



# New Haven Symphony Orchestra Strategic Goals 2018-2020 Season



## Current Environment

125 years after its inaugural performance, the New Haven Symphony Orchestra (NHSO) continues its legacy of artistically excellent performances, award-winning education programs, and an innovative approach to community engagement.

Under the leadership of Music Director William Boughton through May 2019 and Alasdair Neale beginning in September 2019, as well as Principal Pops Conductor Chelsea Tipton, the orchestra has achieved a level of artistic excellence that has generated excitement and new opportunities. Deeply committed to new American music, the NHSO performed 13 world premieres from 2007-2019, and the orchestra received the ASCAP award for Adventurous Programming in both 2010 and 2014. The NHSO was the recipient of the Greater New Haven Chamber of Commerce's First Annual Sunspot Innovation Award in 2018.

The orchestra is managed by an entirely professional staff of experts from their fields of fundraising, marketing, education, operations, and financial management. The endowment has grown to \$14m, cash reserves (depleted during the 2008 Recession) have been fully restored, and the Symphony has generated surpluses for seven of the past eight seasons. The NHSO has experienced a decade of remarkable audience

growth and development. NHSO concert audiences have grown by more than 40% in the past five years, with significant growth in the number of young people and families in attendance.

The NHSO's Education Programs reach approximately 20,000 students and adults annually in a wide-ranging menu of opportunities, including statewide Young People's Concerts, free Family Concerts, School Night at the Symphony, the Listen Up! Podcast Series, free KidTix, the Junior Board, and the Young Composer's Project.

Most recently, the NHSO has strived to become an industry leader in Diversity, Equity and Inclusion (DEI) in classical music. The Harmony Fellowship for Underrepresented Musicians, which places musicians from underrepresented racial and ethnic backgrounds into the orchestra, as well as the development of a DEI task force on the Board of Directors, extensive community outreach by the administration, and an overhauled approach to concert programming, has earned the NHSO recognition and awards from the League of American Orchestras, the Getty Foundation, the National Endowment for the Arts, the Community Foundation for Greater New Haven, and the Greater New Haven Chamber of Commerce.

## Mission and Vision

The Mission of NHSO is to increase the impact and value of orchestral music for its community through high quality, widely accessible performances and educational programming.

The enduring Vision of NHSO is to celebrate its musical heritage, enriched with new American compositions through expanded opportunities for orchestral performance and music education. To fully realize its vision, NHSO must:

- Design and present a continuous, successful artistic program of high-quality concerts and education programs. Programming includes both classical standards and innovative compositions offered in a combination of major symphonic and smaller orchestra performances.
- Repeat Classics, Pops, Family and Young People's Concerts with strategic partners to better attract large, diverse, and growing audiences. It must explore new and perhaps unconventional approaches to performing that enhance its appeal to the community it serves.
- Deliver opportunities to NHSO musicians and staff that enhance individual professional creative growth and provide enhanced satisfaction as an NHSO member.
- Continue to build engagement and communication networks throughout the region that effectively develop and maintain well-informed connections with our communities, thereby enhancing loyalty to NHSO's music.
- Support music education, especially through partnerships with school music programs, integrated curriculum development, and community orchestras.
- Introduce children and families to their musical heritage and the major forms of its presentation.

## Challenges

Notwithstanding its tradition of success, NHSO faces a complex and highly competitive environment. Orchestral music is readily accessible digitally and through an increasing number of performing organizations. Southern Connecticut has the seventh highest concentration of arts organizations in the United States. Nationwide, subscription ticket sales are in decline while the average audience age increases. To thrive in the coming years, NHSO must commit to a creative strategy that

embraces change as a fundamental component of a vibrant orchestra. It must become more agile, flexible, and creative. The Symphony must fully engage with the richly diverse communities it serves. It must plan and act deliberately and comprehensively to realize its vision of exceptional artistic quality. It must plan and act deliberately and comprehensively to expand the reach of its audience base. It must plan and act deliberately to affirm long-term financial stability.

