To my dear HSO family,

I miss you so very much. My fervent hope is that this reaches all of you in good health.

I miss sharing with you the musical moments of pure joy and beauty, filled with deep introspection and appreciation of all humanity. Music is still a part of my daily life and although five minutes of Mozart, Tchaikovsky or Mahler can brighten my day, listening to music alone, without you, without our musicians, and without our shared HSO family just isn’t the same.

So many have lost so much this year. This past summer, among other things, I was to make my debuts with the Philadelphia Orchestra and the Lincoln Center Mostly Mozart Festival. Every plan was cancelled, and to be honest, my spirits crashed. There are days when I am overwhelmed with worry about the future of arts organizations and artists, and I ache for our amazing and hardworking musicians. But on the darkest days, it is your support and encouragement that gives me hope and courage. Seeing so many of you donate tickets to cancelled concerts, make gifts large and small to the HSO, and send positive messages of affirmation makes me truly grateful for that which will see us through: our community and our caring for one another.

We all look for silver linings. I am grateful to have more time to focus on the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion commitments of the HSO. I have treasured my time at home with Elizabeth, instead of my usual scenario of months on the road, conducting operas and concerts in venues throughout the world. For the first time, all 24 of the Taki Alsop Conducting Fellows (I was the first recipient of that honor in 2003) were united virtually with 18 music directors/chief conductors from 16 different countries. The need for connection prompted our regular conversations and we welcomed industry experts into those discussions. Please click here for a short glimpse into my experiences.

I wait impatiently for the day when we can be back on the stage, but until then, we are creating new ways to share music together, even if only in a virtual space. I hope you will all join me in a new virtual adventure, Masterworks In Depth With Carolyn Kuan. Using our original concert repertoire as a starting point, I invite all to explore the beauty of the music we intended to perform this season, and to go even further with surprise guests and musical additions. I miss making music and I miss the electricity that we create when we are together. Stay hopeful, stay safe and know that I am with you always, even when you can only see me on a screen.

With affection,
Carolyn and Elizabeth

TO SUPPORT THE HSO IN OUR TIME OF GREATEST NEED, please go to https://hartfordsymphony.org/individual-support/donate-now/ OR CLICK HERE TO DONATE NOW
The saying goes, “Where there’s a will, there’s a way.” How very true. Thanks to 27 incredible sponsors including our presenting sponsor, the Richard P. Garmany Fund at the Hartford Foundation for Public Giving, the HSO did indeed find a way.

HSO’s determination to return to live music and create a format that is safe for musicians and audiences paved the way for the HSO’s Summer Splash!, a series of 6 small ensemble concerts, each an hour in length, at five different outdoor venues. Tickets, available only through HSO’s website, were offered entirely for free on a first-come-first-served basis. The series sold out in less than 48 hours, proving the ongoing demand for live music.

Given strict governmental regulations, there was limited space availability, but those who attended enjoyed a rare treat in these times: the chance to gather with friends and enjoy live performances of music by various musicians of the Hartford Symphony Orchestra.

Two evening concerts (July 30 and August 25) took place at the Simsbury Meadows Performing Arts Center, the site of the HSO’s summer Talcott Mountain Music Festival, which had to be cancelled this year. Two more evening concerts were held on the grounds of The Hill-Stead Museum in Farmington (August 12 and August 20). A fifth concert was presented on the lawn of the Wadsworth Atheneum at noon on August 12 and the final performance was at 5 pm on August 28 on Pratt Street in downtown Hartford. The featured groups included the HSO String Quartet, HSO’s Brass Quintet, the Mosaic Trio and the HSO Jazz Quartet. With guests positioned within well-marked and physically distanced areas, our musicians and patrons celebrated the sheer joy of enjoying music together, something we will never again take for granted.
Guests enjoyed a picnic while listening to the HSO in performance at The Hill-Stead Museum

View of Simsbury Meadows from the viewpoint of Scott McIntosh, HSO’s Principal Trumpet

Listening to the HSO String Quartet on Pratt Street

The Mosaic Trio and HSO Jazz Quartet performed on the lawn adjoining the Wadsworth Atheneum

The HSO Brass Quintet at Simsbury Meadows

With gratitude to all of our Summer Splash! sponsors
The truest form of legacy is to create something that will live beyond us. It’s planting a tree with the knowledge that the tree will provide shade for someone else long after we’re gone. A legacy is a belief in tomorrow. And in today’s challenging times, believing in tomorrow gives our lives meaning, vitality and hope.

For 76 years, those who believe in a strong tomorrow have helped to sustain the Hartford Symphony Orchestra. Legacies surround us. We have museums built by visionaries and concert halls built by philanthropists. But you don’t have to be a millionaire to create a legacy. You only need the desire to be part of something that will outlast you.

Membership in the Hartford Symphony’s Encore Society is that legacy. Each year, special friends and neighbors become Encore members, with one thing in common: they believe in a hopeful and bright future for the Hartford Symphony Orchestra and for our community. Together, we make a difference. Since legacy gifts do not impact present resources, a plan that includes the HSO in your estate is the easiest way to ensure your symphony’s future.

