

Symphony House

Picture

To

Come



Symphony House was a Greek Revival masterpiece designed in 1833 by Richard Upjohn. (Upjohn was also the Architect of Trinity Church in New York City and later founded the American Architectural Society.) The mansion was built at 166 Union street from 1843-45 by pioneer Maine lumberman Isaac Farrar as a present to his second wife and it served as the Farrar residence for many years. Isaac Merrill, founder of the Merrill Trust Company later owned and renovated the mansion Victorian style. From 1911-1919, the building became the University of Maine College of Law.

In 1929 it was purchased by the Bangor Symphony Orchestra, and named Symphony House. The building served as home of the Northern Conservatory of Music until the school closed in 1972. As the Northern Conservatory of Music was founded as a degree granting college of music for men and women that



offered a number of study programs. The Bachelor of Music Degree in Music Education prepared individuals to become music teachers and music supervisors in public schools. There were also Bachelor of Music Degrees in Music Theory and Applied Programs with Bachelor of Music Degrees with a major in piano, organ, voice, violin, woodwind, brass, or percussion. Small classroom settings and one to one student-teacher instruction was always emphasized at The Conservatory. Symphony House also accommodated the Music Branch of the Bangor Public Library and was also affiliated with the Bangor Theological Seminary and Husson College in Bangor. There were several performing-music groups at the Conservatory including concert band, brass ensemble, jazz band and chorus...in fact, all students were required to register for chorus. Stringed instrument majors played in the Bangor Symphony Orchestra. The Conservatory enrolled about 80 students.

After the Conservatory closed its doors in 1972, the building was given to the YWCA by the Curtis Hutchins family in 1973. For many, many years the mansion was used for YWCA functions, public exhibits and private receptions. With the recent merger of the YWCA and the YMCA (formerly located on Hammond Street), the Bangor Y (as it is now called) has been undergoing renovations and expansions. As a result, many of the Mansion rooms are now used for the Y's programming classes.

In 1973, Symphony House was placed on the National Register of Historic Places as the Isaac Farrar Mansion. But with the memories of the melodious sounds emanating from the building every day, for us locals, it will always be fondly known as *Symphony House*!

