Orchestra Donors & Friends



De-Composed, a feature that explores the composers we want to know better.

Thanks to the movie *The Sting*, which prominently featured "The Entertainer" in the score, composer Scott Joplin is a household name. But does the name James Johnson mean anything to you? After you read this, we hope you'll join others who recognize his genius.

JAMES PRICE JOHNSON (1894 - 1955)

ames Johnson is remembered as the crucial figure in the musical transition from ragtime to jazz, but he was also a classical composer, and is credited as the "father" of the complex stride piano style of composition, a style that hastened the development of jazz. Johnson's protégé was none other than Fats Waller, and Johnson's musical styles and compositions had a profound influence on Duke Ellington, Fats Domino, Count Basie and Thelonius Monk, among others.1

Stride piano is a complex piano style, in which the left-hand creates a rich orchestral accompaniment to a right-hand melody. The term "stride" is derived from the left-hand "striding" the bass line from just below middle "C" to two octaves lower, while the right-hand pushes or pulls on the left-hand rhythm, creating the characteristic rhythmic signature of "stride" piano. Johnson's left-hand speed and accuracy made



him remarkable. Here's a beautiful example of a player piano performing Johnson's 1939 composition, "If Dreams Come True" and the moving keys gives an idea of the left-hand stretch as it "strides" the octaves. https://www.youtube.com/ watch?v=wnLtxSmT43A&t=44s

James Johnson, a highly influential Black American composer, was born February 1, 1894 in New Brunswick, New Jersey. His family moved to Jersey City when Johnson was eight years old, and upon hearing ragtime

piano played in the saloons, he resolved to become a "tickler" (a ragtime pianist) and began to learn piano.² At age 11, Johnson was given the opportunity to attend New York Symphony concerts through a friend who worked as a waiter. Johnson's friend secured the

symphony tickets from a customer, who happened to be the Symphony's conductor, Josef Stransky.3 With access to the symphony, Johnson's musical world expanded further. As noted in a biography by Scott E. Brown, entitled "James Johnson: A Case of Mistaken Identity," the full symphonic sound made a great impression on young Johnson.4

In 1910, when Johnson was 14, his family relocated to the San Juan Hill neighborhood of Manhattan (which was eventually demolished to create

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James Price Johnson

Lincoln Center). It was a bustling entertainment area, and Johnson's focus on music intensified.⁵ During the summer of 1912, Johnson made his way to Far Rockaway, a beach resort in Queens, New York, and that summer, he made "so much money as a tickler" (about \$18 per week in tips) that he "didn't want to go back to school."⁶ He left school and took a job playing in a cabaret. By his late teens, Johnson was performing in clubs in Hell's Kitchen on Manhattan's west side.⁷

His friendship with Ernest Green, another cabaret performer, led to Johnson's first formal music training. Green's mother encouraged Johnson to pursue serious training, and by offering housework in exchange for lessons, she arranged for Johnson to study with Bruto Giannini, a music teacher.⁸ Johnson studied with Giannini for four years, learning harmony, counterpoint, and classical piano fingerings.⁹ Johnson continued to work as a pianist in summer resorts, nightclubs, theaters

and films, and by 1920, at the age of 26, Johnson formed his own band, the Clef Club, which toured Europe, performing on a vaudeville show called "Plantation Days."¹⁰

Upon returning to the United States, Johnson was in great demand as a soloist, accompanist, and band pianist and cut approximately 55 piano rolls for a half-dozen companies.¹¹ He was the favored accompanist for notable performers such as Bessie Smith and Ethel Waters. 12 His composition, Charleston, was the signature tune of the Roaring Twenties, and he made hundreds of recordings for the most important labels of his time, which confirms his exceptional performing, composing and arranging styles.¹³ Johnson wanted to be remembered as a serious composer of symphonic music that utilized African-American musical themes.14

