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Saturday, September 25, 2021
7:30pm

Jonathan Yates, Music Director and Conductor

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The Mission of the Norwalk Symphony Orchestra is to share the beauty and power of orchestral music with audiences of all ages through live performances and music education programs.

VISION

The Vision of the Norwalk Symphony Orchestra is to be a leading artistic institution in Southwest Connecticut. We strive to:

• Inspire, enlighten, educate and uplift the human spirit
• Perform artistically excellent symphonic and POPS concerts, whether they be full orchestra or chamber music compositions
• Value the cultural and educational importance of music
• Provide music educational opportunities for students and adults
• Connect and collaborate with community organizations
• Foster impactful appreciation of the Norwalk Symphony Orchestra, and
• Embrace diversity and promote inclusion for our staff, board, musicians and audiences.

We will sustain this vision by building financial relationships to ensure long term stability.

DEAR SYMPHONY FRIENDS,

Welcome back to the Concert Hall for our 82nd season! There is no doubt that the past 18 months have held both challenges and opportunities for all of us. As a significant cultural organization showcasing talented musicians from our community, the Symphony has enhanced the quality of life in Southwestern Connecticut since 1939, and we are excited to be able to share live music with you once again.

We have much to look forward to for 2021-2022 as we open with all American composers and music. Mozart dominates our November concert, and we are excited to present the Opera Amahl and the Night Visitors twice during the holidays. The second half of our season features our Music for All Ages concert highlighting the Carnival of the Animals, the Brubeck Brothers for an evening of Jazz and Movie music, and our May concert of Verdi’s Requiem.

Our time during the pandemic was spent engaging our musicians for small-group performances and creating a Chamber Music Series – a strategic goal we were able to launch earlier than expected. Look for more of these performances in the future. Video technology became the way for everyone to continue to enjoy performances from the comfort of their own homes; yet we now have this capability to broadly share our live performances as well. We collaborated with many of our Community Partners to pair our music with other artforms and stayed in touch through social media, email and Zoom. These new options will enable us to continue to expand our reach outside the Concert Hall.

Our musicians continued to support music education for all ages through videos created for (Not) Just for Kids, our Young Artists Concerto Competition, a Master Class Program for underserved middle and high school students, and our “Conversations with the Conductor” series - all of which now have both in-person and remote learning options. Chamber groups of musicians from the orchestra will present smaller concerts as part of our expansion of the musical offerings.

To all of you – our audience, sponsors, advertisers, subscribers, donors – our friends – THANK YOU! We are honored by your steadfast support through all our seasons and look forward to many more performances together. Stay safe and stay well!

Sandra J. Miklave
Executive Director

Christopher D. Bell
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JONATHAN YATES
MUSIC DIRECTOR/CONDUCTOR

Jonathan Yates is the seventh Music Director of the Norwalk Symphony Orchestra since its inception in 1939. He has been a driving force in reinvigorating the relationship between the symphony and its community, revived the orchestra's popular (Not) Just for Kids educational outreach program, and started collaborations with numerous local cultural, religious and civic organizations. He made his professional orchestral conducting debut at 23, leading the National Symphony Orchestra in a Millennium Stages Concert. The following year he made his Carnegie Hall debut as a pianist in the Isaac Stern Chamber Music Workshop. As Music Director of the Norwalk Youth Symphony, he has led that ensemble on successful tours to Spain, Germany, Carnegie Hall, and Tanglewood.

Jonathan completed several seasons as Musical Director of Music Mountain, a preeminent chamber music festival in the Litchfield Hills of Connecticut. The New Yorker praised his first year saying, “The longtime festival’s programming has been given a welcome jolt with the arrival of a new director, the pianist and conductor Jonathan Yates.” He has collaborated as a pianist and conductor with many of the country’s most respected musicians, including Midori, Kim Kashkashian, David Finckel, Charles Neidich, Ida Kavafian, Colin Carr, Gilbert Kalish, Paul Neubauer, Joseph Lin, and William Purvis; and the Avalon, Daedalus and Pacifica Quartets. He has been heard as a chamber musician at the 92nd Street Y, Miller Theater, Bargemusic and Merkin Hall, as well as at the Caramoor Festival and on the Ravinia Festival Rising Stars Series. As an ardent devotee of the music of our time, he has conducted new music concerts with the Argento Chamber Ensemble and the Knights, was the recipient of an ASCAP award for adventurous programming, and has given local and regional premieres of pre-eminent composers including Augusta Read Thomas, Huang Ruo, Zhou Long, Chester Biscardi, and Chen Yi.

