

High Notes

News for Hartford Symphony Orchestra Donors & Friends

Save the Dates

Masterworks Series Rachmaninoff & Firebird

February 12-15, 2015

Orchestral fireworks take flight from Venus to New York to Russia, including Rachmaninoff's sumptuous Second Piano Concerto and Stravinsky's romantic *Firebird*. These Valentine's Day weekend concerts will feature HSO Music Director Carolyn Kuan and guest pianist Sean Chen.

Pops! Series The Music of Michael Jackson

February 28, 2015

Join guest artist James Delisco, conductor Brent Havens and the HSO for an evening filled with fabulous music spanning 40 years of Michael Jackson's influential and celebrated career.

Masterworks Series Saint-Saëns & Brahms

March 12-15, 2015

Saint-Saëns' energetic and soaring cello Concerto No. 1 and Brahms' sunny Symphony No. 2 welcome the arrival of spring and an acclaimed father-son duo, conductor Gerard Schwarz and cellist Julian Schwarz.

Pops! Series Playing With Food 3!

March 21, 2015

HSO Music Director Carolyn Kuan and the HSO musicians are all fired up for Playing with Food 3, a new program of delectable sights, sounds, and tastes.

Sunday Serenades On Angels' Wings: Beethoven, Tchaikovsky & Beyond

March 22, 2015

This concert program takes its inspiration from a selection of old master paintings paired side by side with contemporary works in the Wadsworth Atheneum.

2014-2015
Season Sponsor

TRAVELERS 



Bravo! Gala, May 16, 2015

Join us on Saturday, May 16, 2015 at the Connecticut Convention Center for an elegant evening in support of the Hartford Symphony Orchestra. You will experience delightful entertainment, exclusive auction items, dinner, dancing and perhaps even a surprise or two! This event is not to be missed. Black tie preferred. Tickets are on sale now and can be purchased by calling Brian Nekoloff at 860.760.7326.

New Faces at the Hartford Symphony Orchestra

We've welcomed some new faces to the Hartford Symphony Orchestra staff over the past few months:

Benjamin Hosig, a Hartford native and seasoned teaching artist, received his degree in Arts Administration from Arizona State University. Recently, Benjamin became co-founder and executive director of CT Tap Productions, and is now thrilled to be managing the Education and Community Engagement department of the Hartford Symphony Orchestra.

Amanda Savio joined Hartford Symphony Orchestra as its Marketing & Public Relations Manager in October 2014. Amanda has spent the majority of her career in non-profit arts marketing, including for The Bushnell and most recently Hill-Stead Museum in Farmington, where she served as Public Relations Manager and Program Manager of the nationally-recognized Sunken Garden Poetry Festival.

Previously of the Australian Chamber Orchestra, **Elissa Seed** is Hartford Symphony Orchestra's new Production Manager, having joined the organization in December 2014. The Australian Chamber Orchestra is one of the most highly-regarded string ensembles in the world, and Elissa has extensive experience in all aspects of concert and production management.

With a successful career as a NY attorney as well as a background in classical music, **Ruth Sovronsky** elected to leave law when she relocated to Connecticut four years ago. Previously Development Director for the ACLU of CT, Ruth joined the HSO team as Development Director in December 2014, to fulfill a longstanding passion to work for an arts organization.

Welcome to Ben, Amanda, Elissa and Ruth!

Celebrate Valentine's Day with Hartford Symphony Orchestra!

Indulge your love of music with "**Rachmaninoff & Firebird,**" which is being presented as part of the Hartford Symphony Orchestra's Masterworks Series February 12-15, 2015. This concert will be conducted by HSO Music Director Carolyn Kuan, and guest pianist will be Sean Chen.

Orchestral fireworks take flight from Venus to New York to Russia, including Rachmaninoff's sumptuous Second Piano Concerto and Stravinsky's romantic *Firebird*. The program also features Wagner's Overture to *Tannhäuser* and Three Dance Episodes from *On the Town* by Bernstein, which will include images from the Wadsworth Atheneum's Coney Island exhibit. This HSO collaboration with the Wadsworth Atheneum is sponsored by the Richard P. Garmany Fund at Hartford Foundation for Public Giving.

Pianist Sean Chen is being hailed as a rising star with a "million-volt smile" and a "formidable set of fingers" (*Dallas Morning News*). In 2013 Chen won the American Pianists Association's DeHaan Classical Fellowship, one of the most lucrative and significant prizes available to an American pianist. He also won Third Prize at the 14th Van Cliburn



International Piano Competition, becoming the first American to reach the finals since 1997. The 26-year-old American pianist has appeared as soloist with the Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra under Gerard Schwarz, Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra under Leonard Slatkin and Miguel Harth-Bedoya, Indianapolis Chamber Orchestra, Corpus Christi, New West, Phoenix and San Diego Symphony Orchestras, and the Suwon City Philharmonic in South Korea.

"Rachmaninoff & Firebird" is the Tina Mahar McNally and Alexander Campbell McNally Memorial Concert. The Masterworks Series is sponsored by MetLife Foundation and The Edward C. and Ann T. Roberts Foundation.

Interview with Ruth Sovronsky, HSO's New Development Director

High Notes: What drew you to the HSO position? Do you have any exciting changes you would like to see for the HSO?