Johnson dressed in the style expected of his profession and boasted a wardrobe of 25 suits, 15 pairs of custom-made shoes, two dozen silk shirts, silk handkerchiefs, a gold-knobbed cane and more.¹⁵ But the appearance of flamboyance was intended only to create an image. In fact, Johnson was sober, disciplined and a church-going family man. 16 Johnson had enormous financial success derived from performances and royalties from sales of his piano rolls and sheet music, and by the mid 1920's, he was able to focus on his work as a composer. In 1927, he composed, Yamekraw: A Negro Rhapsody, which was first performed in concert at Carnegie Hall, organized by William C. Handy.¹⁷ At the time of the concert, Johnson was working as conductor of the musical Keep Shufflin', and when he could not be released from his obligations, his protégé Thomas "Fats" Waller performed the solo part at the concert.¹⁸ Yamekraw was dedicated to Yamecraw, a waterfront district on the outskirts of Savannah,

Georgia, and the piece, sometimes viewed as a counterpart to Gershwin's *Rhapsody in Blue* (which premiered a few years earlier), was recorded in 1995 by soloist Marcus Roberts with the Lincoln Center Jazz Orchestra. To hear *Yamekraw*, click here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZWPg9BmEF2Y

Johnson's inexperience as an orchestral arranger prompted him to turn to fellow composer and Pulitzer prize winner, William Grant Still, to rework the score in 1928. Still's version includes 3 saxophones, two trumpets and trombone, joined by banjo, drums and strings. The solo piano part shows off Johnson's wide reach, with an abundance of left-hand tenths. ¹⁹

When the Depression ended the age of the Charleston, Johnson retired from Harlem nightlife to concentrate on symphonic composition.²⁰ He unsuccessfully applied for a Guggenheim Fellowship to fund his studies.²¹ Undeterred, Johnson pursued training in classical keyboard technique, music theory, harmony and orchestration. He wrote concertos, suites, symphonies and tone poems for a total of 19 orchestral works. He composed Harlem Symphony in 1932.



Sadly, most were never performed or published in his lifetime. Johnson's creative partners were well-known fellow-musicians, including empresario Eubie Blake, publisher W.C. Handy, and composer William Grant Still. Johnson composed a one-act blues opera with poet Langston Hughes.²² For decades, Johnson wrote to conductors and patrons, seeking sponsorship and performance of his other large scores, but his efforts were rejected.²³

Johnson suffered a paralyzing stroke in 1951 that ended his performing career, and tragically, when he died in 1955, his passing was barely noticed.²⁴ Slowly, America has come to recognize Johnson's genius. He was inducted into the Songwriters Hall of Fame in 1970 and ASCAP (American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers) in 2007. A century after his birth, Johnson was featured on a United States postage stamp in a set with 9 other jazz greats.²⁵

Famed conductor Marin Alsop is a huge proponent of Johnson's compositions, having encountered him first in a liner note for a Gershwin recording.²⁶ In an interview with NPR, Alsop explained her fascination with Johnson's music:

"I became obsessed with James P. Johnson, and my quest to find, restore and revive his orchestral music led me — along with my dear friend and willing collaborator Leslie Stifelman (currently music director of *Chicago* on Broadway) — on a six-year odyssey in search of Johnsons' longlost orchestral music... The possibility of discovering a missing musical link between Scott Joplin and Duke Ellington was too exciting a prospect to resist at least trying.

"... We teamed up with Scott Brown, a medical student at Yale who was writing a biography on Johnson and willingly joined our investigative hunt





for his music. It was truly a detective's challenge, especially in the days before the Internet. Together we visited all of Johnson's surviving relatives, and eventually gained their

trust enough to be shown a treasure trove of memorabilia stored in the attic of his daughter, Arceola Glover, in Riverside, Calif.

"After years of searching, the moment when she brought out stacks of sheet music wrapped in plastic, preserved like an old photo album, was unbelievable. We gently pawed through the yellowed pages. This was the long-lost music from that Carnegie Hall concert! While the music clearly needed attention — and some was obviously missing — we could see its greatness and understood even more profoundly the enormous talent of this great American creator.

