



HARTFORD
SYMPHONY
ORCHESTRA

President and CEO's Report

December 12, 2023

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Message from the President and CEO

Highlights of the Season

Greetings colleagues and friends of the Hartford Symphony Orchestra!

The 2023-24 season is off to a good start with gorgeous concerts and energizing special events under our belts. Bravo to everyone involved at every step of the way and a huge welcome to our newest musicians. As we prepare for concerts in December through February, there are two new projects I would like to share. On January 24th in collaboration with The Amistad Center for Art & Culture, the HSO will present Harmonies & Healing, a concert celebrating the contributions of Black leaders and recognizing the profound intersection of music and faith in the Black experience at the Rehoboth Church of God, Bloomfield. Also in January, we will begin offering a new create-your-own subscription package for the remainder of the Masterworks Series, including concerts in February through June. Details will be available after the first of the year with information on how everyone can help generate sales for the remainder of the season with this new concert package.

Strategic Framework Update and Next Steps

Supporting these great endeavors and helping set our institutional agenda through the 2026-27 season, work continues on developing our strategic planning framework. Four overarching goals have been established and action plans are being created by our standing committees with input from Board, staff and orchestra representatives, and expanded opportunities for our musicians to participate in the process with pre-rehearsal open sessions. There are several critical factors to the successful implementation of the framework, and none is more important than our “key enabler” of an agile, team-based, and collaborative culture. I know I speak for the entire organization in noting how important open, respectful, and constructive communication is for our success. The planning process, while time consuming and rigorous, has also been constructive and is anticipated to be completed in early 2024.

Congratulations and Thanks

Finally, none of the successes and opportunities noted above and within this report would be possible without the patience and diligence as well as the deep caring for our organization and artform that went into the negotiation of our new collective bargaining agreement. I can't thank everyone enough for driving this work to completion and creating an agreement to support and grow our organization for the next four years. Onward!



Steve Collins
President and CEO



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2023 Annual Message

We are delighted to share the release of the Hartford Symphony Orchestra's 2023 Annual Message, a testament to a year filled with musical accomplishments, community engagement, and artistic innovation.

The report encapsulates our commitment to musical excellence, education, and outreach, showcasing the impact we've had on the cultural fabric of our community.

Key Highlights of the 2023 Annual Message:

Artistic Triumphs: We featured renowned guest artists, memorable collaborations, and groundbreaking compositions.

Educational Initiatives: Our educational programs nurtured the next generation of musicians and cultivated a love for music.

Community Engagement: We've connected with our audience and fostered a sense of inspiration through the power of music.

Financial Sustainability: Our financial stewardship is ensuring the long-term success of the Hartford Symphony Orchestra.

- Despite the challenges presented by the evolving landscape, the HSO experienced a dynamic return to full programming and achieved nearly 5% growth in contributed income. However, we faced obstacles in revenue generation, as have so many arts organizations in the face of industry-wide audience redevelopment struggles.
- To navigate these challenges, we took measures to reduce expenses. Nevertheless, we experienced a net loss—the first in six years. Distributions from the Music Builds Community campaign and government sources played a crucial role, contributing over \$440k to support our operations. Last year's annual gala further contributed, raising \$319k.
- Our net assets increased by 3.8%, reaching over \$11 million. This financial strength positions us for continued resilience in the coming years.

Amidst these financial dynamics, the 2023 season was a testament to our commitment to artistic excellence and community engagement. The season featured innovative Masterworks concerts, an engaging POPS! Series, and collaborative events that left a lasting impact on our patrons, donors, musicians, and the community at large.

We look forward to continuing our work together as we navigate the ever-evolving Hartford arts world and strive to create meaningful experiences for our community.

[Click Here to Review the 2023 Annual Message](#)

Help Wanted: HSO's Real Estate Needs

Work continues to identify options for replacing the space we currently lease at 61 Woodland Street, Hartford, for our rehearsal facility, equipment storage, and music library. Options are coming into focus, falling into three categories:

- Leasing a replacement facility similar to our current space.
- Purchasing a facility, with partners, to create a multi-faceted facility with more public-facing functionality.
- Moving some of our functionality into the Bushnell Performing Arts Center.

Of course, there are pros and cons with each type of solution, and hybrid solutions are coming to light as well. The real estate taskforce will begin meeting and evaluating all options shortly after the first of the new year, with opportunities for Board, staff, and musician participation.

