

# QUARTER NOTES

News for Hartford Symphony Orchestra Donors & Friends

## FINDING THE HARMONY: THE CHALLENGES OF RUNNING A SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Leading any multi-million dollar nonprofit arts organization is a daunting task that includes juggling tight budgets and perpetually increasing annual costs. But managing a symphony orchestra elevates the challenge. The executive director must honor a centuries-old art form and simultaneously attract new 21st century audiences who often have little patience with last century's etiquette of sitting quietly for two hours in a darkened hall or being unable to enter the performance space except during designated times. As audience members, we are witnesses to changing mores inside the concert hall, but, behind the scenes, the new challenges are multiplied.

Steve Collins, Executive Director of the Hartford Symphony, offered his perspective on the unique challenges of running a symphony orchestra and outlined four specific tasks that require his undivided attention and expertise.

Steve's first priority is to "get everyone to row in the same direction." Building a cohesive team that unites very different constituents (administrative staff, artistic leaders, board of directors and 86 contracted orchestra musicians) demands high level communication skills and extraordinary patience. Steve explained: "Everyone – musicians, staff, board and the public – cares about the same thing,



HSO's three-way leadership team of Steve Collins, Carolyn Kuan and Jeffery Verney

namely, the health and growth of the Hartford Symphony and the art form we hold dear. But harnessing everyone in productive and positive ways is the real challenge."

Adding to that challenge is the inherent three-way leadership system. Unlike other nonprofit organizations (with a Board and Executive Director at the helm), symphonies have three distinct leaders that include the Chairman of the Board of Directors, the Executive Director and the Music Director. All three must work in unison towards the same vision, finding ways to reconcile many different, and often competing, ideas concerning the best way to achieve strategic goals. It falls

to the Executive Director to facilitate that collaboration.

Steve's second area of focus, the creation of a cohesive organizational culture, is a moving target. Steve observed: "Orchestras share the core belief that there is inherent value in the performance of live music. But different constituent groups within the organization (musicians, Music Director, Board and management) invariably have different opinions on how that culture should operate. In an orchestra, musicians do not create the music. Rather, they bring it to life."

Orchestras throughout the country are in the midst of a thrilling evolution, reshaping symphony culture. Symphony musicians of the past commonly believed they were the orchestral product, but with today's changing expectations, the musicians – and the music – comprise only one component of the total audience experience. While the appetite for live performance has not diminished, how audiences consume the content has changed.

Many see a masterworks concert as a welcome respite from a fast-paced world. It is a chance to focus on just one thing, the music, and be totally absorbed by the art form we all love. But orchestras must also keep pace with new audience members,

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who bring contemporary preferences and buying habits. An executive director must have his finger on the pulse of these changing appetites. For example, 30 years ago, a traditional masterworks concert was a standard two-and-a-half hours in duration, with a 20-minute intermission. Today, with the advent of digital technology that offers 24/7 entertainment on mobile devices, it is harder to capture and retain audience attention. As a result, orchestras throughout the world offer concerts that are shorter in length, with faster-paced content, and more contemporary/experimental selections to offset the traditional repertoire.

Responsible financial management, the third overriding task, is closely tied to organizational culture. Orchestras rely on two primary forms of revenue: contributed income (support from individuals, businesses and foundations) and earned income from ticket sales. Steve explained: "The challenge is to keep the two revenue sources in balance and find ways to offset the rising costs of fixed expenses (administrative and musical personnel, production costs for all concerts and events and overhead for office space and venue costs), which increase faster than revenue."

Since earned revenue amounts to roughly 45% of operating costs, management must seek and embrace creative solutions to support financial growth, which means



Steve and Carolyn working together to "find the harmony" at HSO's 75th Season Gala



The Harry Potter films brought new patrons to the Hartford Symphony Orchestra

increased ticket sales. Masterworks performances have changed in the last 10 years, as have POPS. In response to demand, full-length feature movie concerts with a live orchestra performing the entire musical score to accompany the film are now part of the standard "pops" repertoire of all symphony orchestras.



Three generations of Harry Potter fans enjoying the HSO's performance of Harry Potter films in concert. On March 28, 2020, HSO will perform Harry Potter and *The Goblet Of Fire*, the fifth in the Harry Potter film series.