## Opportunities

NHSO is fortunate to serve a community population that is rich in diversity. By recognizing promoting programming that

resonates with all facets of the community, NHSO has an opportunity to greatly expand its claim to loyal audiences.

## About Goals and Objectives

### Goals

As defined by [Merriam-Webster](#) - Goal: the end toward which effort is directed.

Goals are strategic, “big-picture” and broadly describe a future condition. It is neither the intent nor the purpose of a Goal to detail its achievement. In context of a football metaphor, the *goal* is to rack up more points

than the opponent by moving the ball past the “goal” line. The goal does not suggest the plays to execute in order to score. That is left for team collaboration and individual contribution, with guidance provided from the coaches and quarterback. With that understanding, the goals identified herein are presented as NHSO future aspirations.

### Objectives

As defined by [Merriam-Webster](#) – Objective: something toward which effort is directed.

The definition of Objective is remarkably similar to the definition of Goal, and therein lies the cause of persistent confusion. In practice, however, whereas Goals are strategic, Objectives are tactical and specifically measurable. Extending the football metaphor, the Objective would be a very clear statement of

how to achieve the goal. For example, go long fifty-yards, receive the pass, and run it into the end-zone.

It is not the purpose of this document to establish Objectives. Instead, the supporting Objectives are to be established by the NHSO teams and individuals under guidance from Management and the Board.

## Statement of Goals of NHSO Seasons 2018 – 2020

### Increase Impact of NHSO through diverse music programming

The purpose of this goal is to extend NHSO’s influence by promoting innovative, resonant programming. By enhancing its relevance, NHSO endeavors to extend the base of individuals and organizations that support it through attendance, contributions, and good will.

1. Pursue programming opportunities with existing and prospective audiences
2. Enhance relevance
3. Grow audiences
4. Enhance organizational stability

## Engage diverse communities and build a larger network within the community served by NHSO

The purpose of this goal is to further establish strong ties within the entire community served by NHSO. In so doing, we instill a sense of pride and ownership; this is the Communities' Symphony.

1. Improve information flow
2. Connect with communities not yet served
3. Enhance audience loyalty
4. Build brand equity
5. Strengthen relationships with all NHSO stakeholders

## Ensure organizational sustainability

The purpose of this goal is rather straightforward. All objectives initiated by NHSO should be for the purpose of ensuring continued success.

1. Maintain the highest artistic standards possible and ensure educational excellence
  - a. Introduce and integrate the new Music Director
2. Promote financial success
  - a. Build program support
  - b. Diversify funding streams
3. Develop personnel to best serve NHSO mission and culture
4. Grow through partnerships
  - a. Assess opportunities to collaborate with other highly functioning Connecticut orchestras and other performing arts associations.
  - b. Identify new fundraising opportunities and / or consolidate services with other New Haven Arts Anchor organizations
  - c. Identify new outlets for co-producing run-out concerts and education activities

## Confirm that performance spaces are optimized for success

The purpose of this goal is to ensure that NHSO performance spaces best support the goals established herein, and establish criteria for which other venues may be considered.

1. Determine the extent to which current spaces align to support the strategic goals herein
2. Identify and assess options for performance space that best support the strategic goals
3. Explore opportunities and feasibility to improve current venues or and. / or establish new spaces

## Next steps

With the adoption of these Strategic Goals 2018-2020 Season, NHSO can begin to act on them and drive business practices towards alignment. Measurable Objectives should be established at every level within the organization and with

1. Challenging
2. Achievable
3. Measurable with objective metrics

Because the climate in which NHSO operates is dynamic, both Goals and Objectives must be regularly reviewed to re-confirm direction and priorities. Both should be adjusted as appropriate to ensure the direction is clear

every position. Top-level Executive objectives should align to a Strategic Goal. Each lower level objective should align to its parent objective. Objectives should be:

accurate. In so doing, the *New Haven Symphony Orchestra Strategic Goals 2018-2020 Season* must be considered a living document, where updates are both desirable and encouraged.