

# PRELUDE



Official Newsletter of the ECSO



## Feeling inspired through live music

Toshiyuki Shimada  
Music Director & Conductor

How time flies! We are quickly approaching the end of our 75th anniversary season. Thank you to all of you who have joined in celebration of this very special season. Your participation is an integral part of our symphony.

On March 19, after a two year delay, we finally got to hear Grammy Award winner Jason Vieaux perform on the Garde Arts Center Stage. Jason did a fantastic job and his encore left many in the audience and on the orchestra stage in awe of his talent. One unexpected part of the concert for me came from the positive feedback I received about



George Walker's *Lyric for Strings*. That was encouraging news to me as it was very likely the first time many have heard this piece. There is something magical about hearing a new piece of music live. The intricacy of planning the first performance of pieces is often challenging, but I believe the beauty of art lies in its diversity.

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Photo Contributors: Caleb Bailey,  
Tom Bombria, Cara Cheung



From innovative technologies to staples of classical repertoire, I hope one of these new (or new to our audience) pieces has inspired you as we expand our musical horizon together. You all have my gratitude for trusting me to guide you on this musical journey!

For our season finale, I have chosen to perform Beethoven's *Triple Concerto* and the final movement of his *Symphony No. 9*. For the *Triple*, I find it inspiring that three soloists who come from different backgrounds and have never worked together professionally will create something together because they share a common language in music. On another hopeful note, reading the texts that Beethoven adapted from Friedrich Schiller's poem *Ode an die Freude* "thy magic power reunites all that custom has divided; all people become brothers," reminds me to stay hopeful. In a society that can be divisive at times, the joy of being able to unite around music to create a more harmonious world is so important. Additionally, it is very meaningful to be able to welcome back the Chorus; after two long years, it is almost like a family reunion! Finally, some of you may wonder why I included Florence Price's *Dances in the Canebrakes* on this program. It is a whimsical piece with some jazz elements in it. I can tell you it's because Beethoven also has traces of jazz elements in his compositions. Where? Which piece? You can find out more in our virtual pre-concert chat! I look forward to seeing you all very soon.

- Toshi

## What's coming up...

To close our 75th anniversary season, we return to Beethoven's extraordinary music. In a first performance for ECSO, we will hear Beethoven's virtuosic *Triple Concerto in C Major*, featuring pianist Eva Virsik, violinist Elissa Lee Koljonen and our principal cellist Amy Ward Butler. The whimsical *Dances in the Canebrakes* by Florence Price follows. Finally, a crowd favorite: the vivacious final movement of Beethoven's *Symphony No. 9 (Ode to Joy)*, joined by Eastern Connecticut Symphony Chorus and soprano Sarah Yanovitch, mezzo-soprano Caroline O'Dwyer, tenor Brian Cheney, and baritone Gregory Flower.

# Joyful Dances

**Eva Virsik**  
Piano

**Amy Ward Butler**  
Cello

**Elissa Lee Koljonen**  
Violin

**Eastern Connecticut Symphony Orchestra**  
Toshiyuki Shimada  
Music Director & Conductor

**MAY 7**

**Eastern Connecticut Symphony Orchestra**  
Toshiyuki Shimada  
Music Director & Conductor

**Palm Sunday Concert**

Featuring Soprano Juratė Švedaitė-Waller and violinist Stephan Tieszen

On April 10 at 7:30pm. ECSO is presenting a free Palm Sunday concert at Cathedral of St. Patrick in Norwich again! Bring your family, tell your friends, because we will hear some fabulous music in a magnificent setting. Beloved soprano Jūratė Švedaitė, violinist Stephan Tieszen along ECSO musicians will perform a fetching program for you. Register for a free ticket on our website.

Thank you to the support of the Edward and Mary Lord Foundation for making this concert possible.



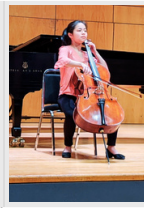
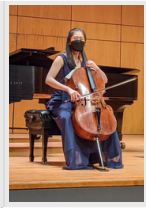


# Instrumental Competition 2022 edition

After an extended delay from 2020 due to Covid-19, the 61st Annual ECSO Instrumental Competition was held on March 14, 2022. Cellist, Shirley Kim (pictured above and middle), 23, was this year's winner, performing Bloch's *Schelomo (Rhapsodie Hébraïque)*. Congratulations to this brilliant young performer; we cannot wait for you all to hear this talented individual with the orchestra in the 2022-23 season!



