



WE ARE FAMILY

The 2025

Town of Hamden Independence Day Fireworks Concert



Friday, June 27th 2025

7:30 PM

Hamden Town Center Park at Meadowbrook



www.hamdensymphony.org

About HSO

This Spring marked the conclusion of Hamden Symphony Orchestra's 63th season! An all-volunteer orchestra of more than 75 musicians from the Greater New Haven area and beyond, Hamden Symphony members share a passion for rehearsing and performing great music together.

Founded in 1962 by Ruth T. Brooks, the Orchestra provides cultural enrichment to the community of Hamden, Connecticut, through its series of concerts, its annual Young Musicians Concerto Competition (YMCC), the Ruth T. Brooks Scholarship Award, and the rewarding experience offered to its members and guest artists.

The Orchestra's commitment to the musical development of local students is a source of great pride. For the last 54 years the Hamden Symphony Orchestra's YMCC has provided an invaluable educational experience to gifted high school musicians in the area: the chance to perform as a soloist with a full symphony orchestra. The competition is held annually each winter, and the winners are featured at the Orchestra's spring concert. In addition, for over 40 years the Orchestra has honored a graduating Hamden High School senior who has demonstrated excellence in their musical studies with the Ruth T. Brooks Award for Excellence in Instrumental Music. The 2025 winner of this award was clarinetist Mia Gribbon (also a 2024 YMCC winner).

From 1969-2007, Hamden Symphony Orchestra was under the baton of Maestro Paul Gacek. To honor his distinguished leadership, continuing support and several return appearances to the podium in recent years, Maestro Gacek was officially designated Hamden Symphony Orchestra's "Conductor Laureate" in 2017.

In 2008, Vesna Mehinovic became the Music Director of Hamden Symphony Orchestra. Under Vesna's baton, the Orchestra has continued to expand, and has presented compelling and innovative concert-programs that have featured new compositions, talented instrumental and vocal soloists, and even dance and multimedia components. Hamden Symphony Orchestra has been honored to be invited by the Town of Hamden to perform at its Independence Day Fireworks Celebration for a vast audience several times in recent years.

Hamden Symphony Orchestra
Vesna Mehinovic, Music Director

Opening Festivities

Lift Every Voice and Sing

J. Rosamand Johnson &
James Weldon Johnson

Andrea Barley, Vocalist

The Star Spangled Banner

John Stafford Smith &
Francis Scott Key

Kayla Cook, Vocalist

Concert Program

Featured Vocalists

Andrea Barley

Kayla Cook

Karen Kriner

Godson Nartey

Spencer Wilson

Charlie Shafer & Amy Weiss, Announcers

The Washington Post March

John Philip Sousa

God Bless America

Irving Berlin
arr. Keith Christopher

The Greatest Showman

Benj Pasek, Justin Paul & Ryan Lewis
arr. Sean O'Loughlin

Performed in honor of Braeden Shizume

Classical Gas

Mason Williams
arr. Robert Bradshaw

George Sprengelmeyer, Guitar

Journey's Greatest Hits Jonathan Cain, Steve Perry & Neal Schon
arr. Victor Lopez

At Last Harry Warren & Mack Gordon
arr. Daryl McKenzie

Karen Kriner, Vocalist

This Land is Your Land Woodie Guthrie
arr. James Ployhar

The Thunderer John Philip Sousa

Can't Take My Eyes off You Bob Crewe & Bob Gaudio
arr. Johann de Meij

Intermission

Battle Hymn of the Republic William Steffe & Julia Ward Howe
arr. Peter Wilhousky

Star Wars Episode V: *The Empire Strikes Back* John Williams
arr. John C. Whitney

Sweet Caroline Neil Diamond
arr. Daryl McKenzie

Armed Forces Salute Various Artists
arr. Bob Lowden

We Are Family Nile Rodgers & Bernard Edwards
arr. Daryl McKenzie

The Stars & Stripes Forever John Phillip Sousa

America The Beautiful Samuel A. Ward & Katharine L. Bates
arr. Carmen Dragon

Musicians of the Orchestra

Violin I

Stacy Shafer '09

Concertmaster

The Ruth T. Brooks Chair

Kimberlee Arnett '23

Elizabeth Braddon '16

Ann Clemmons '10

Yinchen Hao '23

Fred Leng '12

Xiangyu Shi '23

Tim Shizume '23

Amanda Zubek '22

Violin II

Mary Dickerson '25

Alicia Barrett-Oliver '24

Isabel Matos '25

Joeanna Novak '20

Dongjin Seo '24

Avinash Veeraraghav '23

Sophia Yu '25

Eleanor Zagoren '22

Viola

Julia Dolan '25

Shasta Ramachandran '22

Rolland Strasser '17

Anand Veeraraghav '23

Anika Veeraraghav '24

Lisa Zima '25

Cello

Elizabeth Baldwin '17

Dorothy Fang '19

Susan Soloman '13

Raffaella Zanetti '24

Bass

Raymond Quigley '24

Flute

Gianna Gassira '21

Pam Allen Hunter '24

Judith Kramer Koret '08

Mamie Wang '22

Elyssa Wrubel '24

Piccolo

Judith Kramer Koret '08

Mamie Wang '22

Oboe

Terri Bennett '16

Clara Wang '22

Clarinet

Kathryn Anderson '25

Mia Gribbon '25

Kathy Muench '15

Kimberly Vish Vock '20

Bass Clarinet

Harper Liles '25

Bassoon

Sue Lonergan '24

Brenda Tousignant '24

Soprano Saxophone

Brendan Cassidy '23

Alto Saxophone

Alexander Antaya '24

Courtney Carrignan '25

Evann D'Adamo '18

Nick Gardinier '24

Tenor Saxophone

Brendan Cassidy '23

Alex Horvath '21

French Horn

Michael Braverman '25

Mitch Dvoracek '23

Bryan Kupferman '25

Jean Webb '19

Trumpet

Jennifer Carlson '24

Olivia Enny '22

Jade Lewis '25

Steve Moskowicz '23

Christian Venturella '22

Trombone

Jon Craig '24

Bill Gambardella '92

Ryan Nemeti '25

Ethan Romano '23

Tylarr Throm '24

Tuba

Matthew DeNegre '24

Electric Guitar

Victor Ramirez '25

Electric Bass

Andrew Zielinski '24

Keyboard

Braeden Shizume '23

Drums & Percussion

Christopher Bradley '24

Nick Gardinier '24

David Liskov '10

Mitchell Rogers '22

Braeden Shizume '23

Adam Weber '21

Hamden Symphony Orchestra

Save the Date

Fall Concert - Friday, November 21st - 7:30 PM

Hamden Memorial Town Hall

2372 Whitney Avenue

Hamden, CT 06518

More Details to follow...

Have a wonderful summer!

Special thanks go to the following for their help in making tonight's concert possible:

- ♪ Mayor Lauren Garrett & Chief of Staff, Sean Grace.
- ♪ Karen Bivens, Director of Cultural Affairs & Human Services.
- ♪ Rose Lion, Legislative Council Administrator.
- ♪ Tom Brown, Parks Superintendent.
- ♪ Town of Hamden facilities services staff.
- ♪ Student musicians from Hamden High School, Central Connecticut State University, Ithaca College & Yale University.
- ♪ Carpool drivers: Olivia Enny, Yinchun Hao & Clara Wang.
- ♪ Christopher Bradley, Notre Dame High School (Bar Chimes).
- ♪ David Liskov & Adam Weber (percussion transport).
- ♪ Our generous financial supporters throughout the year!

About the Performers

George Sprengelmeyer received his Doctor of Musical Arts degree in guitar performance from the prestigious Peabody Conservatory of the Johns Hopkins University in 2003. He has given concerts across the United States as well as performances in Ireland and Scotland. He has been invited to give lectures and workshops about music at the Royal Conservatoire of Scotland, Mary Immaculata College in Limerick and the Comparative and Continental Philosophy Conference in Leiden, Netherlands. He completed a recording of the Celtic Suite, an arrangement of Turlough O'Carolan's music for the classical guitar, that was released in 2015. Dr. Sprengelmeyer is the Director of the Music Program at Quinnipiac University.

Andrea Barley is delighted to be celebrating here with the Hamden Symphony Orchestra. A resident of Cheshire, her lifelong love of music began with the violin - in a house full of musical instruments. (She still loves collecting interesting musical instruments). She's always loved to sing and has performed in a few choruses as an alto and second soprano. Andrea is currently a Soprano 2 Section Leader with Another Octave Connecticut Women's Chorus.

