

PRELUDE

Official Newsletter of the ECSO



Nature and Nurture

Toshiyuki Shimada
Music Director & Conductor

Welcome to our 2022-2023 season! You might remember hearing me say that I love to introduce unfamiliar pieces to our audience because I believe the beauty of art lies in its diversity. But there is also something magical about returning to the familiar for contentment and comfort. These contrasting concepts are the programming inspiration for this season.



The opening concert features Antonín Dvořák’s *My Home Overture*, Edward Elgar’s *Cello Concerto*, and Ludwig van Beethoven’s *Symphony no. 6 (Pastoral)*.

Dvořák wrote *My Home Overture* as music accompaniment, one of nine pieces, for a play by František Ferdinand Šamberk. A question asked in the play was “where is my home?” Dvořák’s composition depicted the beautiful nature

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of Bohemia, and the overture's theme was later incorporated into the Czech National Anthem. I believe most of us have asked this question, "where is my home?" Of course, everyone will have a different answer. Going beyond the obvious, I think a home is where one feels the obligation to care for and nurture it. Preserving the nature of the land is a very important part of creating a lasting impression on all of us.

This naturally relates to Beethoven's *Pastoral Symphony*. Over the summer, I was thirty miles from where Beethoven wrote this magnificent work that describes his joy of living in nature. The bird calls have changed a bit from Beethoven's time, but the trees, bushes, river streams, folk dances, and spoken language have not. I was able to relate to them all through the spirit of the *Pastoral Symphony*.

Finally, we are starting the season with a star-caliber soloist, Grammy Award-winning cellist Sara Sant'Ambrogio. She first leaped to international attention after becoming a medal winner at the Eighth International Tchaikovsky Competition. I can't wait for you to hear her dazzling interpretation of the Elgar *Cello Concerto*.

It is my hope to rekindle our imagination through listening to these pieces and traveling to the different lands the composers illustrated. Through this shared musical experience, we can connect with one another, and maybe even, take care of each other.

- Toshi

An exciting season coming up...

This season through live performances, we will reconnect you to your imagination by using music as a vehicle to travel the world and experience the majestic nature of different lands and how people feel toward them.

Subscribe to ECSO season tickets and save big on single-ticket purchases. In addition to savings on ticket prices, you are guaranteed your favorite seats, and you get flexible ticket exchanges should your plans change!

OCTOBER 22, 2022	DVOŘÁK, ELGAR & BEETHOVEN
NOVEMBER 19, 2022	SHOSTAKOVICH & SIBELIUS
JANUARY 21, 2023	NEW LONDON BIG BAND RETURNS
FEBRUARY 18, 2023	KODÁLY & RACHMANINOFF
MARCH 18, 2023	BRITTEN & BRAHMS
APRIL 22, 2023	MENDELSSOHN & DEBUSSY

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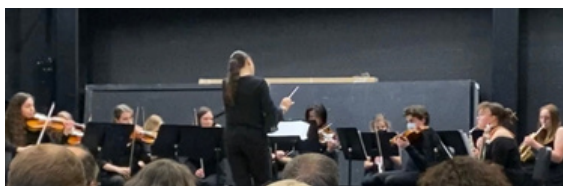




Youth Orchestra & String Ensemble

NURTURING THE NEXT GENERATION OF MUSIC LOVER

My name is Kathleen (Kate) Anderson and I am honored and excited to be once again working with such a talented group of musicians for our Fall 2022 season!



This is my eighth year conducting the dynamic group of young musicians in the youth symphony and my second season working with the string ensemble. I look forward to developing ensemble sound, technique, and performing skills while showcasing the amazing talents of the Eastern Connecticut Symphony Youth Orchestra & String Ensemble (ECSYO & SE) to our local community!

We are planning to perform a wide range of repertoire that includes holiday classics and modern-day hits for our concert in December. Come and share your passion for music with ECSYO & SE! For more rehearsal schedules and more, visit ectsymphony.com/youth-orchestra-string-ensemble/.