The judges this year were ECSO Music Director & Conductor, Toshiyuki Shimada; Stephan Tieszen, ECSO Concertmaster; and Nancy Chaput, ECSO principal flute. They wished to express congratulations to the 2nd and 3rd place contestants, Elisabeth Chang (pictured bottom right) and Yoon Be Kim (pictured bottom left), respectively, as well as all finalists who displayed their talent.



Generously sponsored by the Zuckerbraun Family Fund, this competition was established to recognize the outstanding talents of emerging young musicians through the age of 25.



## Digital Content

Want to know to know more about the upcoming concert? Dive into the music on the concert pages on our website: [www.ectsymphony.com](http://www.ectsymphony.com).

There you will find Music Director & Conductor Toshiyuki Shimada moderating discussions with soloists, musicians, and composers. curated Spotify playlists, and fascinating program notes about the composers and guest artists.





## Musicians of the Orchestra: Ariana Straznicky-Packer

Ariana is making her vocal debut with Eastern CT Symphony Orchestra in our 75th anniversary Gala, however, she is no stranger to the stage as she has been a member of the ECSO violin section since 2015. She received her Master of Music in Violin Performance (cum laude) from The Hartt School and is an active performer, frequently playing on many of Connecticut's premiere concert stages (Bridgeport Symphony Orchestra, Waterbury Symphony Orchestra, Wallingford Symphony Orchestra, CT Philharmonic, Norwalk Symphony, New Britain Symphony Orchestra, and more.) Ariana also teaches at her private studio and owns an award-winning wedding music business called Ariana Strings LLC.

### What is your first musical memory?

I remember learning songs in nursery school and plunking out notes on my father's piano. However, the moment that made the biggest impression on me was when I was about 8 years old, my parents took me to Lincoln Center to watch the American Ballet Theatre production of Prokofiev's *Romeo and Juliet*. I remember I had no real expectations; I was just along for the ride. When we arrived, I was overwhelmed by the beauty of the theater and I marveled at the red velvet walls and chandeliers. The real life-changing moment was when I heard the orchestra perform the opening chords to *Montagues and Capulets*. That powerful sound invigorated me and, looking back, I know it is definitely what drew me to playing in symphonies.

### What made you pick the violin?

If you ask my parents, they will tell you that I chose the violin when I was about 3 years old because I saw a string trio perform at a wedding. That answer is much more dignified than the truth, albeit the truth is comical: It was because I saw The Muppets play "*The Devil Went Down to Georgia*" by the Charlie Daniels Band. I was so enthralled that I watched their skit countless times and I knew I needed a violin. My father brought me a tiny 1/16 violin (borrowed from a family friend, whose daughter had outgrown it) and I will never forget what happened next: I put the violin right up on my shoulder and drew the bow across the strings, thoroughly expecting to sound just like Johnny's fiddle in the song. Much to my disappointment and confusion, I sounded more like the Devil, but not in the groovy, fun way.

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"There is a uniquely invigorating moment when performing, where you are completely drawn in and uplifted by the sound, creative energy and beauty. It is the best feeling in the world."

ARIANA STRAZNICKY-  
PACKER





### What is the most rewarding thing about being a musician?

There's a uniquely invigorating moment where you're completely drawn in and uplifted by the sound, creative energy, and beauty. It's the best feeling in the world.

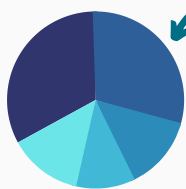
### Care to share a fun fact about you?

I love to travel and have an ear for languages that often get me into trouble. I've visited 22 countries and always study basic phrases before I arrive. My goal is always to greet people in their language with an authentic accent. Unfortunately, I often deliver with too much gusto and people believe that I'm native, so they try to strike up a conversation with me. When I stare back at them blankly and then explain (for example, in Czech), "I'm sorry, I only speak a little Czech," they think I'm pulling their leg! Once, I was visiting a small village in the Czech Republic and a little old lady took me on a tour of their church, telling me all about the history. I tried to explain that my Czech wasn't that good, but she thought I was being humble and kept right on going!

