Dvořák & Firebird

Historical Timeline

Hartford Symphony

FRITZ MAHLER

Musical Director and Conductor

Mozart — Overture of The Abduction From the Seraglio
Haydn — Symphony No. 88, in G Major
Benjamin Britten — The Young Person's Guide to The Orchestra
Morton Gould — American Salute
Debussy — Prelude To "The Afternoon of a Faun"
Strauss — Death and Transfiguration

Wed., Jan. 20, 8:15 P. M.

BUSHNELL AUDITORIUM

SEATS FOR THIS PERFORMANCE $3 $2.50 $2

Available at Symphony Office, Old State House Tel. 46-0811

Jan. 20, 1954, *The Hartford Courant*

Closing the concert was showy yet compelling performance by Mr. Mahler and the Hartford Symphony of Strauss' "Death And Transfiguration," a work I particularly dislike myself. At moments the leading melodies were swallowed in the glitter of orchestration last night but in the main it was an impressive conclusion to a memorable evening.

—T.H.P.

Feb. 13, 1958, *The Hartford Courant*

Death and Transfiguration
Richard Strauss

January 20, 1954
First recorded performance of *Death and Transfiguration* by the Hartford Symphony Orchestra
Fritz Mahler, conductor

February 12, 1958
Second performance of R. Strauss's tone poem by the HSO in Bushnell Memorial Hall
Fritz Mahler, conductor

November 18, 1964
Special performance for concert commemorating Richard Strauss's 100th birthday
Arthur Winograd, conductor

April 24, 1974
Fourth performance in the former Wednesday night concert series
Arthur Winograd, conductor

January 19-20, 1982
Arthur Winograd conducts *Tod und Verklärung* with the HSO for the third time

November 13-16, 2014
"Masterworks" series performances in Belding Theater
Carolyn Kuan, conductor

Portrait of R. Strauss by Franz Hanfstaeng,, c. 1888

Strauss' Birth To Be Noted Here Wednesday

The 100th anniversary of th[e] birth of Richard Strauss will b[e] commemorated by the Hartfor[d] Symphony at its concert, We[d]nesday, 8:15 p.m., at Bushne[ll] Memorial.

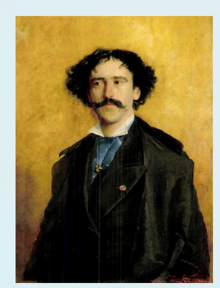
Arthur Winograd, the ne[w] music director and conducto[r] of the Symphony, will condu[ct] the orchestra in two works b[y] the composer.

The "Four Last Songs," will be presented with Lois Marshall, soprano, as soloist, and the orchestra will also perform Strauss' third tone poem, "Death and Transfiguration."

Strauss is one of the few composers who had the good fortune to see his works become classics in his own lifetime.

"Death and Transfiguration," was written in 1890 when he was only 26 years old. The "Four Last Songs" written in 1948, one year before his death at the age of 85, are entitled, "Spring," "September," Going to Sleep" and "In Evening's Glow."

Nov. 15, 1964, *The Hartford Courant*



Portrait of Violinist Pablo de Sarasate (1878) by Ferenc Paczka

Free Concert Today By FERA Orchestra

The FERA Concert Orchestra, Angelo Coniglione, conductor, presents its thirteenth free concert at the Avery Memorial this afternoon, at 3 o'clock. The program follows: Overture "Carnival," Dvorak; Romance from Second Violin Concerto, Wieniawski; Andante Cantible from Symphony No. 5, Tschaikowski; Symphonic Poem "Finlandia," Sibelius (repeated by request); "Claire de Lune," Debussy; "Italian Caprice," Tschaikowski.

The next free concert by the orchestra will be given at the Avery Memorial, Sunday, March 3rd.

