

QUARTER NOTES

News for Hartford Symphony Orchestra Donors & Friends

DE COM POSED

De-Composed: An exploration of the composers we want to know better.

SAMUEL COLERIDGE-TAYLOR

(August 15, 1875 – Sept. 1, 1912)

Samuel Coleridge-Taylor was barely 23 when Edward Elgar, England's leading composer, described him as "far and away the cleverest fellow amongst the young men."

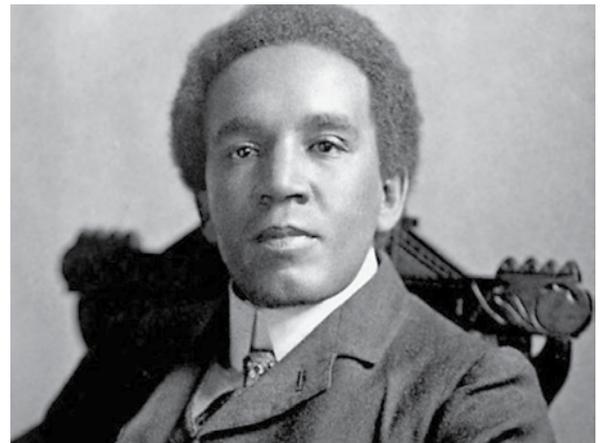
Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, dubbed "The Black Mahler" by white musicians because of his musical successes and energetic conducting style, was a prolific English-born composer and political activist, who used his talent for musical composition as a weapon to combat racial prejudice.¹

Coleridge-Taylor was born on August 15, 1875 in Holborn, England. His father, Daniel Peter Hughes Taylor, was originally from Freetown, Sierra Leone. Daniel, together with his family, was rescued from transport into American slavery by the British Navy, after slavery had been abolished in Britain.² Daniel Taylor came to London in the hopes of studying medicine and

becoming a physician, but persistent racial prejudice thwarted his plans.³ Discouraged, he returned to West Africa, unaware that he had a child on the way.⁴ Daniel later became a physician in Banjul, Gambia, and died there in 1904.⁵

Young Coleridge-Taylor was raised in the London suburb of Croydon by his single British-born mother, Alice Hare Martin.⁶ Alice named her son for the British poet, Samuel Taylor Coleridge, whose famed works include *Kubla Kahn* and *The Rime of the Ancient Mariner*.⁷ With numerous musicians in his mother's family, young Samuel was encouraged in music.⁸

Samuel suffered racial insults in school, including one horrific incident in which his hair was set on fire.⁹ The youngster devoted himself to music



Samuel Coleridge-Taylor

studies with even greater intensity, and while it was unusual for a working-class family to allow a child the luxury of music lessons, Coleridge-Taylor apparently showed enough talent to justify the outlay.¹⁰ Alice's father, Benjamin Holman*, a violinist, paid to make sure that the youngster received violin lessons starting from the age of five,¹¹ and it was Holman who gave

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the young Coleridge-Taylor his first violin.¹²

**A question remains as to whether Holman was Alice's biological father, or of a kindly family that took pity on a single mother without means.*

Samuel's early musical training was supervised by Col. Herbert A. Walters, a silk merchant, army volunteer, amateur musician and honorary choirmaster of St. George's Church in Croydon.¹³ In 1890, thanks to Walters, Samuel began studies at the Royal College of Music in London at the age of fifteen.¹⁴ His contemporaries at the school included the music luminaries, Ralph Vaughan Williams and Gustav Holst.¹⁵

At the Royal College of Music, Coleridge-Taylor was accepted as a student by Professor Charles Villiers Stanford, one of the top composers in England at the time.¹⁶ The teenager's remarkable abilities were apparent, and Stanford encouraged him to change his major from violin to composition.¹⁷ On a dare from Professor Stanford, who claimed it was impossible to compose a quintet for clarinet and strings without being influenced by Brahms, Coleridge-Taylor produced his own clarinet quintet.¹⁸ Stanford conceded the originality of the work. Coleridge-Taylor was quickly recognized as one of the school's star students,¹⁹ having won the prestigious Lesley Alexander prize in competition for two years' running.²⁰ By the time he completed his studies in 1897, several of his student works, mostly chamber pieces, had already been performed there.²¹ Please click the link to hear his remarkable clarinet quintet: [Coleridge Taylor Clarinet Quintet - YouTube](#)