[Go to hartfordsymphony.org/rehearsal/ to learn more.](http://hartfordsymphony.org/rehearsal/)

Help Wanted: Endowment and Initiative Funding

Building our endowment to provide greater support for ongoing operations and creating special funds to fuel development of new initiatives are absolutely critical to our sustainability and growth. The Hartford Symphony Orchestra is launching a \$15 million capital campaign to bolster financial security, support crucial DEI initiatives, and propel artistic development to new levels of achievement. The campaign includes three distinct funds to achieve these goals: endowment funding, stabilization funding, and program support.

The campaign will be overseen by the Capital Campaign Manager, whose responsibilities will include management of all day-to-day campaign operations, campaign coordination, the identification, research and analysis of major gift donor prospects, coordination of prospects assigned to staff and volunteer leadership, donor solicitation as assigned, donor events, and the creation of all campaign materials including a campaign brochure.

[Go to hartfordsymphony.org/open-positions to learn more.](http://hartfordsymphony.org/open-positions)



Rehearsal space at 61 Woodland Street, Hartford will need to be replaced.

HSO's Impact: Fostering Access & Community Engagement

With the 2023 – 2024 season well underway, the Learning and Social Impact team is happy to report our progress. This season, we are focusing on our patrons having more access to our programming. This includes continuing traditional offerings like Symphony in Our Schools, ensemble concerts at Duncaster Retirement community and Melissa White, our Joyce C. Willis Artist-in-Residence, meeting with several school and community groups to discuss her music career and share insights on composer Florence Price.

In order to support students' access, a donor-funded account has been set up to help school districts pay for transportation costs to attend Discovery Concerts at the Bushnell. Over 1,300 students will have their transportation costs covered by this fund, beginning with "Cirque at the Symphony" on December 15, 2023. (See more below.)

Outreach to our community is important to the HSO and we've been able to provide access to our music through charitable events. On November 18, led by "Footwear with Care", several area organizations worked together to help people living in shelters and on the street by providing proper footwear and medical care. HSO staff volunteered to assist with the planning of the event, supporting guests during the event and violinist Gary Capozziello provided music. We are fortunate to partner with the Hartford community to assist one another.

Looking ahead to the winter, we're excited to visit more schools through our Symphony in Schools program, provide music to retirement communities with our Musicians Care Project, conduct "instrument labs" at locations including the Bloomfield Library, and continue to support Chrysalis Center with music therapy.

Empowering Access: Symphony's Transportation Assistance Success

In the Fall of 2022, the HSO began to engage in conversations with Hartford-area schools regarding low attendance at HSO Discovery Concerts. We were saddened to learn that, even if we provided every student with a free ticket, some schools still could not afford to attend because they couldn't cover the cost of transportation.

Recognizing this as a significant barrier, the HSO held conversations with local community partners in the hopes of creating a Transportation Assistance Fund designed to offset the cost of buses for students attending the symphony with their schools. The response has been wonderful. Travelers, The Hartford, Lincoln Financial Foundation, and several other private donors have all made generous donations to the Hartford Symphony Orchestra's Student Transportation Assistance Fund and, as of December 2023, more than 1300 students will benefit from this program. We are now reaching school districts who have never before able to experience our music.



HSO Following Through on its Commitment to Diversity

The HSO is committed to diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) and has adopted accelerating change in DEI as one of its strategic goals. In pursuit of this goal, HSO will track the diversity of its directors, musicians, and staff and will examine its musician hiring and retention practices, establish BIPOC musician fellowships, extend the Joyce C. Willis Artist-in-Residence program and foster community partnerships. To measure progress, HSO will track the diversity of its board, staff, and musicians against national and regional benchmarks, utilizing data from the League of American Orchestras through the new Inclusion Data Hub. In a commitment to transparency, the demographic data for our current orchestra and recent musician auditioners in the sidebar on this page provides a foundation for ongoing improvement.

Symphonic Unity: Celebrating Black Leadership

It is with great enthusiasm that we announce an exciting collaboration with The Amistad Center for Art & Culture to present the upcoming 2024 Harmonies & Healing Concert on January 24, 2024, at the Rehoboth Church of God, Bloomfield.