Feb. 24, 1935, *The Hartford Courant*

Zigeunerweisen
Pablo de Sarasate

September 8, 2006
Korean-American violinist Sarah Chang plays *Zigeunerweisen* as her encore as soloist with the HSO, in their first recorded performance of the work
Edward Cumming, conductor

December 9-11, 2016
Second performance(s) by the HSO with violin soloist Sirena Huang
Carolyn Kuan, conductor

June 4, 2022
2021 co-winner of the Young Artists Competition, Tyler Tan, plays Sarasate with the HSO for a "Symphony in the Park" concert at Bushnell Park
Adam Kerry Boyles, conductor

Local Symphony In 'Pop' Concert At Trinity Nov. 7

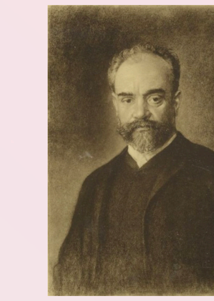
The season's first Pop Concert by the Hartford Symphony Orchestra, under the direction of Fritz Mahler, new conductor, will be held on Saturday evening, November 7, at 8:15 p.m. at the Trinity College Field House. "An Evening in Old Vienna" will be the theme of the evening's performance.

James M. Thomson, general chairman, has announced that proceeds will benefit the educational fund of the Hartford Art School. Only mail orders are now being accepted. Address, Pop Concert, Hartford Symphony, Old State House, Hartford. After October 28, telephone orders may be placed. General admission will be $1.00, and all tables will be reserved. Large parties can be accommodated in the heated field house on the Trinity campus.

Jacquelynne Moody, coloratura soprano who has studied under Dr. Elemer Nagy of the Hartt School of Music and who was recently acclaimed during the opera season in Central City, Colorado, will be featured soloist. She will sing "Allelujah" by Mozart, and the Strauss waltz, "Voices of Spring."

Other numbers on the program include "Radetzky March" by Strauss, the overture to "The Beautiful Galathea" by Suppe, the first movement from Schubert's Unfinished Symphony, three German dances by Mozart, the "Emperor Waltzes" by Strauss, two of Dvorak's Slavonic Dances, the overture to "The Gypsy Baron" and "Perpetuum Mobile" by Strauss and Offenbach's overture to "Orpheus in Hades."

Oct. 18, 1953, *The Hartford Courant*



Print of an original portrait of Dvořák by Ludwig Michalek, 1891

Slavonic Dances
Antonín Dvořák

June 22, 1938
First performance of Dvorak's *Slavonic Dances* by the HSO, held at Bushnell Park's former music shell
Paul Stassevich, guest conductor

November 7, 1953
Second performance at Trinity College's Field House in Hartford for Pops concert, *Dance No. 1* only
Fritz Mahler, conductor

February 20, 1971
Selection of 5 *Dances* for Pops concert at Bushnell Memorial
John Nelson, guest conductor

July 11, 1997
Three *Slavonic Dances* presented at Talcott Mountain Music Festival
Michael Lankester, conductor

June 4, 2022
Dance No. 1 played by the Hartford Symphony for special "Symphony in the Park" concert at Bushnell Park's Pavilion stage
Adam Kerry Boyles, conductor

Symphony's Performance Opens Shell

Concert Under Stassevitch Is Shining Event as Summer Music Season Begins

Conducted by Paul Stassevitch, the Hartford Symphony Orchestra was heard in concert at the Bushnell Park Shell Wednesday night. The program:

Overture, Der Freischuetz ... Weber
Symphony No. 3, F Major ... Brahms
Danse Macabre ... St. Saens
Slavonic Dances ... Dvorak
Wiener-Blut Waltz ... Strauss
Polovtsian Dances (Prince Igor) ... Borodin

A sign that "Sumer is i-cumen in," more convincing locally almost than the solstice itself, the Shell concert series opened again last evening, ushering in our "little season" and continuing music where it was left off a month or two back.

It was distinctly a bright event. Mr. Stassevitch proved to be one of the most musicianly of all conductors who have had their hour upon our stage and then been heard no more. Sensitivity, taste, an acute ear to orchestration which despite the shell's acoustics gave interesting and provocative representation to individual instruments, a keen sense of proportion between outline and detail, talent for making the orchestra sound harmonically—a very great virtue with us—and a willingness to get right inside the music rather than to hold it at a virtuoso's arm's length, were qualities of Mr. Stassevitch which made the bravoes at the end of the concert, most deserved—the first bravoes within your correspondent's summer-concert memory. Mr. Stassevitch made the program both sound and pulse.

Homage to Brahms.

