In this season of thanks and giving, a message of gratitude from the staff and musicians of the Hartford Symphony – and news of a year-end matching gift from an anonymous donor.

To all of you, our partners, supporters and donors, who keep the HSO alive, we offer our profound and enduring gratitude.

Throughout our 77-year history of music-making by the Hartford Symphony Orchestra, one truth has remained constant: we exist ONLY because of the passion and commitment of our partners, donors and loyal ticket-buyers. Never has that been more apparent than now, during a global pandemic that closed our concert halls and left us without ticket revenue.

You, individually and collectively, are our secret super-power. Your belief in the value and power of symphonic music continues to inspire us, lift our hearts and carry us forward. We have the utmost faith in the future of the Hartford Symphony because we have the utmost faith in each of you.

The global pandemic that struck in mid-March forced the HSO to cancel all programs, but because of you the HSO did not retreat. We are still here, reinventing ways to bring music to more people, and creating meaningful programs to educate, excite, comfort and celebrate. The music we perform for you in this, a season we will always remember, is chosen deliberately for you and speaks of our intense gratitude and the depth of our emotions. It’s the story of our highs, our lows, our sorrows and our elation.

We ask that you stand with us and continue your support. We realize that some of you, like many of us, are facing financial challenges. But for those who can, please continue to be generous. Please continue to trust in us as we trust in you.

If you can increase your annual gift by at least 20%, the increase in your gift will be doubled thanks to a gift from an anonymous donor. The match applies on every gift dated through December 31, 2020, whether by check or credit card. If you are unsure of the amount you gifted last year to calculate your increase, please email Jen Galante at jgalante@hartfordsymphony.org.

The time is now. Our annual campaign, Orchestrate Our Future, will bridge the distance between today and tomorrow. We have a plan, and the solution is in your hands. Our promise to you is simple. With your help, the music will not be silenced, and we will be together again.

Because we can’t be us without you.

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
While an echoing silence fills our concert halls, the Hartford Symphony is anything but quiet. In this new virtual era, you just need to know where to find us, and how to hear us.

Although we made the most of the warm weather during summer and early fall to bring live music to as many people as local outdoor venues could accommodate, the cold weather now drives us indoors, and onto your screen. Since regulations and concerns for the safety of our patrons, musicians and staff prevent us from in-person gatherings, our latest musical creations and fascinating programs must all be viewed on your screens, from the safety of our own homes. Your iPad, mobile phone, smart TV or computer monitor is the new HSO stage.

This year marks an important landmark that we intended to celebrate with you, but to put it mildly, COVID-19 put a crimp in our plans. The 2020/21 season is Music Director Carolyn Kuan’s 10th with the Hartford Symphony. Carolyn selected every piece for each Masterworks program because of the music’s deeply personal meaning to her. While we cannot perform these works as originally planned, Carolyn’s commitment to our symphony, to our musicians and to you, our community, has never waned, but has been transformed into her newest monthly series, Masterworks In-Depth, an intimate engagement between Carolyn, you and her special guests.

Each month, Carolyn curates and presents a program entirely of her own creation, drawing from the programs she had planned for this season. Despite the virtual platform that has now become our only avenue of engagement, her energy bursts from the screen, and pulls you closer to her, to the music, to her special guests and to her indefatigable passion for the music and our community. By the time you read this, we will already have shared the first three Masterworks In-Depth productions, to huge acclaim. Don’t miss the next one: beginning January 15 through 17, with a possible extension, Carolyn will focus on the music of William Grant Still, Florence Price and Antonín Dvořák. Check our website for updates.

Our newest musical offering is the HSO Spotlight Series, a monthly 60-minute performance by HSO musicians, who prepare new monthly concerts just for you. It is performed and recorded at different venues in Hartford, in collaboration with community partners. The first Spotlight was filmed live at TheaterWorks on October 26, 2020, and was available to view on-demand from November 13th through December 6th. The program featured works by William Bolcom, Franz Joseph
Haydn, Jessie Montgomery and Antonín Dvořák, performed by HSO musicians Concertmaster Leonid Sigal, Associate Concertmaster Lisa Rautenberg, Assistant Principal viola Aekyung Kim, Principal cello Jeffrey Krieger and pianist Stephen Scarlato.