The Amistad Center is dedicated to celebrating the rich experiences and contributions of people of African descent and recognizes the profound intersection of music and faith in the Black experience. This concert aims to showcase the healing aspects of both secular and sacred music, highlighting the ingenuity and cultural contributions of Black artists throughout history in commemoration of the 95th Anniversary of the first gallery showing of Black Art in the City of Hartford. The program showcases an array of popular, classical, and spiritual music from the days of plantations to present, with anthems of hope and songs rooted in the diverse experience of Black peoples.

Rehoboth Church of God, a leading congregation within a regional conference of 180 congregations, has graciously offered to host this event, and we are delighted to report that well-known regional artists and performers are eager to participate. This concert is free and open to the public.

Harmony and Healing: Celebrating Black Leadership

Wednesday, January 24, 2024

7:00 p.m.

Rehoboth Church of God

1170 Blue Hills Ave, Bloomfield, CT

Musician Demographics (% current/ applicants)

Gender

Male (56/ 61)

Female (44/ 32)

Non-Binary (0/ 1)

Gender Not Identified (0/ 6)

Race

White (67/ 71)

Black (n=1*/ 2)

Asian (13/ 18)

Other (NA/ 2)

Race Not Identified (13/ 6)

Ethnicity

Hispanic or Latino (0/ 8)

Not Hispanic or Latino (87/ 86)

Not Identified (13/ 6)

** number of individuals*

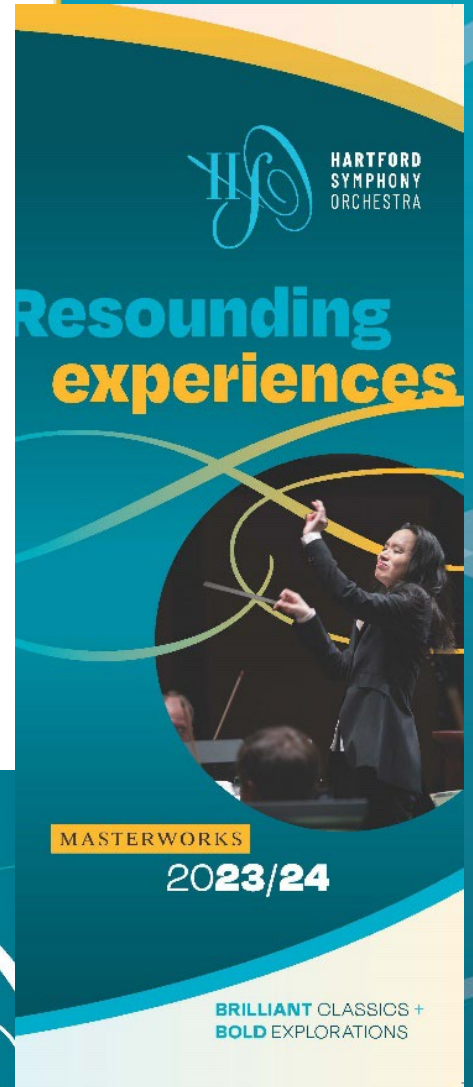
HSO's Dynamic Visual Identity Unveiled

Our team has been hard at work developing a visual brand identity system that strategically integrates color, typography, imagery, and composition to elevate the narrative of the Hartford Symphony Orchestra. The result is a dynamic and contemporary design that captures the energy of our performances and community work.

A stylized monogram and contemporary wordmark serve as a powerful representation of the orchestra's spirit. A recognizable color palate and typography create a clear information hierarchy, and imagery will play an important role in storytelling that brings our performances and events to life on the site. Inspired by our monogram, calligraphic marks add an artistic touch to our communications.

The guidance emphasizes creating engaging layouts, utilizing grids for composition structure, and balancing typographic variety for clarity and interest. Overall, the system offers flexibility to tailor communications for diverse audiences and platforms, ensuring a compelling and cohesive brand experience.

We are thrilled to announce the launch of the new brand-identity on the HSO's website. We are excited to share this milestone with you and invite you to explore our revamped website.



New Board Members

Marissa Baum, Director of Marketing and Communications at the Connecticut Museum of Culture and History, established the department in 2020 and orchestrated a historic rebrand. Previously with the American Jazz Museum in Kansas City, she held roles in development and communications, and served on boards for Young Latino Professionals and the National World War I Museum. Marissa, holding a B.A. in Art History from Syracuse University and an M.A. in Museum Studies from The George Washington University, currently chairs Fortel!, supporting the Hartford Symphony Orchestra.