"We painstakingly restored the scores and recopied all of the music in preparation for performances at Lincoln Center (under the auspices of the Lincoln Center jazz program at Avery Fisher Hall) and a recording for the MusicMasters label (now reissued on Nimbus). We have made all of the music available to orchestras for performance and are incredibly proud to have played a part in preserving this important piece of our shared American legacy."

Are you interested in hearing more of Johnson's music?

Here's a link to a piano roll that features Johnson performing his composition, Carolina Shout: _https://youtu.be/nSFGyipsNsg

Enjoy this 1923 recording of Johnson playing his famous composition, *Charleston*, which you are sure to recognize: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4ajtCKLTOiM&t=13s

A performance of Johnson's Harlem Symphony may be heard here: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=TKQk4ymJQuE Click the following link for a video about Johnson by the New Brunswick Jazz Society: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=5uTZflYARfw

Johnson's playing can also be heard in the score of the 1933 movie *Emperor Jones*, starring Paul Robeson: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JNGJAp0jTLA

For a further discussion about Johnson, here's an interview with A.B. Spellman from the National Endowment for the Arts: https://www.npr.org/2011/06/20/4541412/james-p-johnson-the-original-james-p-johnson-1942-1945-piano-solos

INTRODUCING ENDOW HARTFORD 21

ENDOW HARTFORD

An Endowment Match Program for the Greater Hartford Community

ith hundreds of worthy nonprofit organizations in Greater Hartford, the Hartford Symphony Orchestra was chosen to participate in Endow Hartford 21, a new 1:2 matching gift endowment campaign, the first community-wide campaign of its type in our region. The inclusion of the HSO as one of the beneficiary organizations recognizes our important role as a critical economic engine and an integral part of the extraordinarily rich quality of life in our region.

Endow Hartford 21 is an initiative to strengthen nonprofit organizations throughout the Greater Hartford region, thanks to the vision and leadership of the Zachs Family Foundation and the other matching donors.

Why is endowment important?

Organizations need endowments to secure their future. As we navigated the uncertain times and challenges of COVID this past year, the annual support from you and others in our community was critical to our survival. While annual support remains crucial, as it is every year, we know that the success of HSO's recent Music Builds Community campaign helped sustain us through the past 15 months of uncertainty. We know firsthand the importance of endowment and recognize the ongoing and compelling need to build our future. While we hope to never again encounter anything as extreme as a global pandemic, an endowment creates a long-term resource that helps us sustain our mission during periods of revenue fluctuations. As we begin to exit the terror of the last 15 months, this the moment to look to our future and now, we have an opportunity to begin that journey.

We hope everyone will be able to participate in this important endeavor. Gifts of \$250 up to \$10,000 per donor/household per organization will be eligible for the match provided you have already made your usual annual fund gift to the HSO. The creators of Endow Hartford 21 wisely recognized the importance of continuing annual support, while simultaneously building

an endowment. The wonderful 1:2 matching opportunity immediately transforms your gift of \$500 to \$750, and your gift of \$5,000 to \$7,500! We hope this campaign will inspire you to give generously to support the long-term future of the HSO and the other participating organizations.

As a thank you, donations between \$250 and \$999 will receive an HSO thermal tote bag, and those making a gift of between \$1,000 and \$10,000 will receive a handblown glass paperweight by the renowned glass artist Robin Lehman, which he created to honor the anniversary of Beethoven's 250th birthday.

Want to learn more? Interested in contributing? You can easily make a gift via the Endow Hartford 21 website, at https://www.endowhartford21.com/organizations/ Just click the link below the HSO logo to make your gift directly to the HSO's fund at the Hartford Foundation for Public giving. Your gift can be made by check, credit/debit card, or appreciated stock.

HSO'S VIRTUAL BRAVO GALA NUMBER TWO:

Met · a · mor · pho · sēs (-sez')











n 2020, with only six weeks to plan, the HSO pivoted from an inperson Gala at the CT Convention Center to a virtual Gala on May 2, 2020. Our Gala title, *Ignite Joy*, was converted to *Reimagine Joy* and the result was an enormous success, that met and exceeded the original fundraising goals.