The newest and second in the series, filmed on November 24, 2020 at Asylum Hill Congregational Church, features music of Arcangelo Corelli, Johann Sebastian Bach, Osvaldo Golijov and Felix Mendelssohn, and is available for on-demand viewing now through January 10, 2021.

HSO’s new Symphony Cinema features new feature-length documentary films from and about the world of music. We began with The Bowmakers, a film about “the most important instrument you’ve never heard of,” which traces the history of the modern bow from its origins in France to Port Townsend, Washington, a community that boasts world-renowned bowmakers. Our second film, Never Too Late: The Doc Severinsen Story, is the life story of trumpet-legend Doc Severinsen, who, at 93, is still going strong. Doc performed with the HSO in 2018 at the Talcott Mountain Music Festival, and the HSO is featured in the documentary. Both movies featured live and FREE Q&A sessions with the filmmakers, musicians and producers, with lively questions and comments from our at-home viewers. Keep watching our website and your “Symphon-e news” emails to learn about more movie offerings in the coming months.

New education initiatives have launched. Beyond creative entertainment, the HSO is focused on new education programs, doing our part to fill teaching voids left by the pandemic. With severe limitations on classroom participation, children, relegated to remote learning, are largely deprived of access to music and art. With the elimination of all school-based band programs, too many children are denied in-school music lessons. Guided by conversations with classroom and music teachers, our prime directive is to find ways to support and inspire the students.

In response to requests to support the limited in-school chamber ensembles that are permitted, HSO musicians are creating short 20-minute chamber ensemble programs for teachers to utilize in their classrooms. The music performances include questions, answered by each of the musicians. Targeted follow-up Zoom sessions will provide in-depth coaching geared to encourage continued learning. The first of these, a string quartet program with music by composer/performer Wynton Marsalis, was recorded on November 21 with great success.

And there’s more. Our first Zoom Master Class, scheduled for January 11, 2021, will feature HSO Principal Clarinet, Curt Blood, working

Bowmaker Charles Espey as featured in The Bowmakers.

The Bowmakers Q&A moderated by Lisa Rautenberg, with Ward Serrill (filmmaker) and guests.
with selected high school clarinet students. In 2021, we will again host a Young Artists Competition, using the same virtual format that we implemented last season, to the great delight of our participating students. Applications will be accepted through January 2021.

HSO To Go, the Symphony's virtual platform, will continue to showcase educational and entertaining videos by HSO musicians. It remains free for all and is easily found HERE. All educational materials are free, and the site is updated regularly, to ensure that we keep you informed of all projects and endeavors.

The imperative: addressing diversity, equity, and inclusion. Our country’s painful history of institutional racism was horrifyingly exposed again with the murder of George Floyd on May 25, 2020. It was the impetus that compelled individuals and organizations around the globe to admit and address personal bias and patterns of systemic racism, and it prompted the Hartford Symphony to begin our own deliberate process of examination and introspection. Our statement of commitment, found HERE, is evolving into action. In July, we invited six Black leaders in the world of classical music to host a panel that addressed Anti-Black Racism in American Orchestras. With viewers from all over the country, we began a necessary conversation that addressed the painful history of our industry, and if you missed the live discussion, it can be viewed HERE.

Our evolution continued with a frank panel discussion on December 8, 2020, Confronting the Audition Process in American Orchestras: A Challenge For Greater Diversity, Equity & Inclusion. In response to pressing demand, the last decade has witnessed a monumental shift in the role of the symphony musician. Beyond supreme artistry and musicianship, symphony musicians are expected to participate in educational programs and work with staff to engage audiences through personal dialogue and events. Whether or not the blind audition is the best screening process to address the need for diversity and musicians with the skills to handle these enhanced responsibilities is currently up for debate in the orchestra world. Our esteemed panelists included Jeri Lynne Johnson (renowned conductor, scheduled as the HSO guest conductor for our January Masterworks), Afa Dworkin (President and Artistic Director of the Sphinx Organization and recipient of the Kennedy Center’s Human Spirit Award), Abra Bush (Senior Associate Dean of Institute Studies at John Hopkins Peabody Institute), Kai Rocke (Bassoon, Minnesota Orchestra), and Jarek Lis (personnel Manager and Assistant Principal Second Violin, Hartford Symphony Orchestra). It was an eye-opening and candid exploration of this heated topic. A recording of the December 8th conversation may be viewed on our HSO To Go page.

