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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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EASTERN CONNECTICUT SYMPHONY TO PERFORM IN WILLIMANTIC, OCT. 20  
Free Concert at ECSU Will Feature *Armed Forces Medley*, *Dixieland*, *Rhapsody in Blue*

As a special addition to the Eastern Connecticut Symphony Orchestra's 77<sup>th</sup> season, the New London-based orchestra, led by Music Director & Conductor Toshiyuki Shimada, will give a free public concert in Willimantic on Friday, Oct. 20, 2023, at 7:00pm. Sponsored by ASA Environmental Products, Inc. and Chelsea Groton Bank, the concert will take place in Eastern Connecticut State University's Fine Arts Instructional Center Concert Hall, 306 High Street, on the ECSU campus. All ages are welcome.

**To reserve free tickets, veterans or family of veterans may email [info@ectsymphony.com](mailto:info@ectsymphony.com) between September 21 and October 20. The general public will be welcome to reserve tickets beginning October 10, pending availability.**

Area veterans are encouraged to attend. To honor them, the ECSO will play a medley of the official songs of the six services of the U.S. Armed Forces: Army, Marine Corps, Navy, Air Force, Coast Guard, and Space Force.

After performing works by Amy Beach, Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, and George Gershwin, the ECSO will "shift gears" to play familiar tunes in Dixieland style with the Tom Brown 6, a group led by Principal Trumpet Tom Brown, who recently retired from the U.S. Coast Guard Band. Versatile Connecticut-based pianist Gary Chapman will be the soloist for the Gershwin piece, the famous *Rhapsody in Blue*, which premiered almost exactly 100 years ago, with Gershwin himself at the keyboard.

The ECSO most recently performed in Willimantic in February of 2020. The free series helps to celebrate the connection between the Willimantic area and the orchestra, which was formed from the 1954 merger of the New London Symphony and the Willimantic Symphony. Another well-received series brings the ECSO to Norwich annually to present a free Palm Sunday concert at the Cathedral of St. Patrick.

In New London, the Eastern Connecticut Symphony Orchestra's 2023-24 season of six Saturday-evening concerts at the Garde Arts Center, 289 State Street, begins on Oct. 21. Six- and four-concert subscriptions may be purchased by calling 860-443-2876 or visiting [ectsymphony.com](http://ectsymphony.com). Tickets for individual concerts—on Oct. 21, Nov. 18, Jan. 27, Feb. 24, March 30, and April 27—go on sale at [gardearts.org](http://gardearts.org) on Sept. 25.

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Founded in 1946 by Norwegian immigrant Victor Norman, the Eastern Connecticut Symphony Orchestra is a 501(c)(3) nonprofit organization serving the eastern Connecticut region, including New London, Norwich, Waterford, Groton, Mystic, Old Lyme, and East Lyme. Recent concerts in Norwich, Willimantic, and Stonington reflect the ECSO's renewed dedication to serving a broader area.

*Our mission is to inspire, educate, and connect our communities through live orchestral music.*