



NEW HAVEN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

STRATEGIC PLAN 2020 – 2023

Vision

To inspire, delight, challenge, and connect diverse audiences and communities through the power of live music.

Mission

The NHSO enriches Connecticut's cultural landscape through exceptional performances and education programs that are accessible to residents from all walks of life. Innovative programming offered statewide inspires deeper audience engagement and meaningful artistic and educational collaborations which increase the reach and impact of the Symphony. Authentic commitments to diversity, equity, inclusion, and access move the NHSO to provide representation that reflects the richly diverse communities we serve in all areas of Symphony leadership.

Please Note: This plan was nearly completed before the COVID-19 pandemic. As performance venues reopen, NHSO will need to address the social impact of current events and update the parameters around what success looks like in a post-COVID environment. Standards for measurement will need to be revisited, presented to the Board, and incorporated by reference in the plan.



1. Design and present an inspiring artistic program of high-quality performances and education programs.

- A. STRATEGY: Produce large symphonic and smaller orchestra performances
 - TACTIC: Present season programming that emphasizes our ability to mix a season highlighting American composers, women and musicians of color along with lesser known works of great artistic merit with our backbone of works by history's great composers of the orchestral music loved by our audience.
 - MEASURE: Evaluate each season's programming for composer diversity
 - TACTIC: Perform works that resonate with audiences so as to extend the base of individuals and organizations that support NHSO through attendance, contributions, and good will. [Evaluate impact of COVID-19 pandemic on audience behavior.]
 - MEASURE: Box office reports and audience surveys
 - TACTIC: Identify and apply for grants to fund NHSO's efforts to integrate programming and community engagement programs in innovative ways.
 - MEASURE: Track grant awards received and quantify those that responded favorably to programming, innovation, DEI work, etc.

- B. STRATEGY: Support music education, especially through partnerships with school music programs, integrated resources development, and community music organizations.
 - TACTIC: Continue presenting a broad range of excellent music education programs that respond to the needs of every age group, from toddlers to seniors
 - MEASURE: Maintain the number of schools which and number of children who participate in education programs.
 - TACTIC: Deepen current participants' investment in NHSO services for children
 - MEASURE: Number of participants supporting the cost of busing, ticket fees, contracted fees, etc.



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- TACTIC: Recruit new participants in key education program
 - MEASURE: The percentage of new schools reached, the number of towns served by Education programs.
- TACTIC: Deepen relationships community music partners.
 - MEASURE: Geographic distribution and demographic makeup of communities served to track NHSO reach and impact with special focus on tracking recurring partnerships.



2. **Achieve diversity, equity, and inclusion by engaging our communities in our content and efforts.**

- A. STRATEGY: While maintaining a core commitment to the great orchestral tradition, offer diversified programming (including classics, popular music and under-championed compositions) to better engage the communities we serve.
- TACTIC: Utilize diverse program content to develop relationships with new organizations with special relationships to the content
 - MEASURE: Track the new groups attracted by diverse content
 - TACTIC: Express our commitment to engage a broader audience by presenting diversified programming in an ongoing schedule
 - MEASURE: Present a minimum of three such programs per season. Measure attendance of New Haven residents involved in concerts and education programs.
 - TACTIC: Increase the number of concerts where programming advances diversity goals
 - MEASURE: Evaluate each season's programming for composer diversity
 - TACTIC: Track audience diversity through post event surveys.
 - MEASURE: Assess audience diversity at concerts with primarily standard repertoire from the classical canon as opposed to those with increased program diversity.
 - MEASURE: Observe differences in audience diversity and measure number of new ticket buyers when artists of color are featured.
 - MEASURE: Increase digital reach (social media followers, percentages of emails opened, website hits, etc.) while diverse performances are being marketed
- B. STRATEGY: Promote a wider appreciation of the rich diversity of cultural influences expressed in American music through performances and education programs.
- TACTIC: Earn awards that directly relate to programming music by Americans, women, and people of color.



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- MEASURE: Track dollars donated by funders of new music
- TACTIC: Expand audience understanding of what American music comprises
 - MEASURE: Track works performed that include influences of jazz, hip hop, electronica, East Coast vs. West Coast, and serious traditions



3. Consciously build diversity among the board, staff, musicians, donors, and audiences that reflects the population of the communities we serve.