Different concert choices, unusual repertoire, and the recognition that not everyone wants the same experience must be taken into consideration. The crowd that attends HSO's popular Talcott Mountain Music Festival may or may not also attend

concerts in traditional venues such as The Bushnell. Both Steve and HSO's incredibly talented and creative Music Director, Carolyn Kuan, find pathways to encourage traditional audiences to expand their horizons, with guest artists and selections that incorporate world music and feature instruments and musicians from around the globe.

Finally, in a changing world and an industry in flux, there is an expanding recognition of the vital importance of diversity. While listed last, it is NOT last in HSO's priorities. For years, orchestras endeavored to make symphonies more reflective of their community. Sixty years ago, roughly 90% of orchestral musicians were white men, so the blind audition was created to remove gender bias in auditions. Today, women make up roughly 50% of orchestral musicians and the HSO reflects that changed demographic. Racial and ethnic diversity has lagged far behind, but an awareness of these deficiencies has prompted a new urgency and focus. Orchestras throughout the country are committed to increasing ethnic diversity. A dedicated Board committee of the HSO is charged with the responsibility to find creative solutions that will result in meaningful and necessary change. The new 2019-20 season reflects efforts to address this challenge. Intentional diversity in the selection of composers, guest artists, and guest conductors is one step in a long process of self-examination and commitment to continue the ongoing evolution of orchestral music.

The one constant in any art form is perpetual change, and, as stewards of the Hartford Symphony, we must find creative ways to usher in the future and become part of the growing movement to nurture, grow and support the beloved art of symphonic music. 🎵

**YOU** - our donors -  
are the key to the  
success of the HSO.  
Renew your Annual Fund  
membership today!

# WE ARE SO GRATEFUL TO OUR DONORS: MEMBERSHIP HAS ITS PRIVILEGES!



Carolyn Kuan conducting the first rehearsal of Mahler 5, with HSO donors as special guests

Two HSO donor “thank-you” events combine gratitude with exclusive access.

## HSO’S FIRST REHEARSAL & NOSH: five events each season at 61 Woodland Street, Hartford

Three years ago, our “First Rehearsal & Nosh” (FRN) began as a question. Would music lovers enjoy the experience of observing how a Masterworks concert is created? The answer from our first guests was a resounding “YES!” Thanks to that enthusiastic response, the FRN is now a regular mainstay of our member appreciation program. Five times each season, guests are invited to join a Hartford Symphony FIRST rehearsal to see “how the sausage is made.”

Being our guest at a first rehearsal places you alongside HSO musicians, in the best position to observe the process by which conductors and musicians collaborate to

bring a beloved orchestral work (or a brand new and never-recorded composition) from the page to the stage. With only four rehearsals for each Masterworks program, the first is an experience like no other. Up until that moment, the musicians have only seen THEIR part of the music. The first rehearsal begins the process of fitting all the puzzle pieces together. Beyond decisions about tempi, crescendos and decrescendos, critical determinations of rhythms, timing and cues for each instrument section (or for each individual musician) are an essential part of the first rehearsal process.

Patrons and musicians sit together for the pre-rehearsal “nosh,” a light supper. Seated together at cafeteria-style tables, this is an opportunity to ask questions, share stories, and get to know one another in an informal setting.

**If this is for you, become a Principal Club member!** The First Rehearsal &

Nosh events are open to all Principal Club members (with Annual Fund gifts of \$500 or more each year). With capacity for only 20 people per event, members may attend only one per season. FRN dates in the 19/20 season will be: November 12, 2019, January 13, 2020, February 10, 2020, March 9, 2020 and June 1, 2020. Qualified members receive invitations at the start of each season, and are encouraged to quickly communicate first, second and third choices.

## SNEAK PEEK PREVIEW of the new season, with a presentation by Carolyn Kuan

This event was offered for the first time in February 2019, and our hospitality partnership with the Goodwin Hotel was perfect, given our shared ancestry: Francis Goodwin II, the “father” of the Hartford Symphony, was the nephew of James Goodwin, who built the Goodwin, which began as an exclusive apartment building that once housed J.P. Morgan, a Hartford native and cousin to the Goodwin family. The staff at the Goodwin was attentive and accommodating, and Master Chef Tyler Anderson’s team (owner of Millwright’s Restaurant Group) created mouth-watering treats for our 75 guests. Tyler was twice named Chef of the Year in Connecticut by the CT Restaurants’ Association, so the chance to sample his culinary artistry was a special bonus.