I will forever treasure the enriching experiences I had as a member of the Eastern Connecticut Symphony Youth Orchestra. Mrs. Kate Anderson, the conductor, never fails to select unique pieces that excite, energize, and bond together musicians of varying skill levels. From performing at nursing homes to fundraising galas, the ECSYO brings entertainment and healing to audiences everywhere - an opportunity not to be missed!

- Aria Ruggeri
concertmaster of ECSYO
2017-22



ECSYO has provided me with an orchestral experience unlike any other! Not only is there a diverse group of instruments, but each piece allows for different sections to truly shine. Mrs. Kate Anderson is passionate about the music we create and engages every member of the orchestra with the repertoire we play. ECSYO develops a community that further encourages my passion for music and gives me opportunities that I will always cherish!

-Learra Ruggeri,
member of ECSYO 2019-present



Musicians of the Orchestra: Lisa Gray

Lisa began her violin studies at the age of five in the Suzuki program with Harriette Hurd and Ronda Cole and continued on to attend the Eastman School of Music in Rochester, NY where she studied with Mitchell Stern and Ilya Kaler. She graduated in May 2001 with a Bachelor of Music in Violin Performance. Lisa returned to school graduating in May 2017 from the Hartt School of Music with a Master of Music in Violin Performance with Suzuki Pedagogy Emphasis where she studied with Katie Lansdale, Teri Einfeldt and Christie Felsing. This brought her playing and teaching to even greater heights. In 2018, Lisa continued her education at the University of Bridgeport earning a Master of Science with Education emphasis.

Lisa has been a member of the ECSO since 2001.

Why did you pick the violin?

I don't remember choosing it (lol) as it was such a long time ago. But the story goes that I asked my mom for a baby violin for my fourth birthday. My dad was an avid listener of classical music, and my mom plays the piano. There was nobody in my family who played a string instrument, so she found me a Suzuki teacher because she heard that was a good program/ teaching method, and that's how I started.

How did you come to be an orchestral musician?

I have always loved playing orchestral music. I started playing in an orchestra in middle school, and I loved the repertoire. I remember wishing I could do this all the time! Then when I studied at Eastman School of Music at the University of Rochester for my bachelor's degree, I felt like I was home -- I was finally in a place where people got me and shared a lot of the same passion I had. After graduation, I married my husband and moved here to southeastern Connecticut, on the same weekend, with no prospects. That certainly was a leap of faith. But I auditioned for ECSO and Hartford Symphony Orchestra that fall and was hired by both orchestras.

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Using no words, you can communicate with each other through a gesture or eye contact. I think that is just so special.



LISA GRAY





In addition to your orchestral position, you are also a middle school orchestral director. How did that come to be?

There was a point in my career where I felt like I had plateaued. I went back to school and tried to audition for orchestras again, but those didn't go my way. I knew I wanted something more, and around the same time, someone recruited me to be a long-term sub at a middle school. That teaching experience was enjoyable. Fast-forward a year, I got offered a position to be an orchestral director at a middle school, and I have been there ever since. It kind of came full circle because I began playing in orchestras in middle school, and now I am teaching in one!

As a seasoned music educator, is there something you wish we can do better for our kids?

This does not directly answer the question but I have been thinking a lot about how to make music education more relevant and how can it be applicable in everyday life. A lot of times, students don't have chances to play outside of what their schools offer. How can we provide those opportunities for them? How can they use what they learn (playing an instrument) outside of schools? I think more resources in this regard would be beneficial.

And finally, can you share a favorite moment with the ECSO?

Instead of a favorite moment, I have always enjoyed the community among the musicians. I enjoy playing music with other people and sharing those special musical moments that connect you in a way you can't get from talking. Using no words, you can communicate with each other through a gesture or eye contact. I think that is just so special.

A message from Caleb, ECSO Executive Director

The celebratory 75th anniversary season is behind us, and we are so grateful for our community's support for our mission and music.