She's also been known to rock a karaoke microphone every now and then. When she's not making a joyful noise, she works for a technology retailer, which still allows her to get creative.

Kayla Cook has been part of various school and community choirs as well as singing as a cantor and section leader in churches throughout her life. She graduated from SUNY Fredonia with a bachelor's degree in music and has been fortunate to keep music in her life since then. Presently, Kayla is the soprano section leader at the Center Church on the Green in New Haven, she sings backup in a 60's variety show, and in December sings with the Royal Court Singers caroling group at the Griswold Inn in Essex, CT. When she isn't singing, Kayla works as a farmer at Massaro Community Farm in Woodbridge, CT where she has been for almost 8 years. She enjoys being able to get her hands in the soil and give back to her community. Kayla would like to thank her wonderful friends and family for their continued support in all of her endeavors!

Karen Kriner-Souris, originally from Norfolk, Virginia, moved to Connecticut in June 2013 and has been a Hamden resident ever since. Her lifelong passion has always been music. Raised in a family of musicians, she graduated high school, lettering in Orchestra. Then she spent time in college at VCU Richmond, VA with focus on voice and classical viola performance. After college, she began singing with top-40 cover bands, touring the south-eastern states. Currently, she is a violist and board vice president with the Hamden Symphony Orchestra. She is also a second soprano, violist and publicity coordinator with Another Octave: Connecticut Women's Chorus.

She currently works remotely for a Physical Therapy company based in Texas as a patient account representative. Her professional background is in healthcare insurance billing. She is an advocate for chiropractic and natural healthcare. She is also a DoTERRA essential oil consultant and loves to share her knowledge and experiences with chiropractic and the benefits of using essential oils in her daily life.

Fun facts...she is a newlywed, married Nicholas Kriner-Souris on Valentine's Day, LOVES purple and vibrant hair color experimentation.

Godson Nartey is originally from Ghana, and a former resident of New York. He is a member of the New Praize Gospel group located in Hamden and has been involved in chorale music since the age of 10. He has been in a few choirs over the years, notably, the New York Chamber Choirs. He is pleased to be given the opportunity to be a part of this great event!

Spencer Wilson is a vocalist based in Connecticut. He's been making music since a very young age, and over the years has learned to make many different kinds of music through many different instruments and methods. He also performs with the Wallingford Choir as a tenor, and the Augusta Curtis Concert Band on the euphonium. He's published some of his solo works on all streaming sites and platforms under the name "SponceyTunes".

Vesna Mehinovic has been the Music Director and Conductor of Hamden Symphony Orchestra since 2008. She began her formal education in music by receiving a diploma in Music Theory and Piano Teaching and Performing

from the High School for Music in Sarajevo. She continued her Bachelor of Arts degree in Conducting and Music Theory at the Sarajevo Music Academy, and a Master of Arts in Conducting and Music Theory at Wesleyan University in Middletown.

Vesna has been the recipient of many honors in her native country, and is the first professional woman to conduct an orchestra in Bosnia and Herzegovina. She specialized in Conducting at the Academy for Music and Stage Arts in Graz, Austria in the class of Milan Horvat. Ms. Mehinovic has also served as guest conductor for orchestras in Austria, Serbia, and Croatia.

While in the United States, she has worked with several church and non-religious choirs both in Connecticut and Arizona. As a music teacher Vesna has taught in many elementary, middle, and high schools, as well as having worked with college students at Yale and Wesleyan Universities. Currently, she teaches music and directs the Orchestra and Choirs at Sacred Heart Academy in Hamden. She is also the Conductor of the Quinnipiac University Orchestra, and Organist & Choir Master at St. Michael's Church in Naugatuck.



John Williams & Orchestra recording the score for
Star Wars Episode VII: *The Force Awakens*

Hamden Symphony Orchestra

Board of Directors (2024-2025)

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Amanda Zubek, Elective Director

Additional Support

Bill Gambardella, Legal Counsel
Judith Kramer Koret, YMCC Chairperson
Tracy Turner, Logo Design

Play An Instrument?

Hamden Symphony Orchestra seeks musicians interested in joining the group for its 2025-2026 concert-season!

Rehearsals are anticipated to begin Thursday evenings in early September. For more information, and for the most up-to-date list of openings, visit:

www.hamdensymphony.org/join