After completing his degree, Coleridge-Taylor was appointed as a professor at the Crystal Palace School of Music, as well as conductor of the orchestra at the Croydon Conservatoire.²² August Jaeger, a



Samuel Coleridge-Taylor

music editor and good friend of Edward Elgar, recognized as the dean of English composers, referred to Coleridge-Taylor as a 'genius'.²³ Elgar, upon hearing Coleridge-Taylor's compositions, recommended him for the Three Choirs Festival.²⁴ The subsequent premiere of Coleridge-Taylor's *Ballade in A minor* at the festival cemented Coleridge-Taylor's reputation as a composer.²⁵ To enjoy a performance of the composition by the Minnesota Orchestra, conducted by Thomas Söndergård, click this link: [Coleridge-Taylor: Ballade for Orchestra - YouTube](#)

Coleridge-Taylor's next composition proved to be his greatest success. *Hiawatha's Wedding Feast*, for chorus, soloists and orchestra, set to music a section of *The Song of Hiawatha*, by American poet Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.²⁶ This dramatic choral work was an immediate smash hit and garnered

rave notices in the London newspapers.²⁷ It soon became a mainstay of the choral/orchestral repertoire throughout the English-speaking world. It was performed as far afield as South Africa and New Zealand, and was popular in the United States.²⁸ Some have claimed it was rivaled in popularity only by two other works, Handel's *Messiah* and Mendelssohn's *Elijah*.²⁹ The piece was the first part of a trilogy that included *The Death of Minnehaha* (1899) and *Hiawatha's Departure* (1900).³⁰ Annual staged performances of the trilogy took place at the Royal Albert Hall for two weeks each summer from 1924 until the start of the Second World War.³¹

Coleridge-Taylor proceeded to set to music selected poems by Shakespeare and Christina Rossetti, and many of his works resembled the style of white English composers.³² But it was clear that he had other interests. Even in his student days, he was striving to create music that more closely reflected his African background.³³ He heard the touring Fisk Jubilee Singers, a chorus from Nashville, Tennessee, and in 1896, he met the African-American poet Paul Lawrence Dunbar in London.³⁴ He set some of Dunbar's poems to music, and in 1898, they collaborated on a stage work, *Dream Lovers*.³⁵ Coleridge-Taylor went on to write orchestral works that reflected his African heritage, such as his compositions, *African Suite*, and *Symphonic Variations on an African Air*.³⁶

In 1900, Coleridge-Taylor delivered the opening address at the first Pan-African Conference in London.³⁷ He was the youngest representative present, and the gathering included W.E.B. Dubois, one of America's leading Black intellectuals.³⁸ Dubois became the torchbearer of subsequent Pan-African conferences. Together with Dusé Mohammed Ali,



ENDOW HARTFORD 21



ENDOW HARTFORD 21 A LASTING IMPACT THANKS TO A COMMUNITY PHILANTHROPIST

In our 2021-2022 fiscal year, the Hartford Symphony Orchestra was one of 51 nonprofit organizations chosen to participate in Endow Hartford 21, a 1:2 matching gift endowment campaign, the first community-wide campaign of its type in our region. Endow Hartford 21, created by local philanthropist Henry Zachs, with a \$1 million dollar match, was envisioned as an initiative to strengthen nonprofit organizations throughout the Greater Hartford region, as we all struggled to emerge from the pandemic.

Thanks to the vision and leadership of the Zachs Family Foundation, other matching donors stepped forward to build an even more robust matching fund. 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.

When the campaign closed on June 30, 2022, the HSO was one of only three organizations out of the 51 who had exhausted its share of available

matching funds. Thanks to you, our generous HSO donors who stepped forward to support the Symphony through this unique campaign, the HSO was able to raise over \$116,000 in endowment funds which are now held in a special account for the Hartford Symphony at the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, bringing HSO's total endowment funds to over \$10 million.

