



Arts Around Town: Classic rock 'bonds' with Reading Symphony for New Year's Eve

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Jeans 'n Classics will perform with the Reading Symphony Orchestra at the Sovereign Performing Arts Center on New Year's Eve.

New Year's Eve celebrates with a bang in Berks when the music of James Bond permeates the [Sovereign Performing Arts Center](#) in Reading. That's when Jeans 'n Classics once again teams with the [Reading Symphony Orchestra](#) for a New Year's Eve concert, this time around themed "Shaken Not Stirred – The Music of James Bond." Fresh on the heels of the currently released Bond film, "Skyfall," and the 50th anniversary of the screen debut of Ian Fleming's world-famous 007 agent, the concert will feature Bond favorites past and present.

"We want people to leave well and truly rocked," said Peter Brennan, arranger, guitarist and founder of [Jeans 'n Classics](#). "They've got their Bond fix and heard a good band and singers. They can scream and yell and dance in the aisles," he said.

Brennan established the London, Ontario-based Jeans 'n Classics in the early 90s.

The 7:30 p.m. concert is being held early enough in the evening so patrons can enjoy other New Year's Eve activities in the community, including fireworks atop Mount Penn at midnight, said Jeff Rutter, operations manager and youth orchestra coordinator with the Reading Symphony Orchestra, which marked its milestone 100th anniversary this year.

Brennan describes Jeans 'n Classics as a showcase of fine rock musicians and headlining stars

who recreate and represent the classic rock music of whomever they've been asked to do with symphony orchestras worldwide, from London, Calgary and Nova Scotia, to Anchorage, San Diego, Jacksonville, Hartford and even our Harrisburg. Among their headliners are Roger Hodgson, formerly of Supertramp, and Martin Fry of ABC. Their range is rather wide, from the music of The Beatles, Pink Floyd and Led Zeppelin, to Michael Jackson, Queen, The Beach Boys and Sting/The Police, to name some.

"There are no wigs, costumes or theatrical illusions," Brennan said, "just a proper rock band with an orchestra."



Born in England and raised in Canada, Brennan's own musical tastes were heavily influenced by The Beatles. As a musician, he traveled extensively in Canada and the United States in the 70s and 80s, but his ultimate was to team rock with classic. He explained that "what began as seven scared people assembled for a one-off concert experiment with an equally nervous orchestra" was the impetus for Jeans 'n Classics in the mid-90s. When the London Symphony Orchestra asked if the group could do an Elton John show, it turned out to be a sellout, he said. The concept began to catch on with each new show, and with more concerts in demand in the Canadian market.

"It was pure fluke, 'can you do this?' and I said 'yes,'" Brennan recalled. "We were rock bands standing there with orchestras in a melding of the worlds."

Reading's concert on New Year's Eve will feature Jeans 'n Classics vocalists Stephanie Martin and Neil Donell, and musicians Brennan on guitar, Mitch Tyler on electric bass, Jeff Christmas on drums, and John Regan on keyboard. Regan also will serve as host of the show in presenting a bit of music history.

For further info: jeansnclassics.com

readingsymphony.org