Jonathan received his Graduate Diploma in conducting from the Juilliard School, where he studied with James DePreist and Otto-Werner Mueller, and was the holder of the Bruno Walter Memorial Scholarship. He received his Master of Music from State University of New York, where he worked with Gilbert Kalish, and his Bachelor of Arts from Harvard University, where he studied with Robert Levin. He serves as Music Director Emeritus of Camerata Notturna, a chamber orchestra in New York City, and has also served on the faculty of Sarah Lawrence College. He descends from a family that has been on the forefront of the battles for the cultural and humanistic life of our country. His grandfather, U. S. Representative Sidney R. Yates, was the principal defender of the National Endowment for the Arts in his 48 years in Congress, and his father, the Honorable Stephen R. Yates, was the first judge in Illinois to approve same-sex adoption.
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** Updated through September 10, 2021

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AMERICAN TRAILBLAZERS
SEPTEMBER 25, 2021

JONATHAN YATES, MUSIC DIRECTOR

Fanfare for the Common Man ............................... Aaron Copland
Hints and Tappings from The Light of Three Mornings ............................. Gwyneth Walker
Adagio for Strings .............................................. Samuel Barber
Three Dance Episodes from “On the Town” .......................... Leonard Bernstein
A Suite of Dances .................................................. Florence Price
Appalachian Spring Ballet ........................................... Aaron Copland

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Krzysztof Kuznik, Concertmaster
Stephanie Liu, Ass’t. Concertmaster
Marina Kitaychik - Dr. Emanuel Knishkowy Chair
Claudia Tondi
Leo Ficks
Cameron Chase - Lewis Wilker Chair
Jennifer Trahan

VIOLIN 2
Nina Crothers, Principal
Corinne Metter, Ass’t. Principal
Fiona Lloyd-Aikman
Ludmila Gufeld
Amy Griswold

VIOLA
Suzanne Corey-Sahlin, Principal
Dr. Louis G. Simon Chair
Amy Selig, Ass’t. Principal
Jill Pellett-Levine
Andrew Knebel
Elizabeth Handman

CELLO
Gunnar Sahlin, Principal
Justin Elkins, Ass’t. Principal
Jane Lawson
Sara Bennett Wolf

BASS
Alexander Svensen, Principal
David Uhl, Ass’t. Principal

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Joanne Hiscoscks

OBOE
Janet Rosen, Principal
Marta Boratgis

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Diego Vasquez, Principal
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Videographers: Anthony Santora & Jamie DeStefano
Gwyneth Walker

Widely performed throughout the country, the music of American composer Gwyneth Walker is beloved by performers and audiences alike for its energy, beauty, reverence, drama, and humor. Dr. Gwyneth Walker is a graduate of Brown University and the Hartt School of Music. She holds B.A., M.M. and D.M.A. degrees in Music Composition. A former faculty member of the Oberlin College Conservatory, she resigned from academic employment in 1982 in order to pursue a career as a full-time composer. For nearly 30 years, she lived on a dairy farm in Braintree, Vermont. She now divides her time between her childhood hometown of New Canaan, Connecticut and the musical community of Randolph, Vermont.

Gwyneth Walker is a proud resident of New England. She was the recipient of the 2000 “Lifetime Achievement Award” from the Vermont Arts Council and the 2018 “Alfred Nash Patterson Lifetime Achievement Award” from Choral Arts New England. In 2020, her alma mater, the Hartt School of Music of the University of Hartford, presented her with the Hartt Alumni Award.

A composer since age two, Gwyneth Walker has always placed great value on active collaboration with musicians. Over the decades, she has traveled to many states to work with instrumental and choral ensembles, soloists, and educational institutions as they rehearse and perform her music. A number of these visits have developed into ongoing relationships. In 2018, Walker was named Composer-in-Residence for the Great Lakes Chamber Orchestra in Petoskey, Michigan.