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HSO’s woodwind section in rehearsal



Enjoying an up close and personal experience with the HSO

# HSO'S MUSIC DIRECTOR UPDATE: CAROLYN KUAN ON THE FRONT LINES OF HISTORY



Commemorating the 50th anniversary of the Stonewall uprising that began the gay liberation movement, the New York City Opera commissioned a moving and explosive new American opera, *Stonewall*. Written by Iain Bell, with a libretto by Mark Campbell, NYC Opera could have selected any conductor in the world to conduct the world premiere. They chose HSO's very own Carolyn Kuan. The five performances in June of 2019 made history, and Carolyn Kuan was on the front lines. Carolyn's positive energy, brilliant musicianship, commitment to community, and passion to use music to make a difference are just some of the reasons why we are so lucky to have her lead the HSO. Carolyn's photos, taken during the rehearsal process, are included with production shots from the performance. Please enjoy a video, courtesy of NYC Opera: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LxRJI1przF0>

The HSO welcomes all, and is committed to creating a safe space for everyone in our community. Are we proud of Carolyn? You bet we are!! And we hope you are too. 🏳️‍🌈



Carolyn Kuan in rehearsal for *Stonewall* with director Leonard Foglia



Above and Below: Carolyn's insider photographs taken during rehearsals of *Stonewall*



In performance: curtain calls for the cast of *Stonewall*





The cast of Stonewall in performance



Brian James Myer with Jessica Fishenfeld and Liz Book in performance of Stonewall

## WHAT IS STONEWALL?

In the early morning hours of June 28, 1969, a police raid on a gay bar in Greenwich Village, known as the Stonewall Inn, was the spark that ignited a movement.

The 1960's were hostile to the lesbian, gay, bisexual and transgender communities. Faced with the criminalization of same-sex relationships, the LGBT community sought refuge in gay bars and clubs, where they could openly socialize without worry. Stonewall was a well-known gathering place. Large and relatively cheap, it welcomed drag queens, runaways and homeless gay youths. And it was one of the few – if not the only – gay bar that permitted dancing.

Police raids on gay bars were a fact of life, but often cops would tip off the bars in advance, allowing owners to hide illegal activities. But the raid on Stonewall in the early morning hours of June 28th came without warning. Armed with a warrant, the police officers stormed the club, roughed up patrons, and arrested 13 employees and patrons who were in violation of the “gender-appropriate clothing”

statutes. The community had reached its breaking point. Angry patrons and residents stayed outside the bar and became increasingly agitated as people were aggressively manhandled. When an officer hit a woman over the head as he forced her into a police vehicle, she encouraged the onlookers to react, and within minutes a full-blown riot began involving hundreds of people. The protests continued, grew in strength and numbers, and involved thousands of people over the next five days.



Lisa Chavez as Maggie in Stonewall


Stonewall was a galvanizing force for LGBT activism, and many new gay rights organizations were born including the Gay Liberation Front, GLAAD (Gay and Lesbian Alliance Against Defamation) and the Human Rights Campaign, the largest national lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender and queer civil rights organization. In 2016, President Barack Obama designated Stonewall Inn, Christopher Park and the surrounding streets as a national monument, in recognition of the events that contributed to the protection of gay and human rights.

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## MEMBERSHIP HAS ITS PRIVILEGES!

By popular demand, our Sneak Peek will return in 2020 and will again include an exclusive cocktail event in the beautiful ballroom of the Goodwin Hotel in downtown Hartford. This once-a-year event offers music lovers a chance to learn about the new season before it is unveiled to the public. But even more exciting is the engaging musical and visual presentation by Music Director, Carolyn Kuan, who will explain the creative process needed to select orchestral works and build the new 20/21 season.

**Absolutely yes! This one's for me!** The Sneak Peek Preview is offered to all Maestra members who make yearly gifts of \$2,500 or more to the Annual Fund. Our event in the coming season will take place on February 24, 2020, and special invitations only to Maestra members will be sent in December 2019.

There's always something for everyone! Membership does indeed have its privileges, and with special events at every level, we are always experimenting with new and exciting ways to express our gratitude to YOU, our donors, because without you, there is no Hartford Symphony. Donors are vital members of the HSO family. We show our appreciation with exclusive access and events, such as invited dress rehearsals, guest artist receptions, entry to the Bushnell Suite (a private restaurant catered by Max on the third floor of the Belding Lobby) and more. As you review your Annual Fund membership, consider an upgrade to take advantage of great benefits, gain closer access to the music and our fabulous musicians, and simultaneously support the symphony you love. 

