The birth of the Hartford Symphony Orchestra is attributed to musician and businessman Francis Goodwin II. Goodwin submitted the Federal Emergency Relief Administration (FERA) orchestral application that created the “Hartford FERA Concert Orchestra.” The symphony provided a public service and a program to help struggling musicians through the economic depression.

The orchestra made its official debut on November 18, 1934, at the new Avery Memorial at the Wadsworth Atheneum, under the baton of Angelo Coniglione, who served as the symphony’s first conductor from 1934 to 1936. When the Federal Government disbanded FERA in 1935 and started the Federal Music Project (FMP), a subdivision of the Works Progress Administration (W.P.A), the orchestra became the Hartford Civic Symphony Orchestra.

Jacques Gordon (1936-38) replaced Angelo Coniglione as conductor. The ensemble officially changed its name to the Hartford Symphony Orchestra.

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