Walker’s catalog includes over 350 commissioned works for orchestra, chamber ensembles, chorus, and solo voice. A special interest has been dramatic works that combine music with readings, acting, and movement. The music of Gwyneth Walker is published by E. C. Schirmer (choral/vocal/instrumental music) and Lauren Keiser Music (orchestral/instrumental music).

“Hints and Tappings” from The Light of Three Mornings: Sketches of Braintree Hill

- Gwyneth Walker

This work was commissioned by the Lake Placid Sinfonietta in 1987 and won the New England Philharmonic Composition Competition in 1989. It is scored for two flutes, two oboes, two clarinets, two bassoons, four horns, three trumpets, one trombone, percussion, and strings. A different orchestration exists for string orchestra.

“The Light of Three Mornings: Sketches of Braintree Hill” is a three-movement work for chamber orchestra inspired by the purity and beauty of mornings spent in the composer’s studio in Braintree, Vermont. The view of nearby Braintree Hill predominates.

“The first movement, “When the Stars Begin to Fall,” is a contemporary arrangement of the familiar spiritual tune, “My Lord, What a Morning! (when the stars began to fall).” A newly-composed rhythmic middle section is inserted to emphasize the celebratory nature of the song. Near the end of the movement, “glissandi” in the strings and cascading scales in the winds are the falling stars.

“First Light” is a slow second movement featuring a sustained melody for solo violin. This melodic line is engendered from the blurred patterns heard in the woodwinds at the end of the first movement. As the theme travels among the instruments, it grows in intensity. The ending is abrupt.

“Hints and Tappings” was composed in a spirit of fun. Delight is taken in exploring unusual instrumental (and vocal!) sounds. This is rhythmic and light-hearted music. The theme and harmonic progressions are derived from the first movement. A full quotation from “When the Stars Begin to Fall” appears in the upper strings near the end, but the tappings prevail.

Biography and notes were graciously provided by the composer.
Fanfare for the Common Man
- Aaron Copland

Born November 14, 1900, in Brooklyn, New York
Died December 2, 1990, in North Tarrytown, New York

This work was premiered on March 12, 1943, by the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra conducted by Eugene Goossens. It is scored for brass and percussion.

In early 1942, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra conductor Eugene Goossens invited seventeen composers to submit fanfares to be performed at subscription concerts throughout the upcoming season. World War II had just begun and Goossens wanted to do his part to rouse patriotic sentiment. Each fanfare would honor some aspect of the war effort, usually showcasing a branch of the military or an ally.

In the interest of completeness, each fanfare, along with its premiere date, is listed below:

- Fanfare for Airmen, Bernard Wagenaar, Oct. 9, 1942
- Fanfare for Russia, Deems Taylor, Oct. 16, 1942
- Fanfare for the Fighting French, Walter Piston, Oct. 23, 1942
- Fanfare to the Forces of our Latin-American Allies, Henry Cowell, Oct. 30, 1942
- Fanfare for Friends, Daniel Gregory Mason, Nov. 6, 1942
- Fanfare for Paratroopers, Paul Creston, Nov. 27, 1942
- Fanfare de la Liberte, Darius Milhaud, Dec. 11, 1942
- Fanfare for American Heroes, William Grant Still, Dec. 18, 1942
- Fanfare for France, Virgil Thomson, Jan. 15, 1943
- Fanfare for Freedom, Morton Gould, Jan. 22, 1943
- Fanfare for Airmen, Leo Sowerby, Jan. 29, 1943
- Fanfare for Poland, Harl McDonald, Feb. 5, 1943
- Fanfare for the Medical Corps, Anis Fuleihan, Feb. 26, 1943
- Fanfare for the American Soldier, Felix Borowski, March 5, 1943
- Fanfare for the Common Man, Aaron Copland, March 12, 1943
- Fanfare for the Signal Corps, Howard Hanson, April 2, 1943
- Fanfare for the Merchant Marine, Eugene Goossens, April 16, 1943
- Fanfare for Commandos, Bernard Rogers, (not performed)

Of the eighteen fanfares, only Copland’s has earned a lasting place in the repertoire. Beginning with assertive, almost aggressive, percussion, the work soon introduces the familiar upward-reaching theme in the brass. Probably the most striking element in this short work is the overwhelming feeling of nobility that Copland conjures not for an exalted leader or organization, but for ordinary citizens. Copland described his fanfare as a work to bring honor to “the common man, who, after all, was doing all the dirty work in the war and in the army.” The importance of this stirring miniature cannot be overestimated, as Copland included a reworked version of the fanfare for the finale of his Third Symphony, composed to celebrate the end of World War II.