Francys Jesson, originally from Venezuela and fluent in Spanish and English, has lived in the U.S. for 24 years. A Forestry Engineering graduate from Universidad de los Andes, she led research at Smurfit-Stone Container Venezuela. After becoming a Bilingual Elementary School Educator, she worked for the Madison School District. Later, in Chicago, she joined Projé Inc., and in San Diego, she worked at the University of California, San Diego. Having returned to Avon in 2021, Francys is now focused on family and building a business with her husband while contributing to the Hartford Symphony Orchestra.



Congratulations Gary Capozziello!

We are thrilled to announce the well-deserved promotion of Gary Capozziello to the position of Hartford Symphony Orchestra's Assistant Concertmaster. Gary's outstanding contributions as an award-winning violinist and his dedication to musical excellence have been a great asset to the HSO for more than a decade.

Please join us in congratulating Gary Capozziello on this significant achievement. We are confident that his passion, talent, and dedication will continue to enrich our musical community.



Harmony Enriched: Welcoming Exceptional Musicians

We are thrilled to announce the welcome addition of 16 exceptionally talented musicians to the Hartford Symphony Orchestra, enriching our musical family with outstanding expertise in the violin, viola, trumpet, and cello. Their impressive skills and passion for their craft promise to elevate our performances to new heights, creating unforgettable moments for our cherished audiences. We extend our deepest gratitude to all those who dedicated their time and effort to the rigorous audition process, ensuring the selection of musicians who embody the excellence and artistry that define the Hartford Symphony Orchestra. Together, we eagerly anticipate the harmonious journey ahead and the collective pursuit of musical brilliance. Here's to the incredible contributions our new members will make and the boundless possibilities that lie ahead for the Hartford Symphony Orchestra.



Jamie Andrusyak
First Violin
Norwich, CT



Devon Duarte
Viola
Bristol, CT



Nicholas Citro
Viola
Colchester, CT



Michael Duffett
Principal Second Violin
Newington, CT

Recently Hired Musicians: 16

including
One-year Appointments: 7

Recent Auditions:

Instrument (number of participants)

- Viola (12)
- Violin, including assistant concertmaster and principal (40)
- Cello (27)
- Bass (12)
- Trumpet (47)

Upcoming Auditions:

Spring 2024

- Percussion
- Principal Oboe
- BIPOC Musician Fellowships

Fall 2024

- Principal Trumpet
- Principal Cello
- Bass Trombone
- Piano



Michael Eby
First Violin
Willimantic, CT



Yukiko Kuhara
Second Violin
Astoria, NY



Eva Roebuck
Cello
Red Hook, NY



Jack Farnham
Third Trumpet
New York, NY



Selah Kwak
Second Violin
Suffield, CT



Yu Ssu-Yang
Viola
Edison, NJ



Sean Klopfenstein
Second Violin
Brooklyn, NY



Nathan Lowman
Cello
West Hartford, CT



Alexander Svensen
Bass
Madison, CT



Brandon Kreuder
Service Viola
Burlington, WI



Jihye-Joelle Maree
First Violin
Oakdale, CT



Adam Willson
Cello
Hastings on Hudson, NY

Upcoming Concerts & Events



Holiday Cirque!
December 16, 2023



Copland & Bernstein
March 8-10, 2024



**Harry Potter and the Half
Blood Prince**
April 20, 2024



Elf in Concert
December 22 - 23, 2023



Itzhak Perlmán in Recital
March 16, 2024



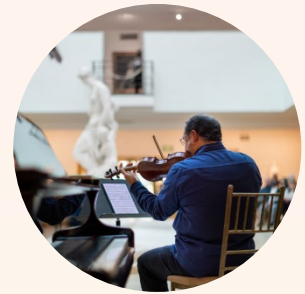
Mozart & Prokofiev
May 10-12, 2024



Enduring Love Stories
February 9-11, 2024



**Distant Worlds: music from
FINAL FANTASY**
March 23, 2024



Avery @ 90
May 19, 2024



Art in Song
February 25, 2024



Vivaldi's Gloria
April 12-14, 2024



The Planets
June 7-9, 2024



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