We long for the day when we can all return to the concert hall, in celebration of the orchestral music that is in our DNA. If you’ve experienced the majesty of a live symphony, you know the magic that lives in each performance. Among the many silver linings of this pandemic is the symphony’s entry onto a virtual platform with the power to bring music to those who are confined or who lack access to the concert halls because of economic constraints. Change is never easy, but we are experiencing a transformation that will have lasting positive impact on orchestras for years to come.
2020 has brought life-altering changes to each of us. We are forced to reorder and re-examine our priorities, our lifestyles, our relationships to each other and to the outside world. The musicians, board and staff of Hartford Symphony, like you, have been touched by circumstances beyond our control, and as we focus on the silver linings, we realize that some changes are indeed miraculous transformations.

The caterpillar entering the chrysalis has no idea of the beauty that awaits when she emerges. So, too, the Hartford Symphony is being transformed, and like the butterfly who trusts in nature, we put our trust in all of YOU, the caring community that has enveloped us for 77 glorious seasons. This year is an exceptional milestone, as we celebrate HSO’s 10th season with our innovative and beloved Music Director, Carolyn Kuan.

Carolyn has relentlessly pursued bold visions, predisposing us to strive for new artistic heights. The HSO is at an inflection point, perhaps one of the most crucial in our history. We recognize this moment as that rare opportunity when new directions appear out of the mist with startling clarity. With Carolyn at the helm, the Hartford Symphony is ready to explore new pathways and without doubt, will emerge miraculously transformed.

The miracle is YOU. Because of YOU, our enduring, generous friends, the HSO will not merely survive but will thrive. The success of last May’s virtual gala proves that miracles do exist, and now it’s time on our website and this year you will be able to select your level of participation. You can view for free (advance registration is required) or investigate one of the ticketing options that will include delicious gourmet meals, drinks, cocktails and more, including a surprise in every box. There’s a special ticket for those under 45, options at every level for “out-of-towners” and, if you select the ticket with one of the gourmet dinners, your meal will be delivered to you! We guarantee an evening of new performances, new adventures and a celebration of the transformational changes we’ve all experienced. Our annual Gala is a fundraising event that is desperately needed this year to support our musicians, our community education programs, and new virtual educational content for children who cannot access traditional classrooms. Don’t miss it!

The journey has already begun. We invite you to trust in miracles and transformation along with us. 

HONORING CAROLYN’S 10TH SEASON AT HSO’S BRAVO! GALA IN MAY 2021

SAVE THE DATE!

We invite you to join us on May 1, 2021, for Metamorphosēs. Look for details HERE

Carolyn in 2011

Carolyn in 2020

Carolyn in 2011

Carolyn in 2020

Carolyn in 2011

Harry Potter, Ron Weasley, Hermione Granger, Harry Potter

Harry Potter, Ron Weasley, Hermione Granger, Harry Potter

Harry Potter, Ron Weasley, Hermione Granger, Harry Potter

Harry Potter, Ron Weasley, Hermione Granger, Harry Potter

Harry Potter, Ron Weasley, Hermione Granger, Harry Potter
Hartford Has It. That’s the slogan on banners in and around Hartford. For some Hartford natives, those three words reflect more of a wish than a statement of fact. But sometimes it takes an outsider with a vision to see what’s long been staring us in the face.

That outsider with the vision is Shelbourne, a small family-owned commercial real estate company started by Bernard Bertram and Ben Schlossberg. In 2014, with their “corporate” offices housed in a tiny space above a grocery store in Brooklyn, New York, the partners acquired 20 Church Street in Hartford. Their research on the building and the city convinced them that Hartford was a good investment. Hartford’s history, thriving arts community, declining crime statistics, and increasing appeal to corporate entities were among the factors that supported Shelbourne’s decision. The more familiar Bertram and Schlossberg became with the city, the more positive they became about Hartford. In the 7 years since, and, with investments in four additional buildings, Shelbourne has become the largest and fastest-growing owner of commercial office space in the city.

To learn more about Hartford Symphony Orchestra's 2020-2021 season sponsor, we asked a key question: “Why Hartford?” Shelbourne's Chief Operating Officer, Michael Seidenfeld, cited the scalability of the city as an important attribute. “Getting anywhere downtown is a ten-minute walk in any direction,” he said. “Boston and New York are large cities, so large in fact that there is no sense of community. Hartford is defined by its unique character, culture, and sense of civic pride. It's also more affordable and well-positioned for success. And, in Hartford, one positive change can have a ripple effect with far-reaching impact.”

