The HSO launched into the 21st century with a major community initiative to reach new audiences, starting with “Have a Dream,” the HSO’s first concert celebrating the life and legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. The HSO was also invited to tour with the popular operatic tenor Andrea Bocelli, and together they performed 15 concerts in cities across North America.

After a three-year search for a new Music Director, Edward Cumming was appointed in 2002, telling Connecticut to “Expect the Unexpected.” Cumming wanted the HSO to be an orchestra for the people of Greater Hartford, and believed the programming should reflect this.

In 2003, the Hispanic Professional Network recognized HSO’s dedication to promoting “awareness of Hispanic arts and culture.” The HSO was also awarded the ASCAP award by the League of American Orchestras for Adventurous Programming of Contemporary Music.

HSO appointed Carolyn Kuan, its 10th Music Director, in the 2010-11 season. Kuan is the first female and the youngest Music Director in the history of the HSO, and is recognized as one of the most exciting, innovative, and outstanding conductors of her generation.

In 2017, the HSO performed their first Naturalization Ceremony, where eleven Connecticut residents, including Carolyn Kuan, took an oath to become U.S. citizens on the stage of The Bushnell before a concert. This ceremony marked the beginning of a new chapter, a renewed commitment to community.

During the 2019, the HSO has continued to remain on the forefront of innovative programming, introducing the Interim concert series that showcases contemporary and rarely-heard classical works in a variety of venues throughout Greater Hartford. The HSO has also ventured into the realm of presenting films with live soundtrack. This began with the outstanding success of Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone™ in Concert, featuring the first film of the Harry Potter franchise and the music of John Williams performed live by the HSO.

“Carolyn has a very good handle on the role of the orchestra in the community. We’ve gotten closer to audiences... We are thinking outside of the box. It’s not about having enough people in an orchestra. It’s about having enough people who are versatile.”

-Senator Eric, member of the Hartford Symphony Orchestra, from the Hartford Courant, Sept 26, 2018

2000s

Milestones & Millenia

2010s

Forward Movement

Carolyn Kuan, courtesy of the Hartford Symphony Orchestra.

Jaroslaw Lis, violinist with the Hartford Symphony Orchestra, from the Hartford Courant, Sept 26, 2018.