Adagio for Strings
- Samuel Barber

Born March 9, 1910, in West Chester, Pennsylvania

This work was premiered on November 5, 1938, by the newly formed NBC Symphony Orchestra, in New York, under the direction of Arturo Toscanini. It is scored for string orchestra.

In 1924, at the age of 14, Samuel Barber entered the Curtis Institute of Music in Philadelphia. This was hardly the beginning of his musical studies, as his aunt, the great Metropolitan Opera contralto Louise Homer, had encouraged him in his childhood to study a wide variety of music. At just 7 years old, Barber composed an operetta, entitled The Rose Tree. Although his father wanted him to become a physician, young Samuel became proficient on piano and developed a serviceable singing voice. When he entered the Curtis Institute, he caught the attention of the school’s founder, Mary Curtis Bok, who became his patron and managed his early career.

In 1935, Barber won the Rome Prize and spent two years in Cadegliano, Italy, with his friend and fellow composer, Gian Carlo Menotti. Summers there allowed Barber to escape the tensions of his studies and a city that he felt was musically confining. He spent a large portion of his time swimming, bicycling, shopping, playing tennis, and composing, which came much more readily to him when combined with leisure activities.

With his career well underway, due largely to Artur Rodzinski’s performance of his Symphony No.1 at the 1937 Salzburg Festival, Barber tried to cement his reputation by finding notable conductors to introduce his newest works. Arturo Toscanini, the esteemed maestro who had premiered Puccini’s final operas, was in Salzburg during the Festival. Barber sent scores of his Essay for Orchestra (he would compose a second such work in 1942) and Adagio for Strings (Barber’s own arrangement of the slow movement from his String Quartet) to Toscanini, knowing that a premiere under the baton of the legendary conductor would bode well for his career. Within six months, Toscanini sent the scores back with no explanation. Assuming that the maestro was not interested in the pieces, Barber begrudgingly began a search for another conductor.

On vacation with Menotti in 1938, the two discussed visiting Toscanini at his island home in Lake Maggiore, but Barber could not bring himself to visit the man who had refused his music. Little did he realize that Toscanini had memorized both scores and would premiere them before the year ended. Barber’s close association with Toscanini brought him recognition as one of the leading young composers of his generation.

The introspective and meditative Adagio is one large arch of sound, beginning softly and slowly rising in pitch and intensity until it reaches a devastating emotional climax – only to stop abruptly and return to the bottom of the broken arch. NBC Radio broadcasted the work after the death of President Franklin Delano Roosevelt, causing it to take on a new life as an expressive elegy. Since then, it has given solace to those mourning President John F. Kennedy, Princess Grace of Monaco, and the victims of the 9-11 tragedies in New York, Pennsylvania, and Washington, D.C.
CONCERT NOTES

Three Dance Episodes from On the Town
– Leonard Bernstein

Born August 25, 1918, in Lawrence, Massachusetts
Died October 14, 1990, in New York, New York

This work received its premiere on February 15, 1946, by the San Francisco Symphony Orchestra. It is scored for piccolo, flute, oboe, English horn, E-flat clarinet, three clarinets, bass clarinet, alto saxophone, two horns, three trumpets, three trombones, tuba, timpani, percussion, piano, and strings.

An American composer of Russian-Jewish parentage, Leonard Bernstein worked his way from a middle-class suburb of Boston to become America's greatest musical figure. Equally adept as a pianist, conductor, teacher, and composer, Bernstein became the great American ambassador to the world's musical community. Before his successes, students from the United States were often turned away from study in the great European conservatories because the European musical establishment felt that their country of origin made them incapable of artistic ability. Bernstein single-handedly changed that opinion.

 Bernstein was equally well known in both the concert hall and on Broadway. In addition to his three symphonies, many other orchestra works, numerous songs, and a handful of choral and chamber works, he also composed three ballets, two operas, and music for several plays. His four Broadway shows - On the Town, Wonderful Town, West Side Story, and 1600 Pennsylvania Avenue - are each revolutionary in their own way. West Side Story, a musical tragedy, is one of the most popular musicals of all time.

