

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Eastern Connecticut Symphony Orchestra (ECSO)
Appoints Jonathan Nickerson as new Board President

New London, CT (July 23, 2025) – The Eastern Connecticut Symphony Orchestra (ECSO) Board of Directors is pleased to announce that it has elected Jonathan Nickerson as Board President. Jon was elected at ECSO's July 8 Annual Meeting. He succeeds Liane Crawford and brings a wealth of experience and a deep commitment to the arts which will be invaluable as the orchestra continues its mission to inspire, educate, and connect communities through live orchestral music.

Nickerson is a prominent arts advocate known for his service leadership and community involvement. He joined the Stonington Community Center Board of Directors, was elected its President and helped lead its capital campaign and master planning for major renovations to the Community Center and Tennis Courts. As a leadership consultant, Nickerson has provided strategic planning services for the Mystic Museum of Art, the SECT Cultural Coalition, and the USCG Leadership Development Center. Nickerson also volunteered his time to chair master planning committees for the future National Coast Guard Museum, developing preliminary plans for the exhibition design and education programming. The USCG National Museum in New London is scheduled to open in late 2026.

"Jon is an especially skilled leader," said Immediate Past President Liane Crawford. "His strong proven commitment to ECSO will be instrumental in his stewarding our orchestra forward and expanding our reach in the community."

Nickerson expressed enthusiasm, stating "I am honored and excited to take on this leadership role. Live orchestra music has the power to inspire and unite people. Composer Felix Mendelssohn stated that *life and art are not two different things*. ECSO's legacy will be built upon that life and art premise and its vibrant future will be ensured through its generous supporters and concertgoers and close work with its Board, dynamic Artistic Director, talented ECSO musicians, and dedicated staff."

Nickerson, a retired Coast Guard Captain, has served as Vice President of the ECSO Board of Directors for the past year and has chaired ECSO's Executive Director Search Committee since mid-April. He congratulated Liane for her passionate leadership and deep commitment to the ECSO. "She and her husband Don have been extremely generous to the Eastern Connecticut region, and we are very fortunate to have Liane continue to serve as our Immediate Past President. I have seen firsthand the ECSO's incredible progress under her leadership and together we are prepared to make ECSO SOAR!"

At the Annual Meeting, the ECSO's Board of Directors elected a new slate of Officers and Board Directors:

New Officers – Jonathan Nickerson (President), Steven Bousquet (Vice President), and Liane Crawford (Immediate Past President).

Renewed Officers – Ellen Cummings (Secretary) and Tom Castle (Treasurer).

New Board Directors – Alan Merriman, Gary Upton, and Ana Stankovic.

Renewed Board Directors – Catherine Marrion (Former President), David Jacobs, Paul Sweeney, Lisa Marien, and Anish Shah.

New Ex-Officio Directors – Michael Pernal (Former Vice President) and Bob Reed (Former President).

About the ECSO

The ECSO has established itself as one of Connecticut's premier symphony orchestras, and is centered in the heart of New London adjacent to its home concert venue - the historic and grand *Garde Arts Center*. The ECSO will be celebrating its landmark *80th Season* and *America250* beginning the summer of 2026. ECSO draws its audiences from the CT shoreline and interior towns all across eastern Connecticut and Rhode Island.

Under the direction of Toshiyuki Shimada, now celebrating the closing of his 15th season and a recent renewal of his contract, the artistic reputation of the orchestra is growing. Lee Howard of *The Day* writes: *“Under the baton of Shimada over the course of the past 15 years, its musicianship has steadily increased to make it one of the small wonders of the American symphony world.”* Toshi delights audiences with strong thematic programming and unexpected works from distinguished and diverse composers as well as soloist performances by renowned and rising-star guests. In a New York Times (regional) article, Phillip Lutz wrote: *“Mr. Shimada has quietly established a reputation for programming, adventurous fare [and] groundbreaking productions.”*

For more information about the ECSO, please visit <https://ectsymphony.com>

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