A. STRATEGY: Continue Harmony Fellowships.

- TACTIC: Identify sources of revenue to continue the Fellowships.
 - MEASURE: Dollars available to continue Fellowships
- TACTIC: Attract funding for which applications request information about DEI work within the Symphony.
 - MEASURE: Track grants awarded because of investments in DEI work.
 - MEASURE: Note grants not-awarded where reviewer noted the need for greater commitment to DEI, including board, staff, audience, and program diversity.

B. STRATEGY: Increase and actively engage a network of community partners

- TACTIC: Create relationships with diverse organizations throughout New Haven to increase the diversity of our volunteer and house manager positions.
 - MEASURE: Benchmark the origin of our current volunteers and house managers. Increase diversity by 10% through new.
- TACTIC: Track participants of ticket give back programs and note the constituents they serve.
 - MEASURE: Engage in at least three Ticket Giveback programs of which at least one partners NHSO with an organization that primarily serves an under-represented group
- TACTIC: Strengthen existing partnerships (further collaborations, deepened involvement).
 - MEASURE: Describe three instances of increased involvement
- TACTIC: Elevate the quality of the donor database to including relationship connections to volunteer leaders and between members of the community.
 - MEASURE: Increase the number of relationships in donor records by 10%



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- TACTIC: Deepen member commitment by communicating work with community partners
 - MEASURE: Conduct an annual member survey to measure engagement, overall “investor” opinion, and lead development.
- TACTIC: Hold one community conversation/convenings per season to connect with the broader population of Greater New Haven.
 - MEASURE: Count participants at each convening
- TACTIC: Facilitate shared experiences for NHSO members/donors to elevate their sense of community.
 - MEASURE: Schedule three experiences per season; Increase member participation by 5% year over year for three years (measured in total attendance at member related events during each concert season).



4. Build the capacity of the organization to support long-term growth, sustainability, and resiliency.

- A. STRATEGY: Deliver opportunities to NHSO musicians, fellows, and staff that enhance individual professional creative growth and provide enhanced job satisfaction.
- TACTIC: Share the upcoming season dates and program information with rostered musicians prior to the June 1 deadline to increase rostered member's participation throughout the season.
 - MEASURE: Calculate a benchmark total percentage of substitutes over the past 4 seasons. Compare future participation percentages. Does earlier notification increase participation?
 - TACTIC: Cross train NHSO staff or volunteers in general concert operations.
 - MEASURE: Update operations manual. Each season, increase by three the number of skills that are reliably duplicated.
 - TACTIC: Offer professional development support to staff and musicians at least once per season
 - MEASURE: Measure dollars contributed to support professional development; track participation of staff and musicians in professional development opportunities
 - TACTIC: Evaluate impact of COVID-19 pandemic on sustainability
 - MEASURE: Present report to Board in Fall 2020
- B. STRATEGY: Address our venue challenges
- TACTIC: Undertake Venue Pre-Feasibility Study;
 - MEASURE: Involve at least two partners in the study. Present completed study to the Board
 - TACTIC: Assess the future impact of accessibility on institutional funding
 - MEASURE: Count grants that ask questions about venue accessibility and state the current impact on unearned revenue.
 - TACTIC: Track audience attitudes toward current venues



- MEASURE: Audience surveys, direct communication with staff, complaints about venue. When patrons do not renew, are they mentioning venue challenges (access, temperature control, seats, acoustics) as a reason for not attending future concerts?

If venue is feasible

- TACTIC: Identify grant opportunities for capital funding
 - MEASURE Monetize the potential impact on revenue.
- TACTIC: Assess the impact on general operating fundraising if a comprehensive building campaign is launched

C. STRATEGY: Maintain stability fund and wisely steward investments

- TACTIC: Continue to carefully monitor strategic investments.
 - MEASURE: Evaluate potential for maintaining investments post-COVID

D. STRATEGY: Grow popular support, especially among next generation audiences.

- TACTIC: Communicate through digital channels Alasdair Neale’s innovative approach to programming to next generation audiences.
 - MEASURE: Track social media engagement percentages. Increase followers by 10%.
- TACTIC: Expand high school volunteer program
 - MEASURE: Increase high school volunteers by 20%