On the Town was Leonard Bernstein's first popular score and also started the choreographic career of dancer Jerome Robbins. In 1943 World War II pervaded American life and was never completely out of the public's mind. Robbins and Bernstein decided to base their musical collaboration on the premise of three sailors on a 24-hour shore leave in New York and the adventures they might encounter. The young lyricists Betty Comden and Adolph Green joined the team and On the Town was complete by the end of 1944. The show opened on December 28 of that year and closed on February 2, 1946, for a total of 462 performances. Comden and Green also performed in the show, along with a twenty-two year old Nancy Walker, who played a brash taxi driver with the entertaining name of Hildy Esterhazy.

 Bernstein described his music with his usual descriptive flair:

“It seems only natural that dance should play a leading role in the show, On the Town, since the idea of writing it arose from the success of the ballet, Fancy Free. I believe this is the first Broadway show ever to have as many as seven or eight dance episodes in the space of two acts; and, as a result, the essence of the whole production is contained in these dances. I have selected three of them for use as a concert suite. That these are, in their way, symphonic pieces rarely occurs to the audience actually attending the show, so well integrated are all the elements, thanks to George Abbott’s direction, the choreographic inventiveness of Jerome Robbins, and the adroitness of the book by Betty Comden and Adolph Green.

“The story is concerned with three sailors on 24-hours leave in New York, and their adventures with the monstrous city which its inhabitants take so much for granted.

“In the ‘Dance of the Great Lover,’ Gaby, the romantic sailor in search of the glamorous Miss Turnstiles, falls asleep in the subway and dreams of his prowess in sweeping Miss Turnstiles off her feet.

“In the ‘Pas de Deux’ Gaby watches a scene, both tender and sinister, in which a sensitive high-school girl in Central Park is lured and then cast off by a worldly sailor.

“The ‘Times Square Ballet’ is a more panoramic sequence in which all the sailors in New York congregate in Times Square for their night of fun. There is communal dancing, a scene in a souvenir arcade, and a scene in the Roseland Dance Palace.”

Suite of Dances
– Florence Price

Born April 9, 1887, in Little Rock, Arkansas
Died June 3, 1953, in Chicago, Illinois

The original form of this work was composed in 1833. Price’s orchestration dates from sometime before 1951 when this version was premiered. It is scored for two flutes, two clarinets, one bassoon, two horns, two trumpets, cornet, percussion, timpani, and strings.

Born in 1887 in a racially integrated neighborhood in Little Rock, Florence Price (born Florence Smith) was the daughter of a dentist and enjoyed a happy childhood. She was precocious as a musician and had her first piece published at age 12. She was valedictorian of her senior class at Capitol Hill School at age 16. It was a big step for a young African American teenager to move to Boston and study at the New England Conservatory, one of the few prestigious music schools in the country to accept students without regard to race, but she jumped at the opportunity. In Boston, she studied with the illustrious composer George Whitefield Chadwick and earned her degree in 1907. A few years after returning home, she was offered the directorship of the music department of Clark University in Atlanta where she stayed until 1912. She returned to Little Rock and married the attorney Thomas Jewell Price, but found that the racial climate was becoming unbearable with lynching becoming commonplace.

In 1927 the Prices moved to Chicago where Florence would spend the rest of her life. Almost immediately after moving, she filed for divorce from Thomas—an especially independent and bold action for the time. This was a period of great musical growth for Price, as she enrolled in the American Conservatory of Music and Chicago Musical College. She signed a publishing contract with G. Schirmer and immersed herself in music. To make ends meet, she wrote radio jingles and played organ to accompany silent movies. She wrote orchestrations for WGN Radio and even composed popular songs under the pen name Vee Jay.
Her big break came in 1939 when soprano Marian Anderson, who mounted an historic Lincoln Memorial concert after she had been denied the use of Washington's Constitution Hall by the Daughters of the American Revolution because of her race, performed Price's 1951 Suite of Dances based on a 1933 piano work called Three Little Negro Dances, which was also arranged for concert band (1939) and for two pianos (1949). The Suite is published without the movement titles - “Hoe Cakes,” “Rabbit Foot,” and “Ticklin’ Toes.” These terms demand explanation. Although these titles may give modern listeners pause, this was music from a time when certain questionable terms were commonplace. It refers to common things in the south, including cornbread (hoe cakes), good luck charms (rabbit foot), and playing with babies (ticklin’ toes). The music stands on its own even without the movement titles.

