

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Eastern Connecticut Symphony Orchestra Opens 2025-2026 Season with "Voyage of Passion: Elgar and Beyond"

Music Director Toshiyuki Shimada Begins His 16th Season with Featured Soloist Nicholas Hammel

The Eastern Connecticut Symphony Orchestra (ECSO) will launch its highly anticipated 2025-2026 season with "Voyage of Passion: Elgar and Beyond" on **Saturday, October 4, 2025, at 7:30 PM** at the historic **Garde Arts Center** in New London. Under the dynamic leadership of Music Director and Conductor Toshiyuki Shimada, now in his 16th season, the orchestra will present an evening of passionate and spirited works that take you on a journey through three centuries and multiple continents.

Featured Soloist: Nicholas Hammel

The concert will showcase **Nicholas Hammel**, winner of the 2025 ECSO Instrumental Competition, performing Sir Edward Elgar's magnificent Violin Concerto. Hammel, a master's candidate at Yale University with degrees from the University of Texas and New England Conservatory, brings exceptional artistry to this cornerstone of the violin repertoire.

A Program of Premieres

The evening's program features four works that share a unique distinction—each had its premiere with the composer conducting in the great musical capitals of Europe. The concert opens with Igor Stravinsky's "The Star-Spangled Banner," followed by:

- **Johann Strauss II's "Spanish March," Op. 433** – Originally dedicated to the regent of Spain, María Cristina, and first performed in Vienna on October 21, 1888
- **Sir Edward Elgar's Violin Concerto in B Minor** – A deeply personal and passionate work that established Elgar as one of Britain's greatest composers
- **Johannes Brahms's Haydn Variations** – Also known as the Saint Anthony Variations, featuring eight brilliant variations on a theme mistakenly attributed to Joseph Haydn

- **Nikolai Rimsky-Korsakov's Capriccio Espagnol** – A five-movement suite that brilliantly showcases the orchestra

About the Eastern Connecticut Symphony Orchestra

The Eastern Connecticut Symphony Orchestra's mission is to inspire, educate, and connect communities through live orchestral music. Under Toshiyuki Shimada's distinguished leadership, the ECSO has become a cornerstone of the region's cultural landscape, presenting world-class performances that bring together exceptional musicians and devoted audiences.

Concert Details

What: Voyage of Passion: Elgar and Beyond

When: Saturday, October 4, 2025, at 7:30 PM (doors open at 6:30 PM)

Where: Garde Arts Center, 325 State Street, New London, CT 06320

Tickets: \$32 to \$84 plus fees

Season Subscriptions Available

ECSO invites music lovers to join their season ticket holder family and experience the magic of live orchestral music throughout the 2025-2026 season. Season subscribers enjoy exclusive perks, the best seats, and unforgettable performances while supporting the arts in the Eastern Connecticut region.

Contact

For season tickets and complete program information, visit ectsymphony.com or call **(860) 443-2876**.

For single tickets go to gardearts.org.

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