In the Fall of 2020, we knew we had to plan a second virtual Gala, making us the first (and only one) of the Greater Hartford arts organizations to create TWO virtual Galas. We were challenged to make it different and even more exciting than our first one. With the appropriate title of Metamorphosēs, the HSO staff, Gala Co-Chairs, and Gala committee were determined to reinvent and push the boundaries even further. We wanted to find a way to do even more to create an engaging, entertaining, and participatory virtual event.

Our priority was to feature the orchestra at Gala, just as we would at a live event. We wanted our Gala

guests to see the HSO musicians perform together for the first time in over a year. Our planning began in September of 2020 and the process was lengthy. We had to search for a production/editing company, write a script, create a stage plot, and work extensively with a remote team for permission to record within the Bushnell Center for the Performing Arts. We had to identify and hire a COVID Compliance Officer to ensure the safety of every person involved in the filming.

In preparing for Gala, the HSO team made a deliberate effort to partner with local CT-based vendors. Our partners contributed to the contents of the meal boxes, the flowers, the out-of-towner cocktail kits, the origami kits, the multiple printed materials, and many local vendors were featured in our extensive online auction. Our decision to "stay local" acknowledges the importance of our community, and we hope it encourages others to support the local treasures in our area!

The final product was a labor of love and a source of immense pride. Our catering partner, David Alan Hospitality, prepared nearly 300 meal packages and more than 300 others registered to watch for free. On May 1st, nearly 250 households tuned in for the livestream. Many hosted "watch parties" all over the state, and some reported hosting gatherings as large as 60 people!

Best of all, HSO's virtual 2021 Bravo Virtual Gala: Metamorphosēs was a financial and critical success, once again exceeding our revenue goal. If you missed the livestream, you may still watch the recording at www.hartfordsymphony.org/bravo.

AND: Save the Date for Bravo! 2022: Renaissance on April 30, 2022.

This time, we'll be in person at the Connecticut Convention Center and we hope to see you there!

THE INTERNS

Talcott Mountain Music Festival of 2021: **PUTTING IT TOGETHER**

ach summer the HSO
welcomes a group of college
interns to join our staff and
experience what happens
behind the scenes in the
production of a large-scale summer
music festival. Most are college
students with two things in common:
a love of music and the desire to gain
experiences beyond the classroom.
This summer, they are assisting
with education, production and
development. We cannot imagine
our Talcott Mountain Music Festival
without the assistance of our interns.

An expected education-based component of every Talcott Festival is the Family Education Zone and Instrument Discovery Lab. When COVID-19 restrictions put a temporary halt on the usual handson teaching activities, we turned to our interns for help in designing and assembling 1,250 "take-away" educational packets for our young audience members. One intern in particular, Gillian Reinhard, came to the rescue. Gillian created five different educational packets – one for each concert night – as well as

the detailed instruction sheets included with each packet. The projects include a coloring/activity book (entirely designed by Gillian), a concert bingo card, origami, and multiple "DIY" percussion projects, including tambourines, jingle bell sticks and egg-shaker maracas.





Gillian, who graduated from Trinity College in May of 2020, was an HSO intern during her sophomore year. In December

of 2020, Gillian contacted us and offered to help in any way she could, explaining that her experience with the HSO made her want to pursue a career in nonprofit development. We were delighted to have the help, and Gillian worked remotely from home, making hundreds of thank you calls to donors. Gillian had to

leave us in June to work with the Vail Valley Foundation in Colorado, but thanks to her creativity, we now have educational packets to distribute to the children that will attend our 2021 summer music festival.



Hunter Hess, a student at Gordon College in Massachusetts, plays saxophone with a special interest in music history and music theory. As a teaching assistant for her college's symphonic band, she has a special interest in the work of a music librarian. To give Hunter the best experience possible, this summer she will learn from HSO's Music Librarian, Scott Switzer, in addition to helping with other administrative tasks.

Charlotte Kazalski is currently a student at Ithaca College, pursuing a Bachelor of Music Education with a concentration on flute. A resident of West Springfield, Massachusetts, Charlotte was accepted to MMEA All-State while in high school and is now a member of the Ithaca College Concert Band and the Ithaca College Flute Ensemble.