## Help us build a music-loving community.

### WONDER HOW YOU CAN SHARE THE JOY OF MUSIC?

Listening to the glorious symphonies being performed on stage by our amazing musicians, it might surprise you to know there are only five administrative staff at the ECSO! We are deeply grateful to our dedicated Board members, Friends of the Symphony, and other volunteers to keep the symphony operating smoothly.



#### Donations

Did you know that donations account for 25% of our revenue? The generosity of donors allows the symphony to engage audiences in the eastern Connecticut region and present artistically excellent programs, as well as create and execute educational outreach programs to surrounding communities.



[ectsymphony.com/your-support](https://ectsymphony.com/your-support)

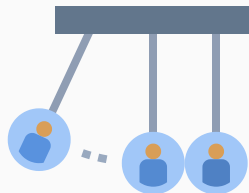
#### Volunteers

We want to find opportunities that excite and suit you! Do you enjoy socializing with other people? Join our auction support team or Gala support team! Looking for something slower-paced? We need people to help with administrative duties at our office in New London. Want to hear some concerts while helping? Ushering might just be for you.



[ectsymphony.com/volunteer](https://ectsymphony.com/volunteer)

However you choose to contribute, your willingness to share your time, talents, and resources to support ECSO will make a positive influence in building a music-loving community.







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**OCT  
22**

## **2022-23 CONCERTS**

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**FEB  
18**

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**NOV  
19**

### **WITH PERFORMANCES BY**

Sara Sant'Ambrogio, Igor  
Pikayzen, New London Big  
Band, Vyacheslav Gryaznov  
and our Instrumental  
Competition winner  
Shirley Kim.

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**MAR  
18**

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**JAN  
21**

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**APR  
22**

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VISIT [ECTSYMPHONY.COM](https://ECTSYMPHONY.COM) FOR MORE INFORMATION  
ALL WORKS, ARTISTS, AND DATES SUBJECT TO CHANGE



## A Message from Caleb Bailey, ECSO Executive Director

As we continue to celebrate our 75th anniversary this season, it's hard to believe that we are already looking at our spring events which will lead us into summer.

The glorious return to live orchestral music after the extended intermission of the pandemic lockdown period has been cathartic and meaningful for our musicians, audience members, staff, and for the local community. To see patrons dining out at restaurants, lining up to enter the Garde Arts Center, and eventually filling their usual seats seems on the surface like a welcome act of normalcy, but still brought an overwhelmingly positive atmosphere for each of our concert nights.

**See you soon  
at our Gala concert:  
Saturday, April 9th  
Mystic Marriott**

We hope to see you at our upcoming events that will help generate funds for the orchestra to continue its mission. On **April 9**, please join us for an indoor Gala concert at the Mystic Marriott featuring the ECSO in an evening of lighter orchestral fare with hors d'oeuvres, libations, and a live auction of a diamond pendant.



Vocalist (and ECSO violinist!) Ariana Straznický-Packer will sing Broadway favorites to help ring in our 75th anniversary in sparkling style. Visit [ecco.givesmart.com](http://ecco.givesmart.com) to register or visit our website for more information.

Thank you so much for supporting the ECSO; we have been humbled to return to performing live music for our community this season. With your help, we will continue to grow our programs' resonance and impact year after year.

**Save the Date  
for our outdoor Gala:  
Saturday, June 25th  
Stonington Vineyard**



We hosted a successful outdoor gala at the Stonington Vineyard last summer and we are bringing it back on **June 25**! Come enjoy a summer evening at Stonington vineyard with wonderful music. There will be a silent auction, accessible from your smartphone, tablet, or computer and will be available for bidding in the weeks leading up to the outdoor gala.

Stay tuned for more information on our website. We can't wait to see you at an upcoming ECSO event!

- Caleb



# Eastern Connecticut Symphony Orchestra

Toshiyuki Shimada  
Music Director & Conductor

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