According to Michael, Hartford’s additional positive components include: a dedicated and committed corporate community, a low cost of living, a beautiful baseball stadium along with the planned DONO (downtown North) development, world-class museums, vibrant music and arts culture, and its convenient proximity to New York and Boston.

As part of our conversation, we asked Michael how the COVID-19 pandemic affected Shelbourne’s vision and plans in Hartford. In response, Michael acknowledged that although the global pandemic has indeed tested Shelbourne’s commitment to Hartford, it has not altered it. Just prior to the pandemic, Hartford was increasingly moving in a positive direction. New companies were moving into the downtown area, such as Infosys, Hartford Healthcare,
and GalaxE, to name a few. But Michael was sensitive to the impact on all of us. “The pandemic has been devastating for many individuals, families, and businesses in the Hartford community,” Seidenfeld said. “There is real pain and hardship right now. Despite the current situation, we remain optimistic and committed to the success of Hartford. This City is not defined by the health and financial troubles caused by the virus. Rather, it is the inherent strength, perseverance, fierce sense of community of the City’s residents which characterizes Hartford and gives it its true value.” Michael acknowledged that while COVID-19 is a vicious storm that is roaring through everyone’s lives, we all know it will eventually pass. The core virtues and strengths of Hartford have remained unaffected by COVID-19, and, once the pandemic is in the rear-view mirror, Shelbourne believes that Hartford will continue its upward trend.

Shelbourne’s recent purchase of the former Fuller Brush Headquarters in Hartford’s North End neighborhood underscores that Shelbourne’s continued commitment to Hartford is tangible and not just talk. Furthermore, it is the real estate company’s first investment outside of the CBD. Their plans envision redeveloping the historic complex to better serve the community in which the building resides, and to create greater synergy between the opportunities in the CBD and the North End district.

When we asked Shelbourne, “Why Hartford Symphony Orchestra?” Michael explained that Hartford’s richness in arts and music is disproportionate to its size. He stressed that supporting arts and culture is important for the growth and future of Hartford and Shelbourne is committed to doing its part. “If we band together, as a community, we will all rise together,” Michael said.

We hear you loud and clear, Shelbourne. We’re thrilled that you’re here.
WELCOME TO OUR 2020/21 SEASON – WITH ENHANCED MEMBER BENEFITS!

To thank all who make donations this season, we’ve arranged new and special treats for members at all levels. All benefits listed below are in addition to those outlined on our website at: https://hartfordsymphony.org/individual-support/giving-levels/

Benefits are available to Annual Fund donors, and this season, for the first time, benefits will also be extended to those who have graciously donated back tickets to cancelled concerts during these extraordinary times. As always, benefit levels are determined by the value of the contribution.

- **Benefactor** $100-$249
- **Player’s Club** $250-$499
- **Principal’s Club** $500-$999
- **Concertmaster’s Club** $1,000-$2,499
- **Maestra’s Society and above** $2,500+

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- Distributed four times annually in our new electronic format.

- "Up Close and Personal" – a series of interviews with HSO musicians. Each Quarter Notes Plus features two HSO musicians, plus a private link to a special video message and musical collaboration by that musician pair, available ONLY to members.

- Hosted and created entirely by HSO Assistant Conductor Adam Boyles, this series of FOUR live webinars (each at 6:30 pm) explores a wide range of topics and began on December 11th: "Conductors... Who needs 'em?" The titles of the remaining three episodes are Big Deal (,) Beethoven? (on January 23), Persistence: Women in Classical Music (on March 19), and Making Music and a Movement: The Difficult Journey of African-American Musicians in American Orchestras (on May 14.) Invitations will be sent to those entitled to attend, and advance registration is required for all live sessions.

- Created and hosted by HSO Music Director Carolyn Kuan, this online series brings you into the room with Carolyn for a live conversation with top conductors, composers, directors and/or artists. Music lovers will immediately recognize Carolyn’s special surprise guests for their stunning achievements. Carolyn’s first guest, Marin Alsop, the first woman to lead a major American orchestra, began the series on Wednesday, Nov 4 at 6 pm. Advance registration is required for the live sessions. Members will also have unlimited access to recordings of all sessions. The other two sessions will take place on February 4 and April 15.

Check out the full list of benefits on our website at: https://hartfordsymphony.org/individual-support/giving-levels/