Each movement uses ragtime rhythms and harmonic progressions, which gives it a lighthearted feel more akin to Scott Joplin or George Gershwin than to more regimented classical composers. This delightful work deserves to be heard more often.

Ballet for Martha (Appalachian Spring)

- Aaron Copland

The first performance of this work, in its original version for thirteen instruments, took place on October 30, 1944, at the Coolidge Auditorium of the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. Copland’s suite for full orchestra was first performed on October 4, 1945, by the New York Philharmonic, with Artur Rodzinski conducting. This larger version is scored for pairs of flutes, oboes, clarinets, bassoons, horns, and trumpets, with timpani, percussion, piano, harp, and strings.

Described by Leonard Bernstein as the “Dean of American Music,” Aaron Copland delighted in his role as its elder statesman in the later years of his life. Perhaps this is due to the seventy years he was involved in various musical endeavors. Before launching his compositional career with his resounding success in Hollywood writing the music for his fourth film, The North Star - an irresistible piece of wartime propaganda with a stellar cast and a screenplay by Lillian Hellman, created to build a sense of trust among the American people for our Soviet allies - when Elizabeth Sprague Coolidge contacted him with a commission for a new ballet for the renowned dancer-choreographer Martha Graham. Copland agreed to compose what would be his fourth ballet.

Once Coolidge, Copland, and Graham agreed on the terms, all that remained to be determined was the subject. In time, the two collaborators settled on the story, as told by a program note in the published score.

“...a pioneer celebration in spring around a newly-build farmhouse in the Pennsylvania hills in the early part of the last century. The bride-to-be and the young farmer-husband enact the emotions, joyful and apprehensive, their new domestic partnership invites. An older neighbor suggests now and then the rocky confidence of experience. A revivalist and his followers remind the new householders of the strange and terrible aspects of human fate. At the end the couple [is] left quiet and strong in their new house.”

Beginning work on the score while still in Hollywood, Copland continued during a subsequent vacation in Mexico. He finished the work the following summer during a teaching stint at Harvard University. Copland was aware of the small stage and pit in the Coolidge Auditorium at Washington’s Library of Congress. Because of these limitations, the work was scored for a compact chamber ensemble of just thirteen instruments. The version most often performed today is the suite that Copland arranged a few months later to be played by full orchestra. For this version, the composer removed just one ten-minute block of music from a single location in the score, resulting in a sense of continuity seldom found in such suites.

Despite the rural atmosphere often attributed to this music, Copland used only one pre-existing melody - the familiar “Simple Gifts,” heard near the end of the ballet. Perhaps most interesting of all is that the title of the work did not come about until the day before the performance. Martha Graham stumbled across the exhortation “O Appalachian Spring!” in Hart Crane’s epic poem “The Bridge,” and it seemed to fit perfectly. The official title of the score remains “Ballet for Martha.”

“I have been amused that people so often have come up to me to say, ‘When I listen to that ballet of yours, I can just feel spring and see the Appalachians,’ But when I wrote the music, I had no idea what Martha was going to call it! Even after people learn that I didn’t know the ballet title when I wrote the music, they still tell me they see the Appalachians and feel spring. Well, I’m willing if they are!”

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www.norwalksymphony.org/young-artists-competition
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The annual Concerto Competition is an opportunity for students to test their musicianship with peers from the Fairfield County region. The environment is encouraging with judges providing constructive feedback with an emphasis that aims to assist young musicians in improving their skills. Learning to perform and compete are important elements of the performing arts, and this event helps to develop skills for young students to become great performers. The winner of the competition plays their solo piece with the full orchestra at our annual Music for All Ages concert each March.

Focus is on middle and high school students, and this marks our second year of developing this new grant-funded program. Working with our local high schools and two other nonprofit music education programs, Symphony musicians and the conductor have presented specialized workshops to assist these young musicians in their playing and performing skills. Development of the format and expanse of this program is ongoing and we look forward to growing this new opportunity to work with young musicians.

Information on these presentations can be found on our website at www.norwalksymphony.org.

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