Ruth Sovronsky: When I relocated to Hartford from New York, my 'dream job' was to work with an arts organization committed to help build and serve the surrounding community. Four years after arriving in Connecticut, I was presented with the once-in-a-lifetime chance to work with a vibrant symphony committed to playing an important role in that process.

I am so pleased that the HSO is finding exciting ways to engage youth and reach out to new audiences, but this is just the beginning.

HN: So many of the HSO staff members are musicians or passionate about music. Are you a musician and/or is music a passion in your life?

RS: Music is embedded in my DNA. My grandmother played piano for silent movies, my great-uncle was a concert pianist and music was always present. The house resonated with *Peter and The Wolf*, *Carmen*, *Sleeping Beauty* and *The Nutcracker*. As a young child, I attended symphony performances and, being a New Yorker, those memories include Bernstein's Young People's Concerts. Classical music was my first love.

I began piano at age 5, studied music continuously through college and still play today. I wanted to be a concert pianist, but quickly recognized that my aspirations

outstripped my talent! But my hopes became reality for my two children who are professional musicians.

HN: Hartford is becoming well known for its artistic flare and culture. Have you always lived here? If not, what other cities have you lived in and what did you enjoy about those locations?

RS: When I moved to the Hartford area four years ago, I had no idea of the level of art I could find here. In fact, I initially believed I'd have to return to New York to find great theater and a high level of music performance. I am the first to admit how wrong I was. Hartford is rightfully proud of its vibrant and creative arts environment. Hartford's investment in arts is manifested in many ways, from the Riverfront music series in the summer, the Hartford Jazz Festival in July to Open Studios Hartford every November. As Hartford advances as a center for the arts, the HSO will continue as one of its crown jewels.

HN: Having joined the HSO team after the launch of the Bushnell/ HSO alliance, what exciting opportunities do you think will come from this dynamic alliance?

RS: I am thrilled to be part of an exciting and innovative experiment with the goal of finding new ways to help buttress important arts organizations. With administrative "back office" assistance from the Bushnell, the HSO has been 'liberated' to focus on the music, the artistic programming, and creative expansion of our outreach.



RUTH SOVRONSKY, DEVELOPMENT DIRECTOR

And because of the Bushnell's support, we are now working to engage more individuals, businesses and other community members as key financial partners.

Helping the HSO cultivate new economic partners ensures that the HSO will not merely survive but flourish. Each donor should take pride in every note the symphony plays, for without them, the music – and the HSO – would be silenced.

HN: You only started working here a few days ago, but what can you tell us about the impressions so far of the HSO and its current staff members?

RS: In just a few days, every musician or staff member I've met has made me feel instantly welcomed and valued. Their deep dedication, love and passion for the symphony is palpable, and never before have I felt so "at home" so fast. To my delight, our donors echo these strong passions, making it apparent that every individual connected with the HSO is committed to our success.

Focus on Discovery Series

The Hartford Symphony Orchestra Education department presented its first concert in the Lincoln Financial Discovery Series of the season on October 29: *5,000 Years in 50 Minutes: Celebrating Hispanic Culture in the USA through Music*. Guest conductor Oscar Bustillo led students on an interactive musical journey featuring Caribbean Salsa, Tango, Copland and Bernstein, too. Hundreds of school children shouting out "Mambo!" at the direction of the conductor was a sight to see *and* hear! There was clapping, dancing in the seats, and even spontaneous group singing during the final number. It was yet another demonstration of this season's theme, *Music Brings Us Together*.

Feedback: "I have been working in Hartford for the past 10 years and have attended many concerts at The Bushnell. This was by far one of the most engaging performances I have seen." - Kim LeRoy, Grade 4 Teacher at Expeditionary Learning Academy at Moylan School.

The second Discovery Concert this season was Leopold Mozart's *Toy Symphony* and the classic tale of *Peter and the Wolf* on November 19. This concert featured a fully-staged vaudeville-inspired solo performance by Michael Boudewyns, Co-Founder of Really Inventive Stuff and was conducted by our very own Maestra Carolyn Kuan. Following the concert, students were able to discuss the wonderfully interactive performance in a Q&A session with Kuan and Boudewyns.

Feedback: "WONDERFUL show today!! Probably the best HSO children's concert I've ever been too!" – Jessie Wills, Music Teacher at L.W. Batchelder Elementary School.



Conductor Oscar Bustillo (center) with HSO Director of Artistic Operations and Administration Steve Collins (left) and HSO Manager of Education and Community Engagement Benjamin Hosig (right).



Bushnell Vice President of Education & Community Yolande Spears (center) joins Benjamin Hosig (left) backstage with Principal Timpanist Gene Bozzi (right)



Orchestra Cellist and Board member Carole Olefsky warms up.



Bustillo visits with Weaver students for Q&A following the concert.



HSO Music Director Carolyn Kuan conducts a Q&A session with students after Prokofiev's *Peter and the Wolf*.



Guest artist Michael Boudewyns & Carolyn Kuan after the *Peter and the Wolf* performance.

If you would like to receive this newsletter electronically, please contact Colleen Coelho. Call 860-987-6086 or email Colleen_Coelho@bushnell.org and provide your email address.

Note from the Editor: We understand that, due to a problem with the mailing of the last issue of High Notes, you may have received some outdated information. We sincerely apologize, and hope you enjoy this issue. Happy New Year!