Mr. Stassevitch's Brahms was soundly, carefully, almost meticulously done, filled with a warmth both of music and feeling. At times it seemed more scholarly than robust, but it was patently tender and loving interpretation at all times. At moments it seemed to me that Mr. Stassevitch, in the first and third movements, dwelt a bit too lovingly and that these movements lost momentum. Whether the rather small size, onally, was due to smothering by the shell, or to Mr. Stassevitch's intent, is hard to say. But in any event it was excellent homage to Brahms, sensitive and entirely musical.

One of Mr. Stassevitch's most attesting marks of musicianship was the fact that he lavished quite the same devotion on the shorter pieces. They were choicely done. Not only were they richly inflected and set out with style, but they were made to sound glowingly. There is no doubt about it that between Mr. Stassevitch and the orchestra, they managed to build up a web of sound of finer texture than has been heard from the Hartford Symphony in a long while. The Slavonic Dances were grandly heard. And for the first time, the orchestra rally played a waltz. The Polovtsian Dances of course they have done so many times that it has become one of their traditions.

Orchestra Excellent.

In paying tribute to a conductor, one frequently robs the orchestra of its due. I would not do that this time especially, for the orchestra played with a general finish outstanding in its career. Choirs unsure in the past somehow found new virtuosity, and above all the orchestra has developed a vastly superior rhythmic sense. The No. 3 Brahms is an orchestral terror but there were few points where it ruffled the instrumental calm last night.

The shell acoustics have of course their traditional difficulties. Those musicians who would reduce the size of the orchestra or enlarge the shell, are undoubtedly on the right track.

—T. H. P.

June 23, 1938, *The Hartford Courant*

City Symphony Opens Festival in Worcester

The Hartford Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Arthur Winograd, opens the 116-year old Worcester Music Festival Monday and Tuesday nights at the Memorial Auditorium in Worcester, Mass.

The nation's oldest music festival, the Worcester had originally scheduled the Detroit Symphony Orchestra for a full week of festival appearances, its 18th season with Worcester. Because of labor disputes, the Detroit Symphony was unable to tour, and within the past 10 days the Hartford Symphony and the Rhode Island Symphony responded to Worcester's request to perform, and will share the orchestral activities. The Hartford Symphony was invited to open the festival, and to play also on the second evening, while the Rhode Island will be heard on Thursday evening and at a young people's concert on Saturday morning. Opera will be featured on Friday and Saturday nights.

In order to accept the invitation, the Hartford Symphony had to rearrange rehearsal schedules in Hartford and add additional rehearsal hours for the Worcester appearance. Funding for these appearances is made possible in part by a grant to the Hartford Symphony from the National Endowment on the Arts. The Hartford Symphony had performed at the Festival also in 1969, in a program conducted by Winograd and by Aaron Copland, and featuring Marian Anderson narrating Copland's "A Lincoln Portrait."

Already engaged by Worcester as solists with the orchestra were two artists who appeared last season, in Hartford, with the Hartford Symphony: Itzhak Perlman, violin, and Philippe Entremont, piano.

Tomorrow Perlman will play the same work he performed here in May, the Brahms "Concerto in D" for Violin and Orchestra. The orchestra will be heard in works performed in Hartford Oct. 8—Copland's "Outdoor Overture," Brahms' "Variations on a Theme by Haydn", and Stravinsky's "Firebird Suite."

On Tuesday, Entremont and the orchestra will be heard in Beethoven's "Emperor" Concerto, and the Hartford Symphony will also play Dvorak's "New World" Symphony. The concert opens with Vivaldi's "Credo," a work featuring the Worcester Chorus, conducted by Alfred Nash Patterson, chorus director.

Single tickets are available at the Worcester Memorial Auditorium box office. Concert time for both programs is 8:15 p.m.

Oct. 19, 1975, *The Hartford Courant*

Ambitious modernism concert focuses on Stravinsky, Picasso

By STEVE METCALF
Courant Music Critic

MUSIC REVIEW

For its season finale devoted to modernism, the Hartford Symphony took an evening-length look at the two men who invented it: Stravinsky and Picasso.

Of course, that's a little like saying the Hartford Symphony gave us the cultural history of the 20th-century in an hour and 55 minutes.

A few things had to be omitted. But you have to admire the ambition.

This was the third and last of this season's "Classical Conversations" series, which have been especially lively this year, largely due to the presence of former Wadsworth Atheneum director Patrick McCaughey, who, along with Hartford Symphony music director Michael Lankester, has used the series to consider the relationship between the visual arts and music.