Severin Konefal, a resident of West Hartford, is currently attending the Berklee College of Music in Boston, majoring in saxophone. You may have seen Severin on stage, given his multiple performances on saxophone at Hall High School's Pops 'n Jazz and as section leader with the Hall High School Concert Jazz Band.



If you plan to attend any performance of the Talcott Mountain Music Festival, try to spot one of the interns and be sure to greet them. All of us are so excited to welcome you back to LIVE music!

PARTNER SPOTLIGHT ON:

ary & Ted are a team,

TED & MARY GAWLICKI, FOUNDERS AND PRINCIPALS OF THE GAWLICKI FAMILY FOUNDATION

completely aligned about what is most important: making a difference.

In chatting with Mary and Ted, what immediately came to mind was a line from Hello Dolly spoken by Dolly Levi: "Money, pardon the expression, is like manure. It's not worth a thing unless it's spread around, encouraging young things to grow." The tag line of the Gawlicki Family Foundation echoes that sentiment, with three simple words: "We Fund Forward."

Mary and Ted came from different backgrounds but were raised with common values, in families and communities committed to helping one another. Speaking of her home in Skaneateles, New York, Mary recalled, "Each year everyone helped with the library drive and said yes when a neighbor needed help." Ted was born in Jackson Heights, Queens, in New York City. Both have MBA degrees in finance (Ted attended the University of Connecticut and Mary attended the Wharton School at the University of Pennsylvania.) They met at Lydall, Inc. in Connecticut, where Ted was employed. Claire Pryor encouraged her husband, Millard Pryor, a principal in Lydall and coincidentally, the Chairman of the Board of the Hartford Symphony Orchestra, to hire Mary as a summer intern. The rest, as they say, is history.

Ted's career path brought them to Rochester, New York, where Mary got a job at Xerox. They regularly attended concerts at the Eastman School of Music and the Rochester Philharmonic. Mary, who played French Horn in high school, inherited her family's love of music. According to family lore, her grandfather, who emigrated from Italy at the age of 16, was an oboist in a band conducted by the legendary composer and band leader, John Philip Sousa.

Career growth eventually brought the couple to Connecticut, and in 1990, with two toddlers (aged one and three), they made the bold move to start a new business in their basement. Their new



venture, Corporate Translations, Inc. (CTi) became a market leader in global translations for the pharmaceutical and biotech industries. With clinical trials in pharmaceuticals being conducted around the world, there is a need for translations of protocols, consent forms, patient information and marketing materials into over 150 different languages. A bold venture into a new field might have frightened others, but Mary and Ted saw opportunities: "In any industry, you often wind up doing the same thing, but you don't always get to learn. With our new business, we had a golden opportunity to learn so many new things."

The company that began in their basement grew to more than 200 full-time employees and 750 translators in countries around the globe. In a large and competitive industry, which recognized CTi for producing the most accurate translations, their success is testament to their mutual determination and commitment in all that they undertake.

Always interested in making a difference, Mary and Ted invested \$3 million into a family foundation while building CTi. When CTi was sold to a public company in 2015, they invested even more in their foundation and started to look more seriously at how to use private philanthropic dollars to bring about public change. "There is only so much money that you need to spend on yourself," observed Mary, "and it's really important to live your life with purpose. We see so much need in the community, and serving others is a pretty good reason to get up in the morning."

Mary and Ted quickly narrowed their focus to three areas: pulmonary rehab (given Mary's own health challenges and long-standing interest in the field,) K-12 education, and municipal/economic development for the city of Hartford. Mary and Ted are active philanthropists, who identify problems and work with their partners to find solutions. The internship program they initiated at Hartford Public High School pays student interns, who work with a variety of different companies including nonprofit arts organizations. From just 4 interns, the program has grown to over 100 students, working with 40 different employers. The student interns must participate in a widereaching 14-class program which includes everything from learning to code to workplace expectations. The success of the program is evident. During COVID, when absenteeism in the Hartford high schools was as high as 77%, their internship group experienced only 6% absenteeism.