For more information, please call Ruth Sovronsky, Development Director, at 860-760-7321, or contact her at rsovronsky@hartfordsymphony.org.
Wilmot “Bill” Jones and David Jones adored their Uncle Bob. In their eyes, he was the “fun guy” at family events, but they had no idea of their uncle’s depth of passion for the arts.

Born in Pennsylvania in 1930, Robert D. Jones enjoyed life to the fullest. A skilled athlete and baseball pitcher, Bob attended Amherst College on a baseball scholarship, where he earned a degree in business. After graduating from the Wharton School of Business with an MBA, Bob enjoyed a varied career that took him to multiple states including Pennsylvania, Ohio, Minnesota, New Jersey and ultimately Connecticut, where he established a consulting firm. In Connecticut, Bob continued his love of baseball and played tennis well into his eighties. He preferred car trips to plane travel and maintained strong bonds with his family and friends all over the country.

When asked to list two things that were most impressive about their uncle, Bill and David said the same thing: Bob was always surrounded by the multitude of friends he’d made throughout his life, and he was known to be generous to all he met. A natural raconteur with an outgoing personality, social gatherings invariably found Bob surrounded by a group of people who talked louder and laughed harder than everyone else.

While Bob’s biological family was small (one brother, and nephews Bill and David), his chosen family was infinitely larger. He made friends easily and maintained all friendships avidly, traveling throughout the country to spend time with classmates, colleagues and friends from every aspect of his life’s journey. In Connecticut, Bob was devoted to all that our region has to offer, including theater, the symphony, walks along the Farmington River and his spiritual home, Asylum Hill Congregational Church in Hartford.

Neither Bill nor David had any idea of the depth of their uncle’s passion for the arts, but as he thought about it, David told us that Bob’s legacy gift to the Hartford Symphony made perfect sense: “For Bob, community and family were priorities. In leaving a gift to the Symphony, he was doing his part to ensure the continuation of the vibrant community he loved.”

Bob’s friend and attorney, Paul Bourdeau, confirmed Bob’s philanthropic focus on arts and education, as both are essential elements in creating community. Paul, a partner in the West Hartford firm of Cummings & Lockwood, and a past President of Hartford Stage Company, helped guide Bob to learn how to make a difference. Paul often volunteers to teach adult education classes in legacy giving and reminds us that no one should take for granted the vibrant arts community we enjoy in Hartford. Paul noted, “Bob lived modestly, but after making sure that the family he adored received half of his estate, he felt it was critical to support the community. He loved the idea that he could use a charitable remainder trust as a way to retain a cash flow, benefit from an up-front tax deduction, and after death, give away a portion of his assets to organizations he valued.”

Thank you, Bob Jones, for your generosity, your love of our community and your profound appreciation of the value that music brings to a community. As Audrey Hepburn famously said, “To plant a garden is to believe in tomorrow.” And right now, we need to believe in tomorrow, more than ever before.

Bob is a role model for the rest of us. Legacy giving is something each of us can do with ease. It can be as simple as naming the Hartford Symphony as beneficiary of a retirement fund or life insurance policy or listing the Symphony as a beneficiary in your will. Other forms of estate giving might be more complex, such as the charitable remainder trust that Bob created with the help of his attorney. Whatever the mechanism, a gift to the Hartford Symphony through your estate makes an enormous difference and it simultaneously ensures that you have the necessary funds to support your needs during your life. The amount of your estate, or your gift, is not important: you only have to care enough to want to support those organizations that enriched you and brought you joy.
THREE CRITICAL TAX TIPS FOR 2020:

1. MAXIMIZE THE MANDATORY IRA DISTRIBUTION

If you are 72 (or reached the age of 70 ½ before Jan. 1, 2020) you are required to take a taxable distribution (RMD or required minimum distribution) from your IRA. For 2020, the CARES Act gives you the right to defer that distribution. But the IRS announced that while the RMD is not required, you retain the right to request that distribution. For those who want a tax advantage from their charitable gifts, this is a GREAT strategy. How? Simple! Before the end of 2020, instruct your IRA advisor to make the required distributions directly to a 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 can be directed to a single gift or broken into multiple gifts, and all tax consequences on the RMD that was designated as charitable gifts (Qualified Charitable Distributions or QCD’s) are eliminated.

2. MAKE GIFTS OF APPRECIATED STOCK

With the stock market gains in 2019 and 2020, 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 the 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. Instructions for making a stock gift to the Hartford Symphony Orchestra are on our website. https://hartfordsymphony.org/individual-support/stock-donation/

3. DEDUCT UP TO $300 IN CHARITABLE CASH GIFTS EVEN IF YOU DON’T ITEMIZE

If you do not itemize deductions, the CARES Act permits you to claim an additional $300 ABOVE your standard federal itemized deductions for cash gifts to charities in 2020. If you DO itemize your deductions, the CARES Act raises the Adjusted Gross Income ceiling for gifts to public charities from 60% to 100% for 2020 for federal income tax purposes.

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 our website to check it out. You just might double your gift! https://hartfordsymphony.org/individual-support/matching-gifts/

QUESTIONS? Just call Ruth Sovronsky, Development Director, at 860-760-7321 or email her at rsovronsky@hartfordsymphony.org

HSO PROGRAMS ARE FUNDED IN PART BY: