



## See the Light

Featuring 2024 & 2025

Young Musicians Concerto Competition Winners:

Lina Elwood, Piano

Mia Gribbon, Clarinet

Mia Jung-Pitkin, Violin

Philip Larson, Violin



Sunday, April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2025

3:00 PM

Hamden Memorial Town Hall

Sponsored by Paul & Elizabeth Mathey

[www.hamdensymphony.org](http://www.hamdensymphony.org)

## About HSO

Today's performance marks the conclusion of Hamden Symphony Orchestra's 63<sup>rd</sup> 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 Award for Excellence in Instrumental Music, 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 55 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 student with the Ruth T. Brooks Award for Excellence in Instrumental Music. The 2024 winner of this award was violinist Aidan Swan.

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 Music Director of the 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

Sunday, April 27<sup>th</sup>, 2025  
3:00 PM  
Hamden Memorial Town Hall

### Concert Program

Festive Overture Dmitri Shostakovich

Poème Ernest Chausson

Philip Larson, Violin

Clarinet Concerto No. 1 in F minor Carl Maria von Weber  
3. Rondo: Allegretto

Mia Gribbon, Clarinet

Violin Concerto No. 2 in D minor Henryk Wieniawski  
1. Allegro moderato

Mia Jung-Pitkin, Violin

### *Intermission*

Piano Concerto No. 2 in C minor Sergei Rachmaninoff  
1. Moderato

Lina Elwood, Piano

Capriccio Italien Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky

*Please join us for a reception in the lobby following the performance!*

## Musicians of the Orchestra

### Violin I

Stacy Shafer '09  
Concertmaster,  
*The Ruth T. Brooks Chair*

Elizabeth Braddon '16  
Ann Clemmons '10  
Fred Leng '12  
Gabrielle Liberatoscioli '22  
Andrea Osburne '17  
Anna Schneer '91  
Frank Schneer '91  
Xiangyu Shi '23  
Tim Shizume '23  
Jessica Xu '25  
Amanda Zubek '22  
Rebecca Zucconi '14

### Violin II

Alicia Barrett-Oliver '24  
Brendan Cassidy '23  
Mary Dickerson '25  
Jennifer Kroeger '24  
Yinchen Hao '22  
Oscar Lin '24  
Nancy Mangino '14  
Majesty Moore '25  
Joanna Novak '20  
Jody Smyser '14  
Avinash Veerarahav '23  
Jing Yuan '24  
Eleanor Zagoren '22

### Viola

Karen Kriner-Souris '13  
Shasta Ramachandran '22  
Joy Snyder '05  
Rolland Strasser '17  
Anand Veerarahav '23  
Lisa Zima '25

### Cello

Elizabeth Baldwin '17  
Dorothy Fang '19  
Olga Shevelkina '23  
Tanya Townsend '17  
Marney Walker '19  
Raffaella Zanetti '23

### Bass

Andre Cardenas '24  
Raymond Quigley '24

### Flute

Ann Katis '23  
Judith Kramer Koret '08  
Linda Latimer '24  
Mamie Wang '22

### Piccolo

Linda Latimer '24

### Oboe

Terri Bennett '16  
Misha Kummel '24  
Clara Wang '22

### English Horn

Terri Bennett '16

### Clarinet

Kathryn Anderson '25  
Elizabeth Black '20  
Marcel Paige '25  
Kimberly Vish Vock '20

### Bassoon

Sam Bergstrom '23  
Julia Fischer '25

### French Horn

Mitch Dvoracek '23  
Matthew McAuliffe '24  
Ashlee Richardson '24  
Michelle Scalzo '19

### Trumpet

Jennifer Carlson '24  
Sander Cohen-Janes '23  
Olivia Enny '22  
Kei Kohmoto '23  
Christian Venturella '22

### Trombone

Anna Franz '14  
Bill Gambardella '92  
Molly Gambardella '11  
Ethan Romano '23  
William Schilp '25  
Tylarr Throm '24

### Tuba

Jonathan Craig '24

### Harp

Megan Sesma '25

### Timpani

David Liskov '10

### Percussion

Christopher Bradley '24  
Grace Brunner '23  
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Adam Weber '21

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## About the Performers



**Lina Elwood**, 15, is a 9th grader at Hopkins School in New Haven, CT. For the past two years, she has been studying the piano with Svitlana Fiorito in Connecticut and with Alexander Korsantia and Natalia Harlap at the New England Conservatory Preparatory School in Boston. Lina has won numerous top prizes at regional and international competitions, including the Steinway Piano Competition, Chopin International Piano Competition in Hartford, Chopin Avenue International Piano Competition in Poland, Burgos International Music Festival Competition in Spain, ENKOR International Piano Competition, Renee B. Fisher Competition, J.Y. Park Piano Competition, Schubert Club of Fairfield County Awards Competition, among others.

In addition to her solo performances, Lina has enjoyed playing with orchestras and chamber music groups. Most recently, Lina was named the winner of Norwalk Symphony Orchestra Young Artist Concerto Competition and Hamden Symphony Orchestra Young Musicians Concerto Competition for her performance of Rachmaninoff's Piano Concerto No.2. Last summer, as a top prize winner in the concerto category of Chopin Avenue International Piano Competition, Lina was invited to play with the Warsaw National Philharmonic Orchestra at their concert hall and with the Warsaw Impression Orchestra at the Ursynow Cultural Center in Poland.

Lina has participated in masterclasses with renowned piano professors and pianists around the world, such as Andrzej Jasinski, Amy Yang, Bronislaw Kowala, Victoria Mushkatkol, Miyoko Lotto, Young Hyun Cho, Paul Wirth, and Vitaly Starikov.



**Mia Gribbon** is a senior at Hamden High School, where she is president of the school's Tri-M National Music Honor Society. She started playing clarinet eight years ago and currently studies with Nikki Pet. Mia is the principal clarinet of the Norwalk Youth Symphony's Principal Orchestra. In 2022, she was first clarinet in the NAFME All-National Symphony Orchestra and was the first chair of the CT All-State Orchestra in 2021 and 2022. She was the winner of Norwalk Youth Symphony's 2024 Concerto

Competition and performed with the orchestra as a featured soloist last spring. She was a winner of the 2024 Hamden Symphony Orchestra Concerto Competition and placed second in the 2024 Marianne Liberatore Instrumental Competition. She has attended the Tanglewood Institute's clarinet intensive for the past two years and was a member of the Young Artists Wind Ensemble this past summer. In her free time, Mia is a co-captain of the varsity lacrosse team at Hamden High School. She loves all types of classical music, with a special interest in early 20th century composers. She also enjoys listening to opera and klezmer music. Her clarinet inspirations include David Shifrin and Giora Feidman. Mia will continue her studies next year at Yale University.



**Mia Jung-Pitkin** (13) has been playing the violin since she was five years old. She is the prizewinner of Hamden Symphony Orchestra's Young Musicians Concerto Competition (winner), Norwalk Symphony Orchestra's Young Artists Concerto Competition (honorable mention), and Music International Grand Prix Competition (third place, youth strings division). As an orchestral player, Mia is currently a member of the Norwalk Youth Symphony Principal Orchestra and has served as the concertmaster of the Junior String Ensemble at Interlochen as well as the Norwalk Youth Symphony Concert Orchestra.

As a young artist, Mia has participated in masterclasses with the leading artists of our time including Rachel Barton Fine, Sirena Huang, Katie Lansdale, Jinwoo Lee, Robin Scott, and Eric Silberger. During her summers, she has attended Luzerne Music Center, Interlochen Music Camp, Blue Mountain Chamber Music Festival, and Killington Music Festival, focusing on chamber music. Mia attends Bedford Middle School in Westport, CT and has been studying the violin with Dr. Soo Yeon Kim since 2022. In her free time, she enjoys playing tennis, skiing, reading, and spending time with friends and family.



**Philip Larson** is an 18 year old homeschooler from Winsted, Connecticut. At the ripe old age of 4 he began violin lessons with his mother, Annie Trépanier, and joined Chorus Angelicus, a multi-level choral program based in northwest Connecticut. He was introduced to the piano while sitting in on his older brother's piano lessons and, with the help of his father, began to learn scales and chords at the keyboard to improvise with - something

he pursued for a number of years on his own. At 8 years old he started harp lessons with Teresa Mango, and a few years later officially began piano lessons with Malgosia Lis at the Hartt Community Division where he also joined the orchestra and the chamber music programs and eventually continued his harp studies with Susan Knapp Thomas. In 2018 he continued his violin studies with Aaron Packard.

By the age of 16, Philip received first place in Hartt's Guitar and Harp Honors Competition, was selected as Assistant Concertmaster for the New England Music Festival Orchestra, and won the Farmington Valley Symphony Orchestra concerto competition on piano, performing Saint-Saëns' 2nd Piano Concerto with the orchestra the following season. He was also chosen to serve as assistant to Chorus Angelicus Music Director, Gabriel Löfvall, in the role of Senior Choral Scholar for two consecutive years. In 2024 he was selected as Concertmaster for the New England Music Festival Orchestra and performed as a piano soloist with Connecticut Youth Symphony. Tragically however, and to the disappointment of music lovers word-wide, it was in that year that he had to put aside the harp, at least for the time being, to prepare for college auditions on his two other instruments, as well as begin composition lessons with Douglas Bruce Johnson.

His hobbies include devising impractical harmonic and rhythmic notation systems, scribbling nonsense in his sheet music, and engaging in tedious political discussions with his brother.



**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.

### About the Artist

**Van L. Nguyen** received his art training at Southern Connecticut State University. He had a long and successful career in the financial industry prior to his retirement as a Vice President of Citigroup in 2010. He holds an MBA from the University of Connecticut, where he was elected to the honor society Beta Gamma Sigma. His art has been exhibited at the Ely House Gallery (Of Yale University) and at Southern Connecticut State University in New Haven, Connecticut. His most recent exhibits have been at the Blackstone Library in Branford (2017) and at concerts in the Hamden Memorial Town Hall in Connecticut (since 2018). His artist's statement follows:

“We are living in a world of widespread human suffering from wars, Covid-19 pandemic, huge floods, and wild fires as well as daily economic anxiety. Whether this suffering is caused by man-made actions or natural events, it is easy to feel that darkness is rising and about to overwhelm us. We want desperately to see a brighter future. My painting of blooming flowers on a completely black background symbolizes my own hope that we will survive this period of darkness, and that love and kindness will triumph over anger and malice.”

Contact: <https://www.facebook.com/profile.php?id=100008622541626>

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Bill Gambardella, Legal Counsel  
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**Additional thanks** go to the following for their help this Spring:

- ♪ Town of Hamden Mayor Lauren Garrett & Chief of Staff, Sean Grace.
- ♪ Rose Lion, Town of Hamden Legislative Council Administrator.
- ♪ Town of Hamden Facilities Services Staff.
- ♪ Student musicians from Central Connecticut State University, Quinnipiac University, & Yale University.
- ♪ Carpool Drivers: Olivia Enny, Yinchen Hao, Kimberly Vish Vock & Clara Wang.
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- ♪ Southern Connecticut State University Music Department (Joshua Groffman, Chair), YMCC Venue.
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- ♪ YMCC "Blind" Audition Materials/Room Setup: Jameson Forsythe & Vesna Mehinovic



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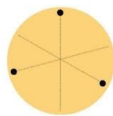
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# THE LEADER OF THE PACK

For Stacy

A musician appears from stage right,  
Violin tucked under arm, faces the orchestra.  
A subtle glance at the oboist and the "A" sounds.  
The entire orchestra is tuned to perfection.  
The "leader of the pack" then sits in a chair  
Close to the audience, left of the conductor.

Meet the concertmaster, principal first violinist,  
First chair, orchestra liaison. She is  
Often considered to be the right hand  
Of the conductor.  
From the Baroque to Classical era to present day  
He or she is esteemed in orchestras worldwide.

The concertmaster has complete access to the conductor,  
And may even conduct in an emergency.  
Solo appearances with the orchestra  
Highlight outstanding technical abilities.

Watch the bows move up and down in the same direction  
As you listen to the music.  
The concertmaster must mark the first violin string music  
To make this happen.  
Other string sections may follow these "bowings".

Talent, artistry, leadership skills are required to fill this first chair.  
When the conductor enters the concert hall  
And shakes the hand of the first chair violinist  
The entire orchestra is greeted and thanked through this  
Symbolic gesture!  
Bravo to the second in command,  
THE LEADER OF THE PACK!

Joy Snyder

## Program Notes

The lengthy and complicated career of Soviet-era Russian composer **Dmitri Shostakovich (1906-1975)** epitomizes the entanglement of the arts with broader societal upheaval and politics throughout history. Born in Saint Petersburg, the second of three to Dmitri Boleslavovich Shostakovich, an engineer and Sofiya Vasilievna Kokoulina, he learned piano early. When he was 13, Shostakovich was enrolled at the Petrograd (Saint Petersburg) Conservatory, which was led by composer Alexander Glazunov. He studied piano, composition and music theory and later conducting under Nikolai Malko and eventually conducted the conservatory orchestra.

At 19 years old, Shostakovich composed his *Symphony No. 1* as a capstone for his graduation; Malko conducted its premiere with the Leningrad Philharmonic Orchestra. After graduating, Shostakovich continued in composition and piano, where he was one of the Soviet participants in the 1927 inaugural International Chopin Piano Competition in Poland. He then travelled to Berlin where he met conductor Bruno Walter, who would conduct the symphony's premiere outside of Russia. His 1930 attempt at a satiric opera, *The Nose*, was met with critical disdain, but 4 years later his second opera *Lady Macbeth of Mtsensk* was more successful at least initially.

The early years of communism were marked with a sense of apathy to the arts, and Shostakovich was a supporter at first. Things changed quickly in the late 1920's and early 1930's under the regime of Joseph Stalin, and the arts became primarily a propaganda tool. In 1936, Stalin attended a performance of "*Lady Macbeth...*" but left the performance without a word. Shostakovich only began to regain favor with the regime the next year with his *Symphony No. 5*, which he composed in a more conservative style. For the next decade, Shostakovich delicately balanced the shallow popular music demanded and the serious Western-style music that would risk personal condemnation.

By 1954, a year after Stalin's death, tensions had somewhat cooled. Shostakovich was engaged as a consultant with the Bolshoi Theater and lacking any options was commissioned to write a composition to celebrate the rapidly approaching 37<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the Bolshevik Revolution. In just three days, he completed the *Festive Overture* which

premiered that November 6<sup>th</sup>. A few years after his death, the work was adopted as the official theme of the 1980 Summer Olympics held in Moscow.

French romantic-era composer **Ernest Chausson** (1855-1899) was born into a wealthy family in Paris. He initially went into the law field as a barrister, aiming to please his father, a contractor who worked on the city's redevelopment in the 1850's. Lacking serious interest in the legal profession, Chausson was a regular at Parisian salons and met luminaries that included the composer Vincent d'Indy. At 24, he enrolled in composition classes under Jules Massenet at the Paris Conservatoire. He later studied with César Franck. The two became lifelong friends and Franck was highly influential in Chausson's early compositions.

In the late 1890's, three years before Chausson's untimely death from a bicycle accident, Eugène-Auguste Ysaÿe, a virtuoso violinist of Belgium, requested Chausson to compose a concerto for him. Chausson wrote:

I hardly know where to begin with a concerto, which is a huge undertaking, the devil's own task. But I can cope with a shorter work. It will be in very free form with several passages in which the violin plays alone.

Written during a trip to Florence, Italy between April and June 1896, Chausson originally titled the piece *Le Chant de l'amour triomphant*, from the Russian romance novella *The Song of Triumphant Love* by Ivan Turgenev. Not wanting to introduce any programmatic intent, he modified its name to *Poème symphonique*, and later to *Poème*. Its official premiere was that December with Ysaÿe as the soloist. The subsequent Paris premiere the following Spring was met with sustained applause.

**Carl Maria von Weber** (1786-1826) was a composer, conductor, pianist and music scholar of the early Romantic era. He was born in Eutin in the Holstein region of northern Germany to Franz Anton, a violinist and conductor, and his second wife Genovefa Brenner, a singer. Franz Anton wished for his son to follow in Mozart's path as a child prodigy and started him on piano and singing at the age of 4. In 1796, he moved to Hildburghausen and studied with oboist Johann Peter Heuschkel. The

following year brought him to Salzburg, Austria where Michael Haydn (the younger brother of Franz Joseph Haydn) agreed to teach him for free. At 12 years old, he moved to Munich and focused on the operatic genre, studying both singing and composition. His first opera, *Die Macht der Liebe und des Weins* (*The Power of Love and Wine*), was completed in 1799, but like many of his early works ended up lost.

Though primarily known for operas, Weber composed a number of works for the concert-hall, which included several concerti for wind instruments. He developed a particular fondness for the clarinet, which only by the start of the 19th century had progressed in its technology to be widely accepted as an instrument of the orchestra. In 1811, on a concert-tour across Europe, Weber met the virtuoso clarinetist, Heinrich Bärmann, a musician in the court orchestra of Munich, and became close friends. He wrote the one-movement *Concertino for Clarinet in E-flat major* in just three days for Bärmann to perform at a concert organized by the King of the Bavarian State. Its successful premiere that April led to a commission by the King to compose two more works for Bärmann. The *Concerto No. 1 in F minor* premiered just a few months later in June 1811 to further acclaim.

**Henryk Wieniawski** (1835-1880) became a violin prodigy at an early-age in his native Poland before locating to Paris to study at its Conservatory and graduating at the age of 11. After a stint performing throughout Europe, and even as far as California, he returned to Paris to study composition. He later taught at the Saint Petersburg Conservatory, which had just opened in 1862.

The *Violin Concerto No. 2 in D minor* was premiered in Saint Petersburg in 1862 with the composer as the soloist. Maintaining a grueling career as a traveling concert-artist, he famously collapsed from a spasm during a later performance of the concerto in Berlin. He ended up in Moscow where he was cared for by Nadezhda von Meck, a wealthy patroness. Published in his last year, Wieniawski dedicated this concerto to "His Dear Friend," Pablo de Sarasate, another renowned violinist and composer of the time. This work endures as a staple of the romantic-era violin repertoire, with a variety of highly demanding technical passages woven together with beautifully lyrical melodies.



Composer, conductor and virtuosic pianist, **Sergei Rachmaninoff** (1873-1943), is considered one of the last Russian romantic-era. He was born in the village of Semyonovo into a family of aristocrats from the Russian Empire. His mother started him on piano lessons at the age of 4. Anna Ornatskaya, a recent graduate of the Saint Petersburg Conservatory, was soon hired to be his formal instructor and live with the family. At 10, he began studies at the same institution under Ornatskaya's teacher Gustav Kross. A series of familial losses and failures in his general education courses led to his 1885 transfer to the Moscow Conservatory, where he studied and resided with a more stern piano instructor, Nikolai Zverev. Rachmaninoff eventually won a scholarship to advance his coursework there. In 1889, Zverev expressed strong disapproval of his student's eagerness to compose as a distraction from his piano studies.

In 1892, his last year at the conservatory, Rachmaninoff composed for his exams *Aleko*, a short opera based on the *The Gypsies* by Alexander Pushkin. The Bolshoi Theater premiere earned praise from his fellow composer, Tchaikovsky, and ultimate approval from Zverev in the form of a gold watch. After completion, he managed an initial publishing contract and several engagements as a touring pianist. However, the 1893 death of his idol Tchaikovsky led to a crisis of confidence and eventually depression that resulted from the spectacular failure of his *Symphony No. 1* in 1897, its premiere performed by an unprepared orchestra conducted by a supposedly drunk Alexander Glazunov.

Suffering writer's block, Rachmaninoff did not compose for the remainder of the decade, only getting by from teaching piano before landing a conducting position at the Moscow Private Russian Opera. In 1899, he performed a well-received concert in London, where he conducted his 1893 tone-poem *The Rock* and played some of his solo piano compositions. He promised their Philharmonic to return the next year with a follow-up to his student work, the *Piano Concerto No. 1*.

In 1900, after a visit arranged by his aunt from the writer Leo Tolstoy meant to encourage him was unsuccessful, Rachmaninoff turned to a family friend Nikolai Dahl for professional therapy. This included hypnosis (Dahl chanted to his patient " "You will begin to write your concerto ... You will work with great facility ... The concerto will be of an excellent quality"). After a few months these efforts brought him improved sleep and appetite, and awakened his compositional ideas.

That summer while staying in Italy with a Russian opera singer at La Scala, he delved into work on his *Piano Concerto No. 2*. He quickly completed its second and third movements, even premiering them before the concerto's completion. The first movement was more challenging, but he concluded work on it the following year. The full piece premiered with the Moscow Philharmonic Society in November of 1901, with Rachmaninoff performing the solo part. It was met with immediate acclaim and was performed around Europe before making its way to London in 1908. Rachmaninoff dedicated the concerto to Dahl for his successful treatment.

**Peter Ilyich Tchaikovsky (1840-1893)** was born in Votinsk, Russia to a military family. Though supportive of his musical talents, at 10 his parents sent him to the School of Jurisprudence, a Saint Petersburg boarding school, to be trained for a career in the civil service. This traumatic family separation was intensified by his mother's death when he was 14. After a short career in the civil service, Tchaikovsky enrolled in 1862 at the newly founded Saint Petersburg Conservatory.

By 1879, while achieving wide acclaim for his works in the symphonic, ballet, and operatic genres, he had suffered several personal setbacks. Aside from the death of his father, his short-lived marriage to Antonina Miliukova, his former student, had ended disastrously. Balancing composing with teaching was also proving frustrating. Nadezhda von Meck, a wealthy patroness, with whom he had frequent written correspondence, agreed to support his composition work. She provided emotional support and friendship to Tchaikovsky throughout her life.

Italy had become a frequent escape for Tchaikovsky to escape the brutal Russian winters. That year he traveled with his brother to Rome and resided at a hotel adjacent to the barracks of the Royal Italian Cuirassiers, where a bugle call was performed every morning. This inspired the opening fanfare of the *Capriccio Italien*, which he began work on in January, 1880. Describing it to von Meck as an "Italian fantasy on folk tunes," he incorporated numerous styles and moods into the piece, including the melody of "Ciccuzza," a fast tarantella that gradually builds to a raucous conclusion.

*Program notes by David Liskov.*

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## Meet HSO

*This Spring's edition is a first for this feature!*

**Introducing Anna & Frank Schneer, two members of the first violin section, who also happen to be married!**



**Where are you from and when did you move to Connecticut?** Anna was born in Ithaca, NY but grew up in Inwood, Long Island. Frank is originally from Queens, NYC. We married in 1989, and moved to Connecticut in 1990. If you think that Connecticut is expensive to live in, check out Long Island, NY!

**What do you do for school or work?**

Anna is a retired string music teacher, having taught in the Elmont, NY district. She has also taught privately. Frank is a retired electronic technician, formerly employed by the US Postal Service.

**When did you start playing your instruments?** Anna started private lessons at 8 years old with her elementary school teacher. She pursued music education, getting her BA in Music at Binghamton University, and her Masters in Music Ed at Penn State. In addition to high school and college orchestras, she has played in several community, and one semi professional, orchestra(s).

Frank started taking private violin lessons at age 9 and continued for 14 years (total) until his teacher passed away. A graduate of the High School of Music and Art in NYC, he's played in a number of school and community orchestras.

**Other than classical, what other types of music do you like to play or listen to?** Anna loves 50s and 60s rock and roll, Motown, the Charlie Daniels Band, Carole King, Chicago, James Taylor, Doobie Bros., Bee Gees, Earth Wind and Fire, and big band.

Frank loves, and listens to, Big Band: Miller, Goodman, Ellington, Rich, Sinatra, Streisand; Rock and Pop: Chuck Berry, Elvis, Roy Orbison, The Beatles, Simon & Garfunkel, Joni Mitchell, ABBA, Linda Ronstadt, CS & N, Chicago, BS & T, Led Zeppelin, Tom Petty, Billy Joel; Folk; Blue Grass; Motown; Some of the great musicals: Oklahoma, Music Man, Young

Frankenstein; Comic Operas, especially Gilbert & Sullivan's "The Mikado;" and some new age music.

**Favorite musical experiences with HSO or elsewhere?** Anna and Frank met while playing in what was then The South Shore Symphony in the Five Towns of Long Island. We've "been making beautiful music together" ever since! We started with the HSO in 1991, but in 1993, with no family, we had to pause for 23 years to raise our family. We returned in 2016 and, aside from Covid (2020) and some medical issues, we've played here since. We love playing in the orchestra along with the talented student soloists in our spring concerts. We've also played in the "pit" for several shows presented at East Haven HS. Both in NY, and here in the HSO, we've played some truly wonderful and memorable music, by great composers. We've also met some wonderful people, and made lifelong friends. Nothing, though, beats playing music in a community orchestra like the HSO, with an incomparable stand partner!

**Favorite concerts you've attended?** In 2018 we saw Marin Alsop conduct the Yale Orchestra and choruses in a wonderful performance of Beethoven's 9th Symphony. Last month we visited, for the first time, the Met Opera to see Aida. We've seen Chicago, the Doobie Bros., Linda Ronstadt, America, and the Beach Boys live in concert. In college Anna saw Elmar Oliveira perform in concert. Frank has seen Blood Sweat & Tears and Don McLean live, and in high school his orchestra accompanied famed flutist Herbie Mann, who was a friend of the conductor.

**Favorite composer(s) or composition(s)?** Anna: Mozart, Beethoven, Bach, Tchaikovsky (especially his violin concerto), Vivaldi (especially the Four Seasons).

Frank: Bach, Beethoven, Mozart, Telemann, Dvorak, Brahms, Vivaldi, Tchaikovsky, Gershwin; music from the operas Aida and Carmen; and West Side Story.

**Any other hobbies or fun-facts?** Anna: I love gardening and my exercise with yoga, stretching, and pilates. I enjoy cooking and spending every moment I can with our four children and grandchild.

Frank: We raised three sons and one daughter, each of which we are exceedingly proud, and have one granddaughter. Our children are all musical and played various instruments at one time or another. We have a nice vegetable garden, and I'm somewhat handy around the house. We manage to keep very busy.

**Hamden Symphony Orchestra** has enjoyed gathering weekly to make music together this Spring! All financial contributions, whether small or large, will help keep the music going as we move into our 64<sup>th</sup> season this September!

**Donations** are being accepted this afternoon at the lobby table; Cash, checks or digital payments made out to Hamden Symphony Orchestra are accepted:

**Checks can also be mailed to:**  
Hamden Symphony Orchestra  
PO Box 185412  
Hamden, CT 06518

Hamden Symphony Orchestra will be participating in the **2025 Great Give®**, sponsored by the **Community Foundation for Greater New Haven**, on **May 7<sup>th</sup> & 8<sup>th</sup>**. All donations designated to Hamden Symphony Orchestra, Inc. on these dates at the website - [www.thegreatgive.org](http://www.thegreatgive.org) - are matched, and could help us win additional prizes during the event.

**Online contributions** via the secure DonorBox platform are also accepted at [www.hamdensymphony.org](http://www.hamdensymphony.org) all year. The following QR code goes directly to our year-round donation page:



With any donation method, we continue to offer the following sponsorship opportunity for a **\$400 gift**:

*All donors at this level will have their name listed as a **sponsor** for one concert. This includes program-cover and all concert marketing materials - print & digital. (Placement arranged on a first-come first-served basis)*

**Have an item or service you'd like to donate for a concert auction or other purpose?**

Contact us by email, [info@hamdensymphony.org](mailto:info@hamdensymphony.org) or call 203-691-5178. These donations are also tax deductible.

## Hamden Symphony Orchestra Boosters (2024-2025)

We gratefully acknowledge the generous financial support and gifts from the following friends:

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## **Play An Instrument?**

Hamden Symphony seeks musicians interested in joining the Orchestra for our Summer 2025 season and beyond.

Rehearsals will be held on Thursday evenings starting in late May (Summer) and early September (Fall) at Hamden Memorial Town Hall. For more information and for the most up-to-date list of openings, visit:

[www.hamdensymphony.org/join](http://www.hamdensymphony.org/join)

## **Strike up the Orchestra Again!**

Hamden Symphony Orchestra returns to the great outdoors!

Town Center Park at Meadowbrook  
2761 Dixwell Avenue  
Hamden, CT 06518

*Performance date and more information to follow in June...*

**Fall Concert** *(details to follow)*

Friday, November 21<sup>st</sup>, 2025 - 7:30 PM  
Hamden Memorial Town Hall

*Have a wonderful summer!*