### QUESTIONS ABOUT ANNUAL FUND BENEFITS AND LEVELS?

Just contact Jen Galante, our Annual Fund and Special Events Manager, at 860-760-7302 or by email to [jpgalante@hartfordsymphony.org](mailto:jpgalante@hartfordsymphony.org) She'll be thrilled to say "hello!"


## TAKE NOTE!

# 75 YEARS OF THE HSO FEATURED BY THE CONNECTICUT HISTORICAL SOCIETY



An exceptional exhibit at the Connecticut Historical Society on display from May 21, 2019 through August 10, 2019, honored the 75th season of the Hartford Symphony Orchestra. The exhibit celebrated the rich history of our Symphony from its humble beginnings in 1934 as a "WPA" orchestra (funded under the Federal Music Project, a subdivision of the Works Progress Administration) to the present day, under the leadership of our Music Director, Carolyn Kuan.

As we step forward into our 76th season, we give thanks to our wonderful partners at the Connecticut Historical Society, and acknowledge that our collaboration would not have been possible without the generous support of key funders: the National Endowment for the Arts, the Elizabeth Carse Foundation (Bank of America Trustee), and Nordstrom Cares.

Our secret power always lies in what we can achieve together! 

### LIMITED OPPORTUNITY:

This piece of commemorative HSO history can be acquired for a 75th Anniversary donation of \$375. Please contact Jen Galante, HSO's Annual Fund and Special Events Manager, at 860-760-7302, or [jpgalante@hartfordsymphony.org](mailto:jpgalante@hartfordsymphony.org)



## SPONSOR PROFILE

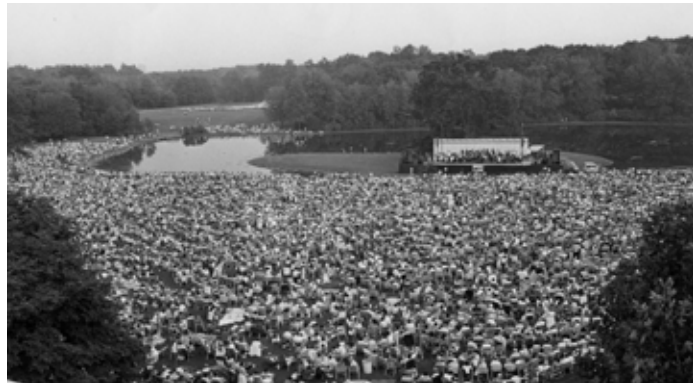
# CIGNA: PAST VENUE OF HSO'S SUMMER FESTIVAL AND TODAY'S COLLABORATIVE PARTNER

**B**efore there was a Talcott Mountain Music Festival, there was HSO's Summer Sounds on Cigna's Bloomfield campus. While the venue of HSO's summer music festival has changed, HSO's connection to Cigna is ongoing. Cigna's commitment to the community drives the company's philanthropy and investment and this past year, Cigna's partnership with the HSO provided expanded support of HSO's programming.

While Cigna Corp. traces its roots back more than 200 years, the company became "Cigna" in 1982 with the merger of Philadelphia-based INA and Connecticut-based Connecticut General. In December 2018, Cigna completed its combination with Express Scripts to create one of the world's largest health service companies, with more than 74,000 global employees and more than 160 million customer relationships worldwide. Cigna is globally headquartered in Bloomfield, CT, and has approximately 4,700 employees throughout the state.

Cigna's mantra, the body-mind connection, is a recognition that emotional wellbeing and physical wellbeing affect one another, and both are essential to good health. Cigna's forward-thinking leadership recognizes that health goes beyond the body. The connection between music and health is well-documented at every age: music is vital to the developing brain in children, and an essential tool that aids those with dementia.

Prevention is a key part of Cigna's focus on good health. Its mobile lab, the Health Improvement Tour, travels the country providing free screenings and health coaching for blood pressure, blood sugar, cholesterol and body mass index. Cigna's recognition that youth aged 12 to 18 are especially vulnerable to suicide and multiple mental health issues prompted the creation




HSO's Summer Sounds on the campus of Cigna in Bloomfield.

of a mental health first aid training program. Presented in collaboration with the Mandell JCC of Greater Hartford, the program helps parents, teachers and other adults to learn to recognize the symptoms of mental illness, thus facilitating early intervention. Cigna encourages all of its employees to give back to the community and gives each employee eight hours of paid leave annually for volunteer service. In a unique program, employees who have worked three years at Cigna can apply for a special grant under which they are paid their full Cigna salary while working at a community service agency for 90 days.