The Endow Hartford 21 match was available between June 1, 2021, and June 30, 2022. Cumulatively, the 51 participating organizations raised more than \$2.8 million in combined gifts and matching funds, an astonishing achievement for our community and for the many charitable organizations that improve the daily quality of life in our region.

The success of the program prompted requests to participate from many new organizations. With

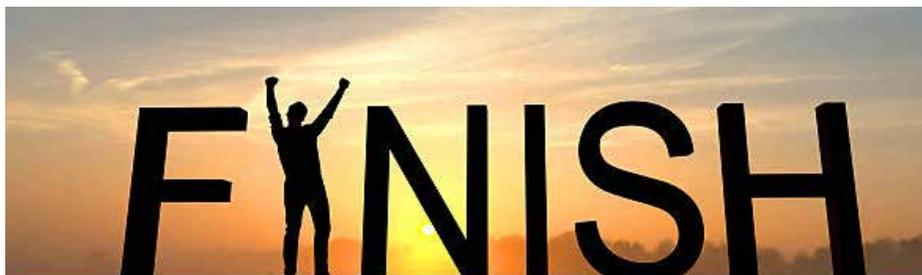
more than \$1 million in remaining matching funds, the Endow Hartford 21 team just announced the plans to start Phase 2 of the program, which began September 1, 2022 and will run through August 31, 2023.

The Hartford Symphony, in recognition of the importance of this initiative for our community, has made the decision to step aside, and thereby afford new organizations the chance to participate in Phase 2. Steve Collins, the CEO of the Symphony, summarized it this way:

"Thanks to Henry Zachs and the other generous matching donors, we were able to increase our endowment, a critical component of long-term stability. Mr. Zachs and the other donors created a community pool of funds that must be used as it was intended: to help other worthy organizations create and/or increase their endowments. For that

to happen, it is important that those who've had a turn step aside and make room for others."

"Thank you to everyone!" 



A huge thank you to all who helped the HSO reach our goal!

PLEASE WELCOME

COMPOSER/CONDUCTOR QUINN MASON, HSO'S JOYCE C. WILLIS ARTIST-IN-RESIDENCE

In the 2022/23 season, the HSO joyfully welcomes composer/conductor Quinn Mason, our Joyce C. Willis Artist-In-Residence. The residency is made possible by a generous grant from the Edward C. and Ann T. Roberts Foundation.

In late 2020, the Roberts Foundation announced the creation of the Joyce C. Willis Fund for Excellent and Equity in the Arts, a visionary initiative created to support Black artists. The Hartford Symphony Orchestra was simultaneously notified that alongside the Amistad Center for Arts and Culture and Hartford Stage, we had been selected to receive a special grant to create an artist-in-residence program. The program was created to honor Joyce C. Willis, a former board member of the Roberts Foundation, a founding member and past board president of The Amistad Center for Arts and Culture, a former board member of the Hartford Symphony Orchestra, and a long-time supporter of Hartford Stage.



QUINN MASON

After an extensive search, the HSO selected conductor/composer Quinn Mason as our Joyce C. Willis Artist-In-Residence for the 22/23 season. Mr. Quinn, based in Dallas, Texas, served as the Detroit Symphony Orchestra's Classical Roots composer in residence for 2022 and was the youngest composer ever appointed to that role. As part of his residency with the HSO, Mr. Mason will compose a new work for

orchestra, with a world premiere of his new composition on our June 2023 Masterworks. Other works by Mr. Mason will be performed by HSO Musicians at the HSO Annual Meeting on September 27, 2022, at the HSO's upcoming performance, ENVISON, at the Parkville Market on October 13, 2022, on the HSO's matinee and evening Holiday Cirque performances on December 10, 2022, and on our December 2022 Masterworks program (December 2 - 4.)

During the period of his residency, which will include four separate weeks spaced throughout the 2022-2023 season, Mr. Mason will also be working extensively with HSO's Learning and Social Impact division on community and education initiatives with HSO partners throughout Hartford, including the South End Boys and Girls Club and students at the Noah Webster Micro Society Magnet School. 

