmental causes that focus on this issue.

**Biggest Career or Life Obstacle I've Overcome and How:** I think the biggest obstacle in the career of a conductor is the huge amount of rejection that one experiences over the years. This is mostly because the competition is so enormous. For any job that we apply for, there are usually 200-plus applications. The one and only way to deal with this problem is persistency. I have managed to ignore, or at least blend out, the endless stream of rejection that conductors will experience during their careers: be it from people who are questioning their talents, from losing out to competitors whose main qualification is "who they know," or from the countless rejection letters that I have received over the years. No matter how personal each one of these might feel, you have to just get up and try again.

**Accomplishment I'm Most Proud Of:** To be where I am today. When I started out, all I was hoping for was to somehow get paid for making music. Today, I am the music director of two professional orchestras and a professional opera company. I never would have dreamed this to be possible.

**What Your Childhood Self Wanted to Be When You Grew Up:** For a brief period, I was following every boy's dream of being an astronaut or an airplane pilot. But then I decided pretty early on that I wanted to be a conductor. By the time I was a teenager, I knew that's what I wanted to do.

**Favorite Way to Spend Saturday Afternoon:** Cueing up my German Bundesliga and watching my favorite soccer teams with my dogs.

**Favorite TV Shows:** "Seinfeld" and "Game of Thrones"

**Favorite Movies:** The original *Star Wars* trilogy and *The Name of the Rose*

**Favorite Sports Team:** Die Mannschaft (German National Soccer Team)

**Favorite Comfort Food:** Goulash over homemade spaetzle

**Favorite App:** My Spotify Music App

**Last Book Read:** *Dictator* by Robert Harris

**Dream Vacation:** Exploring the cities, countrysides and culture of Indonesia and Bali. I find this part of the world fascinating and extremely beautiful. I have been to Thailand and Malaysia, but I have never been to this group of islands, and I hear it is amazing.

**Something That Has Changed My Life:** Not something, but someone: My wife, Paula.

**Best Thing I Ever Learned:** If you truly believe in something, you can make it work.

**One Word You Would Use to Describe Yourself:** Resilient

**Favorite Hobbies:** I love to cook, and I love to travel.

**Secret Aspiration:** One of these days I would love to get my pilot's license.

**Reality Show I Would Totally Win:** A reality show for people who know absolutely nothing about reality shows

**Something People Would Be Surprised to Know About Me:** When I was 19 years old, my hair was shoulder long and I played lead guitar in a heavy metal band.

What person do you think we should know? If you'd like to suggest someone we should meet, email [editor@columbiacountymag.com](mailto:editor@columbiacountymag.com) and tell us why.

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