Cigna partners with the nonprofit community, directing its philanthropic investment to create meaningful impact. The commitment to community extends to a vast array of nonprofits that include, among others, Foodshare, Healing

Meals (a project based at Auerfarm in Bloomfield, CT), St. Francis, the Waterbury Police Athletic League, and Girls On The Run, just to name a few.

The Hartford Symphony is honored to partner with Cigna, and we are so proud of what we can achieve – together! 



Today's Talcott Mountain Music Festival in Simsbury

## MUSICIAN SPOTLIGHT

# GARY CAPOZZIELLO

## HSO VIOLINIST

In November of 2016, Gary won the audition to become a member of the Hartford Symphony, and this summer, was featured as HSO's guest soloist, performing the Tchaikovsky Violin Concerto. We are so proud!

### Quarter Notes: At what age did you begin to study music?

I began violin at the age of 9, but as a professional musician, I approach every day as if it were my first. With advanced training, it takes work to stay in touch with your own instincts, and I search for ways to really connect with the composer.

### QN: Did you grow up in Connecticut?

I did. I was born and raised in Fairfield, Connecticut.

### QN: Who helped you get started on a musical path?

Behind every musician is an inspiring teacher – or many teachers - and for me it was Deborah Graser, my childhood teacher, a true mentor. She taught me to love chamber music, which remains a passion. I also had remarkable public school teachers and youth orchestra conductors. My behavior got me into trouble at school, but these amazing teachers never stopped believing in me. They somehow knew that music was my passion – even before I did – and their faith in me kept me going. My debt to all those teachers can never be repaid – except to pay it forward and be a positive force for my students.

### QN: So you are now a teacher! Tell us what you enjoy most about teaching.

I thrive on that moment when a student shows the smallest interest or curiosity. I teach students of all ages, and I also teach at Hotchkiss. When any student works consistently to improve, I respond with infectious

excitement. As a teacher, one of the most rewarding experiences is figuring out how to engage a particular student – and that's when teaching is at its best.

### QN: Did you have any other powerful musical influences?

Without question, my violin hero was Isaac Stern. I'd seen him on stage several times, and, when I was 18 years old, I performed in a master class for him. I remember his intense eyes and his advice to me: "You have to feel that fire in your belly." He was quite strict with me, but since it was the first time anyone had been, I was inspired, not discouraged. I resolved to work as hard as I could. I had some solid talent, but learned about hard work from him.

### QN: Are there other instruments that interest you?

I played blues guitar and took lessons with the same teacher who taught John Mayer, now a famous blues guitarist. At 18, I chose the violin, but I was pretty serious about the guitar as well. I still love the blues, and I have a long list of favorite bands and artists from the 60s and 70s: The Grateful Dead, Led Zeppelin, Pink Floyd and many others. I would have loved to play guitar in a great band that really focused on improvisation.



Gary in performance at the Talcott Mountain Music Festival



### QN: Where did you study as an undergraduate and graduate?

I studied at SUNY Purchase Conservatory of Music, then pursued a Master of Music program at New England Conservatory. I played professionally for about six years before meeting my most recent teacher, Katie Lansdale, and opted to study with her at the Hartt School. I was awarded a full scholarship at Hartt for my Doctor of Music Arts degree.


### QN: What interesting facts can you tell us about the instrument you play?

I play a new violin built by Connecticut violin-maker, Michael Daddona. It is not yet a year old! I connected with him via Instagram and Michael asked me to "play in" his instrument before it was entered in the Violin Society Competition in November of 2018. I played the violin for a few weeks, fell in love with it, and my violin won an award in the Competition!

### QN: If you were not in your current profession as a musician, what other profession would you have chosen and why?

I am fascinated by science. I also practice Vipassana meditation. I'm not sure if science and meditation go hand in hand but there are many neuroscientists who study and practice ancient meditation and its effects on the human mind.

### QN: What's the most fun thing you do on a snowy day?

The opportunity to stay home with nothing to do is a luxury, and I celebrate before breakfast by blasting my favorite rock songs and air guitar along with them. My wife, Zitao, is often bewildered by my weirdness! 



*Alive through great music!*

If you would like to receive this newsletter electronically, please contact Jen Galante. Call 860-760-7302 or e-mail [jgalante@hartfordsymphony.org](mailto:jgalante@hartfordsymphony.org) and provide your e-mail address.