Please join us in extending a warm welcome to Quinn Mason!



ANNOUNCING HSO'S 45TH ANNUAL YOUNG ARTISTS COMPETITION

TOGETHER, LET'S LAUNCH THE NEXT GENERATION OF RISING STARS!

During the pandemic, the HSO team worked tirelessly to maintain the Young Artists Competition, affectionally known as the YAC. Thanks to you, our generous donors, the competition continued without interruption. At a critical time, when educational programs and performance opportunities ceased for two years, HSO's Young Artists Competition

provided young musicians with direction, focus and an important goal.

After two years of virtual competitions (2020 and 2021), we were all immensely relieved to be able to return to the stage in 2022 for a live and in person closing round of the competition, featuring our five enormously talented finalists. Their brilliant virtuosity made for a thrilling performance. If you missed it, please make sure to mark your calendars for the closing performance of our 45th Competition, which will be held on Saturday, May 20, 2023, at 3 pm at the Theater for the Performing Arts, part of the Greater Hartford Academy of the Arts.

Our 2022 first prize winner, Vien Le, (cello) is currently a senior at Canton High School. Her music teacher, Blake Brasch, teaches at the Community Division of the Hartt School. Vien's winning performance was Tchaikovsky's Variations on a Roccoco Theme. If you missed it, you'll have an opportunity to hear



HARTFORD SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA'S

45th YOUNG ARTISTS COMPETITION

Application Deadline February 1, 2023

For more information or to submit an application, scan the QR code or visit www.hartfordsymphony.org/yac

\$1000 First Place Prize
And an opportunity to perform with the HSO!



VIEN LE

Vien perform as a soloist with the Hartford Symphony on our Holiday Cirque performances, which will be held on Saturday, December 10, 2022 at 2 pm and 7 pm. You will not want to miss hearing her perform. Tickets for Cirque are now on sale, along with tickets to all HSO's 2022/23 season offerings.

HSO's Young Artists Competition (YAC) is an instrumental opportunity,

open to Connecticut residents in grades 9 – 12. From now through February 9, 2023, candidates are invited to apply online. As soon as the application window closes, we begin the difficult process of selecting those applicants who will proceed to a live semi-final audition. The final round (featuring five finalists) will be held in a public concert at 3 pm on Saturday, May 20, 2023, followed by a reception that offers the audience a chance to meet our young stars. As we did last year, the three winners, all of whom will receive cash prizes, will be announced at intermission, after performances by each of the finalists.

A performance with a professional symphony is an opportunity rarely granted to high school students, making this competition exceptionally important to young musicians. But this competition cannot happen without you! Last year, our donors contributed more than \$35,000, making it possible for us to hold the competition.

We cannot do this alone, and to succeed, we need ALL of you. If you missed the fun last year, here's your chance to join the excitement.

All donors contributing \$100 or more receive one complimentary ticket to the final round. Donors of at least \$250 receive two tickets and are included in the printed program, and donors of at least \$500.00 receive four complimentary tickets to the performance. It's the chance to meet and speak with our young, inspiring finalists.

Be part of the excitement – it's easy!

Just contact Ruth Sovronsky, Director of Development, at 860-760-7321 or rsovronsky@hartfordsymphony.org and let her know you want be part of this very special event.

Let's launch the next rising star – and the next generation of young musicians - TOGETHER. 



CRITICAL TAX TIPS FOR 2022:

1. YOU CAN MAXIMIZE THE MANDATORY IRA DISTRIBUTION

If you are 72 (or reached the age of 70 ½ before Jan. 1, 2022) you are required to take a taxable distribution (RMD or required minimum distribution) from your IRA. If you are looking for the best tax advantage for your charitable gifts, using a Qualified Charitable Distribution, (QCD) is a GREAT strategy.

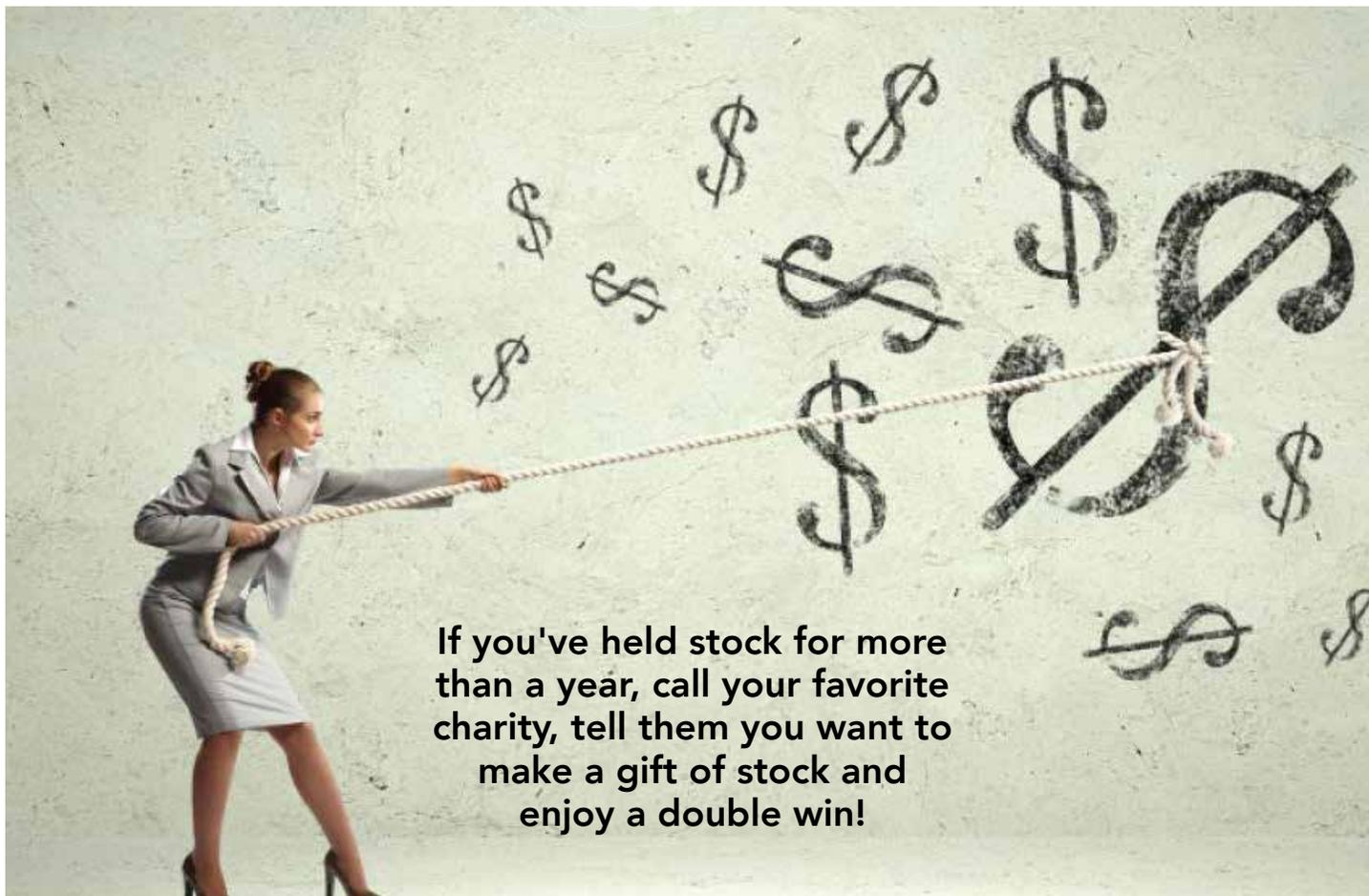
A QCD is a direct transfer of funds from your IRA custodian, payable to a qualified charity. QCDs can be counted toward satisfying your required minimum distributions (RMDs) for the year, provided certain rules are met.

In addition to the wonderful benefits of supporting a worthwhile cause, a QCD excludes the amount donated from taxable income, which is unlike regular withdrawals from an IRA. Keeping your taxable income lower may reduce the impact to certain tax credits and deductions, including Social Security and Medicare.

QCDs don't require that you itemize, so that means that even if you decide to take advantage of the higher standard deduction, you can still use a QCD for charitable giving.

To maximize an RMD from your IRA, do this: Before the end of 2022, instruct your IRA advisor or manager to make the required distributions directly to a registered 501c3 nonprofit of your choice, and the entire amount of that distribution will NOT be subject to ANY income tax. This is an opportunity to eliminate tax obligations on the RMD. The entirety of the RMD

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If you've held stock for more than a year, call your favorite charity, tell them you want to make a gift of stock and enjoy a double win!

can be directed to a single gift or broken into multiple gifts, and all tax consequences on funds designated as charitable gifts (QCD's) are eliminated.

2. YOU CAN MAKE GIFTS OF APPRECIATED STOCK

If you've been holding stock for at least a year, you may be fortunate enough to have enjoyed significant increases in your stock or mutual fund holdings. If you sell the stock, those great gains will be taxed (both federal and state) as ordinary income, a minimum of roughly 28% if you live in Connecticut. BUT – you can make the gains work to your advantage. If you've held the stock for more than a year, call your favorite charity, tell

them you want to make a gift of stock and enjoy a DOUBLE WIN! You pay NO tax on the transaction, AND you may deduct full market value of the stock on your tax return. You get a tax break, and your favorite non-profit benefits. Once you've decided, instruct your asset manager to make the stock gift in accordance with the directions of your chosen charity. Instructions for making a stock gift to the Hartford Symphony Orchestra are on our website.

[Make a Donation of Stock | Hartford Symphony Orchestra](#)

EXTRA BONUS: Do you (or did you) work for an employer that has a matching gift program? If you're unsure about matching gift

opportunities, go to your employer's website to check it out. You just might double your gift!

Please note: The ability to take a \$300 charitable deduction ABOVE your standard federal itemized deductions expired in 2021 and is not available in 2022. 

QUESTIONS?

Always consult your own tax specialist for proper guidance and advice, but if you have questions about HSO policies and suggestions, please contact Ruth Sovronsky, Development Director, at 860-760-7321 or at rsovronsky@hartfordsymphony.org

STAFF SPOTLIGHT ON:

ASHLEY FEDIGAN

HSO'S MANAGER OF MARKETING

Ashley joined the HSO team in December of 2021, just as we were beginning to emerge from the lockdowns created by the pandemic. The HSO had just returned to work in our offices, so it was the perfect moment to get together in person. Ashley is a valued and innovative member of the team. While we know that Ashley is still "drinking from a firehose" given the volume of work at the HSO, she is happily adjusting to the incredibly fast pace!

Quarter Notes: Every staff member at the HSO invariably has a deep and personal connection with the arts. Is that also true for you?

There has not been a time in my life when the arts were not important. As a child, my chosen art was dance. I began taking dance lessons when I was only two years old and continued well into my adult life. Throughout those transformative years, I spent five and six days in the studio, and the skills I learned there have carried me through my life. As I got older, although I realized that I did not want to pursue a serious career in dance, I always felt the magnetic pull of the arts, and I knew that I needed to keep the arts in my life.

QN: Did you grow up in a family that was also interested in the arts?

My mom always loved music. I grew up with the music of her generation, such as singer/songwriter, Gordon Lightfoot. My mom was an avid

concert goer and while she didn't listen to symphonic music, I always knew I had my family's support when it came to my interest in the arts and my love of dance. I will never forget my first trip to New York City or my first Broadway show. (It was Grease.) I owe those experiences to them.

QN: Tell us about your educational directions and choices.

I chose to go the University of Hartford to study communications, with an emphasis on advertising and public relations. My goal was to somehow find a job in marketing for the arts, even though I wasn't sure how that would happen. Shortly after graduating and venturing out in the non-profit world for a short time, I found myself back at the University of Hartford, working with the marketing team at The Hartt School.

Although I was always interested in dance and musical theatre, it was through my work at Hartt that I was introduced to so many musical genres, including jazz, orchestral works, and opera. I was, and still am, in awe of the students, teachers, and musicians who work tirelessly to perfect their craft, inspire those around them, and bring beauty to the world in a way like no other.