HSO's ongoing partnership with the Gawlicki Family Foundation focuses on both traditional and innovative educational programs for children, recognizing that music is an essential component of a robust educational experience. Mary and Ted are active and collaborative partners, who respect the importance of evaluations and encourage adjustments to ensure positive outcomes.

Mary and Ted want to create an enduring legacy in educational, cultural and social redevelopment, and they firmly believe that their philanthropic strategies will encourage students to become successful, return to Hartford, and create an ongoing network of mentors for the next generation. Ted spoke for himself and Mary: "We see the success in what we are doing, and we hope to accomplish so much more."

Thank you, Ted and Mary, for having the courage and the commitment to see the possibilities.

SPOTLIGHT ON HSO'S NEWEST STAFF MEMBER:

JENNIFER PHIPPS ASSISTANT MANAGER OF EXECUTIVE RELATIONS AND DEI/COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

elcome Jennifer! While her title is more than a mouthful, Jennifer's job description puts her at the heart and center of the HSO. In short, she's the glue that connects every department, every Board member and every staff member. We are so pleased to introduce her to all of you.

QN: If you had to describe yourself in three words, how would you do it?

That's easy, but not necessarily in order of priority: thespian, humanitarian, singer.

QN: What made you decide to apply for a job with the HSO?

My love of the arts is what drives me, so any chance to work in an environment surrounded by art - music, theater, performance - is what excites me. When I graduated from college and knew I had to find a job to "pay the bills", I was a little sad that I couldn't immediately find a job in the arts that would fuel my soul. My last job involved work in a day care center (which helped me realize that I'm really good with kids!) but I was constantly looking for opportunities to include art and music in everything I did with the children. I now really appreciate how much art is a part of me and how much I need to be surrounded by art on a daily basis. When this opportunity arose at the Hartford Symphony, I immediately applied, and I'm just thrilled to be here!

QN: So many on the HSO staff have a strong relationship with music. Tell us a little bit about your background.

I was raised in Meriden, CT, and I have a very wonderful and long relationship with music. My mom is a musician (her instrument is the piano), so music was always present in our family as I grew up. I am a singer and in addition, I always played an instrument. I studied violin and participated in choirs throughout high school and college. I attended Eastern CT State University and was a music major, with a concentration on voice.

QN: Besides music, are there other art forms that excite you?

Yes - theater! I'm a bit of a "rebel," so when I found theater, I was hooked. I wound up graduating from Eastern with a degree in Theatre, with concentrations in Acting and Directing. Theater gives me the chance to explore and push some boundaries in a safe place. I've been involved with community theater productions for four years and I love it. And others on the HSO staff also love theater, so I'm in great company.

QN: Other than theater, do you have other interests that keep you busy?

There are so many! I love to cook, and I have a cooking Instagram account. Other hobbies including writing, painting, and even building models. I tried scene painting in college, and during the pandemic, painting became an important outlet. Everyone at the HSO already knows that I am a huge Harry



Potter fan. I have so many ideas for creative projects that it will take a lifetime to get through all of them.

QN: How difficult was it to start a new job in the midst of a pandemic?

It was not as bad as one might think. The staff at the HSO are welcoming and everyone found ways to include me, even when we were all working remotely. But now that we are coming back into the office, it's definitely easier.

QN: How are you adapting to your new role and your new responsibilities?

I love what I do, especially the work in education, community engagement and DEI, which is diversity, equity and inclusion. The HSO's commitment to this initiative is sincere, and I am thrilled to be in a position to connect with schools, with other community organizations and to build important relationships with community members that will help the HSO expand in meaningful ways. This is only my second full time job since graduating from college, so I know I have so much to learn, but the opportunities are so plentiful. I am learning to appreciate the structure of nonprofits, and how all the pieces fit together, including the important role of Board members and the various committees. We have a pretty small staff, so the commitment of the Board members, who are all volunteers, is impressive, when you realize what it takes to run a nonprofit. III

ENDNOTES:

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