Thursday's concert was the most convincing specimen of the three "Conversations", if only because the parallels between Stravinsky and Picasso were so strikingly deep and genuine.

Almost exact contemporaries, who came to prominence early in life, and both in the heady crucible of Paris, the two men not only ushered in the modern age, they embodied it, several times re-invented it, and eventually, in some senses at least, outlived it.

In Stravinsky's case, the personal timetable was almost unimaginably embracing: as a young man, he glimpsed the ghostly figure of Tchaikovsky in a Moscow theater. Yet he lived to experience the Beatles, Vietnam and the N.Y. Mets' victory in the '69 World Series, an event he reportedly took some interest in.

Picasso was granted an even longer span of years, along with one faculty that was not particularly a Stravinsky hallmark: fecundity. We saw a wide sampling of the man's art through the early and formative decades Thursday, and also quite a few late images. McCaughey pointed out that in his 90th year, Picasso's output was a staggering 167 paintings, along with several dozen drawings.

The musical illustrations were ample and apt: portions of "The Rite of Spring," "The Fairy's Kiss" in its entirety, fragments of some of the composer's neo-classical works and finally the "Firebird Suite," whose use as the evening's crowd-pleasing finale illustrates both the young Stravinsky's dazzling originality and modern audiences' still-steadfast preference for the composer's youthful music.

The evening also conveyed another truth about these two giants: that behind their revolutionary spirit lay a reverence for the past that often confounded and irritated even their admirers. But it is perhaps for this reason, among others, they were the last artists in their fields to be universally acknowledged as great, before the fractious century they helped to shape had a chance to undermine not only the accomplishments of its artists, but the idea of greatness itself.

The HSO will repeat the above program today at 8 p.m. in The Bushnell.

May 24, 1996, *The Hartford Courant*

Carnival Overture
Antonín Dvořák

February 24, 1935
First performance of Dvořák's *Carnival Overture* by the FERA Concert Orchestra (original name of the HSO) for Avery Memorial Auditorium Concerts series of Wadsworth Atheneum, which was remotely broadcast on WTIC radio
Angelo Coniglione, conductor

March 28, 1973
Second performance of the *Carnival Overture*, first heard in Bushnell Memorial Hall
Arthur Winograd, conductor

July 18, 1996
Third performance by the HSO, for the second annual Talcott Mountain Music Festival
Apo Shu, guest conductor

September 24, 2008
Performance in Belding Theater for the 2008-2009 HSO Season opening concert
Edward Cumming, conductor

October 1, 2011
Pre-season performance at The Hartt School's Millard Auditorium, conducted by former conductor of the HSO and Hartt Orchestra, Edward Cumming

Portrait of Igor Stravinsky, 1919

The Firebird Suite
Igor Stravinsky

February 24, 1960
First performance of *The Firebird* by the Hartford Symphony
Friitz Mahler, conductor

May 2, 1962
Second performance of the Suite, alongside the visit of cellist Leonard Rose
Friitz Mahler, conductor

October 20, 1975
Performance of *The Firebird* at Worcester Memorial Auditorium (Mass.) for the opening concert of the 1975 Worcester Music Festival
Arthur Winograd, conductor

May 23-24, 1996
Presentation of selected artwork by Pablo Picasso shown during performances of Stravinsky's music
Michael Lankester, conductor

February 12-15, 2015
Weekend performances of *The Firebird* Suite for "Masterworks" series program
Carolyn Kuan, conductor

February 11-13, 2022
Performances of *The Firebird* Suite featuring Serena Huang for "Masterworks" series program
Carolyn Kuan, conductor

Bushnell Memorial

WED. EVE., FEB. 24

HARTFORD SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Fritz MAHLER

Director

MOZART — Overture to Don Giovanni
BEETHOVEN — Symphony No. 5 in C Minor
RESPIGHI — Botticelli Triptych
STRAVINSKY — Suite from the Firebird

Remaining Seats at Box Office

JA 5-3177

$3.50 $2.00 $1.50 $1.00

Feb. 21, 1960, *The Hartford Courant*

HARTFORD SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Compiled by Caleb Smith, HSO Intern/Historian
Contact: archives@hartfordsymphony.org