QN: We are so lucky to have you at the Hartford Symphony. What makes working at the Symphony a different experience from prior jobs?

At the Hartford Symphony Orchestra, I am surrounded by incredible music every day, not to mention a



ASHLEY FEDIGAN

supportive and collaborative staff. And most important is that I am now gaining firsthand experience of how music truly changes lives. Throughout my career, I have heard stories about how music was the spark that inspired people to try a new path, and at the HSO, those stories come to life every day. As the HSO's Marketing Manager, I am determined to find ways to share those exciting and meaningful stories. Part of our organizational "prime directive" is to encourage more and more youngsters to follow their hearts, their passions and their dreams. If we do our jobs well, some hopeful young people that we haven't yet met might be inspired to find their true calling in the arts. 

MEET HANEEF NELSON, HSO'S NEW VOICES FELLOW, SUPPORTED BY THE GREATER HARTFORD ARTS COUNCIL!

A native New Yorker, born in Brooklyn and raised on Long Island, Haneef Nelson has called Hartford "home" for the last 20 years. An alumnus of the Long Island High School of the Arts who also studied at the famed Jazzmobile in Harlem as a teenager, Haneef enrolled in the Hartt School of Music at the University of Connecticut as an undergraduate to study with jazz legend Jackie McLean. Haneef earned his Bachelor of Music from The Hartt School in African American Music Study, then went on to earn his master's degree in Jazz Composition and Arranging at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst.



fellows are offered the chance to work in their chosen field, and gain exposure to a wide range of professional activities at arts and culture institutions.

Haneef is currently pursuing his Doctorate in Composition at the Hartt School and was also one of ten individuals selected to participate in the New Voices Fellowship program, offered through and supported by the Greater Hartford Arts Council. The New Voices Fellowship offers an immersive experience for aspiring arts administrators of color. During the 12-week program,

We were delighted to learn that as a New Voices Fellow, Haneef specifically requested to be matched with the Hartford Symphony Orchestra, one of the host arts organizations. Haneef has already joined HSO's weekly staff meeting and will be working on specific projects with our Learning and Social Impact division. Haneef's passion for music has

translated into a passion for education. In addition to his own doctoral studies, Haneef teaches at the University of Rhode Island College of Music, was the first Director of Jazz Studies at the Community Music School in Springfield, Mass, and maintains a robust private teaching studio and performance schedule.

As an active working musician, Haneef is the founder and artistic director of multiple groups that include the Haneef N. Nelson Quintet, the Neeftet, the Hartford Legacy Jazz Orchestra, and the Hartford Jazz Composers Collective, and has routinely collaborated with legendary musicians that include Nat Reeves, Zaccari Curtis, Avery Sharpe, Yoron Israel, among countless others.

Please click this link to hear Haneef in a wonderful musical program that includes Haneef Nelson on trumpet, Cedric Mayfield on tenor sax, Andrew Wilcox on piano, Matt Dwonczyk on bass and Jonathan Barber on drums: [Yes or No - YouTube](#)

Endnotes:

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² <https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/literature-and-arts/music-history-composers-and-performers-biographies/samuel-coleridge-taylor>
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⁴ <https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/literature-and-arts/music-history-composers-and-performers-biographies/samuel-coleridge-taylor>
⁵ Ibid
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²² <https://www.wisemusicclassical.com/composer/274/Samuel-Coleridge-Taylor/>
²³ Ibid
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²⁶ <https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/literature-and-arts/music-history-composers-and-performers-biographies/samuel-coleridge-taylor>
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³² <https://www.encyclopedia.com/people/literature-and-arts/music-history-composers-and-performers-biographies/samuel-coleridge-taylor>
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³⁴ Ibid
³⁵ Ibid
³⁶ Ibid
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⁵¹ Ibid
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⁵³ Ibid
⁵⁴ Ibid
⁵⁵ Samuel Coleridge-Taylor: Black British Composer and Political Activist - Kentake Page
⁵⁶ <https://history.delaware.gov/2018/01/29/samuel-coleridge-taylor-composer/>
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