

## Celia Dolgan

### Community Affairs



Music has been a part of Cecilia's life since 1947 when at the age of nine, she sang the leading role of Gretel in the Operetta "Hansel and Gretel". That debut also marked the beginning of her contribution to perpetuating Slovenian music in the United States. At her commencement in January 1956 she sang the popular "La Vie En Rose" in French. She majored in French and minored in business.

In 1956 she successfully auditioned with more than 1,200 singers to become a member of the Cleveland Orchestra Chorus under the direction of choral conductor, Robert Shaw. For ten years she was a member of the alto section singing in major choral works and was also a member of the smaller chorus that went on tour with the orchestra that played at Carnegie Hall in New York City. She studied voice with George Vassos of the Cleveland Institute of Music and landed the alto lead role in the school's summer opera workshop. In 1961 she sang the lead role of Gretel in the opera "Hansel and Gretel" in the first program to open the new Kulas Hall at the Cleveland Institute of Music. This led to a performance of the opera with the Cleveland Symphony Orchestra at Severance Hall in February 1962. At this time she received a voice scholarship to continue studying at the Cleveland Music Settlement.

After a visit to Slovenia in the 1960's, she began to share her knowledge of Slovenian music with youngsters of the SNJP Slovenian Junior Chorus and became its musical director. She has taken the chorus on annual concert dates to Europe, Canada, California, and Florida.

Cecilia has arranged and published two songbooks of Slovenian folk songs, compiled a directory of Slovenian organizations throughout the U.S., written lyrics to 100 songs, and directed a choir of more than 100 singers for the celebration that recognized Slovenia as an independent country in 1992. As president of the National Polka Hall of Fame, she helped organize the fundraiser, "Polka at the Rock", an evening of polka music played at the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame. She has now become a free-lance writer for the NewsHerald, a daily paper in Lake County.

She lives in Willoughby Hills with her husband Bob, a sportswriter for the Cleveland Plain Dealer. They have two grown children.