Last season was especially poignant as we returned to live orchestral music after an almost eighteen-month-long intermission from indoor performances with larger audiences. Now our 76th season begins with the opening concert on Saturday, October 22. We are still emerging from the effects of the pandemic; audience return rates across the country are hovering around 60-75% of pre-pandemic levels.

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The outpouring of support from our donors and corporate sponsors, foundations, and state-funded and national grants has enabled us to keep the music going. I have been so humbled to continue to witness the joy that music brings to people in person and celebrate a number of new partnerships that have opened up even more possibilities for our orchestra and community.

Toshi's message in our season brochure to "reconnect with joy" is a reminder of what the arts can do for the soul. It is more important than ever before for us to have opportunities to socialize, gather, and, of course, take in beautiful works of music in the award-winning Garde Arts Center and other venues throughout eastern Connecticut. For information about our concerts this season, visit our website at ectsymphony.com. There you can listen to music from upcoming concerts, meet soloists in our pre-concert video chats, and learn more about the depths of orchestral music that we explore each season. I look forward to seeing you in the concert hall!

Thanks to New London ARPA funding, we received a grant to bring back our "Conduct Us" concert where the audience can step onto the podium and try their hand at conducting an orchestra! Kids and adults are all welcome to join us at the Hygienic Art Park, 79 Bank Street on October 2nd in New London. Visit a local restaurant and grab a lunch, then join us for a series of works performed by the orchestra and conducted by you!

Can we become better people by listening to music?



We know music can influence our behavior. Think about the type of music you listen to when you are exercising. Now think about the type of music you listen to when you want to relax. They are likely to be very different. This is because music can influence our behavior; it can make us feel more energetic or calm. And because it has the power to influence people's behavior, music has an aesthetic as well as ethical relevance. One can make the argument that if you repeatedly listen to music to put yourself in a "better" state of mind, you are becoming a better person.

Another perspective is that by exposing ourselves to different types of music, we are learning to keep our minds and ears open. Just like with food, you can open yourself to some new tastes in music.

One helpful tip to try when listening to a piece of music you haven't heard before: ask yourself questions about it. For example, let's say you just heard a piece with unorthodox instrumentation, and perhaps you noticed some interesting sounds in the music. You can ask, "What did I hear? Which instruments were actually playing? Why these instruments? Why this combination? Why is there no bass line?" By asking yourself these kinds of questions, you might raise in yourself a curiosity and thereby some openness to what this music is presenting to you.



Enjoying and Sharing the Gift of Live Orchestral Music

Dear ECSO Friends, Patrons, and Music Lovers,

We all know the healing power of music, especially in its most exciting form – live performance. Nothing compares to being in a concert hall and witnessing live orchestral music. The experience has positive effects on the human brain, creates a sense of well-being, and, if you listen long enough, takes you on your own very personal journey. Music has the power to nourish the soul and expand the mind. Live performance also brings people together, shoulder to shoulder – something we all relish after these unthinkable last few years.

I think of ECSO concerts as gifts: gifts from our Maestro who masterfully creates diverse programs that inspire and thrill audiences, gifts from our musicians who, with years of study and dedication to their craft, come together to create amazing music, and gifts from our concertgoers and patrons who applaud our orchestra and make possible ECSO concerts through their support.



Don and Liane Crawford at an ECSO event

One of my goals as president of the ECSO board is to share our treasured orchestra with those who have never experienced the joy of live orchestral performance. We know our orchestra has the unique ability to comfort and transform, and we recognize the importance of that ability. Our mission is to share this experience with as many as possible in our community.



Liane and Don Crawford with Music Director & Conductor Toshiyuki Shimada

I hope this latest edition of ECSO's Prelude in our 76th year inspires you to purchase an ECSO subscription and join us at our first concert on Saturday, October 22 at 7:30 p.m. and all our 2022-2023 season performances.

And I look forward to greeting you at the doors of New London's Garde Arts Center, the League of Historic American Theatres' 2022 Outstanding Historic Theater award recipient!

Liane Crawford
President, ECSO Board of Directors



Eastern Connecticut
Symphony Orchestra

Toshiyuki Shimada
Music Director & Conductor

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