

1 **MAGNIFY THE IMPACT**
2 **Multi-Year Strategic Action Plan for the New Haven Symphony Orchestra**
3 **Commencing with the 2013-2014 Season**
4

5 **OVERVIEW**

6 **Current Environment**

7 More than 120 years of vision, values, commitment, and achievement have combined to create
8 today's New Haven Symphony Orchestra (NHSO) – the nation's fourth oldest orchestra. Since
9 1894 when Morris Steiner persuaded a group of New Haven musicians to form a symphony
10 orchestra and its first audience performance in 1895, the NHSO has striven to provide its
11 audiences with high quality professional performances that have transformed the NHSO into
12 today's accomplished symphony orchestra.

13 Since adopting its 2010 Strategic Plan, which was prepared with the assistance of the League of
14 American Orchestras, the NHSO has made great strides in a wide range of strategic areas. The
15 orchestra, under the leadership of Music Director William Boughton, has achieved a level of
16 artistic excellence that has generated excitement and new opportunities. Our roster has been
17 enriched by the recruitment of world-renowned concert master Ani Kavafian and several other
18 distinguished musicians. Cheever Tyler celebrated NHSO musicians with a photographic
19 portrayal. The NHSO garnered critical acclaim by winning a "Critic's Choice" award from
20 *Gramophone Magazine* for its first recording of the music of William Walton on the Nimbus
21 label. ASCAP recognized NHSO's commitment to new music with two ASCAP Awards for
22 Programming of American Music and ongoing grant awards supporting the Young Composers
23 Project.
24

25 The NHSO has also strengthened its management team, with a new Executive Director and
26 General Manager rising from within and with the recruitment of a new Finance Manager and
27 new Directors of Development, Education, and Marketing. In addition, the Board of Directors is
28 now led by a reinvigorated Executive Committee, including a Board President who also serves
29 on the Board of the League of American Orchestras. Under this leadership, the NHSO has
30 increased both its endowment by \$8,000,000 from the Richard English Estate through the
31 Greater New Haven Community Foundation and its cash reserves by more than \$280,000,
32 overhauled its accounting and budgeting systems, increased subscriptions, and finished in the
33 black for the past three years.
34

35 During the same period, the NHSO successfully launched a regionalization program that has
36 expanded the reach of the orchestra to new markets and audiences across Connecticut and
37 beyond. The orchestra continues to build community partnerships and expand fee-for-service
38 engagements.
39

40 NHSO's education department has integrated its programs into school curriculums and instituted
41 a new link between education and symphony series programming. The Composer-in-Residence
42 Program has not only enriched our concerts with new works but also made it possible for young
43 composers to work with Augusta Reed Thomas and other leading American composers as
44 mentors. This season's Young People's Concerts and educational residency programs, featuring
45 hip-hop/classical violinist Daniel Bernard Roumain, created unprecedented excitement in the
46 community and schools, and marks a new era of innovation and leadership in the organization's
47 education programs.
48

49 **Challenges**

50 Notwithstanding these successes, we continue to face a complex and highly competitive
51 environment. Orchestral music is readily accessible digitally and through an increasing number
52 of performing organizations. Southern Connecticut has the seventh highest concentration of arts
53 organizations in the United States. Nationwide, subscription ticket sales are down as the average
54 audience age increases. To thrive in the coming years, we must improve our capability to think
55 creatively and strategically and to embrace change as a fundamental commitment of a vibrant
56 orchestra. *We must become more agile, flexible, and engaged with the diverse audiences and*
57 *communities we serve. We must plan and act more deliberately and comprehensively to realize*
58 *our vision of exceptional artistic quality, expanded audiences, and increased revenues.*

59
60 **Need for a New Strategic Plan**

61 This Strategic Plan (the Plan) builds on past successes and is designed to position the NHSO to
62 become a leading regional orchestra dedicated to increasing the impact and value of our music
63 for ever-expanding audiences. The primary purpose of the Plan is to enable the NHSO to
64 improve and expand services of artistically excellent programming in a financially sustainable
65 manner. The planning process has already strengthened the organization by demonstrating that
66 enduring success depends upon all of us working together with the communities we seek to
67 serve.

68
69 To realize our vision, the NHSO must:

- 70 ♪ Design and present a continuous successful artistic program of high quality concerts and
71 education programs, which include standard and innovative compositions, through a
72 combination of *major symphonic works* in New Haven with repeat performances in
73 regional venues; *chamber and smaller orchestra programs* repeated throughout the
74 region; and *pops, family and student concerts* also repeated through the region that will
75 attract large, diverse, and growing audiences.
- 76 ♪ Structure and offer opportunities for NHSO musicians and staff that will enhance
77 individual professional creative growth and satisfaction as an NHSO member and enable
78 continuous improvement in music performance and operational effectiveness of the
79 orchestra.
- 80 ♪ Provide engagement and communication networks throughout the region that effectively
81 develop and maintain well-informed connections with our communities, thereby
82 enhancing their loyalty to NHSO music.

83
84 **Plan Outline**

85 The Plan sets forth a road map for the NHSO developed through extensive participation of the
86 NHSO Board, staff, musicians, committees, audiences, and a consultant provided by the League
87 of American Orchestras; research conducted by the Strategic Planning Committee; and extensive
88 discussions with senior management. It identifies the NHSO's current and foreseeable future
89 needs and opportunities and, then, lays out the means and steps necessary to ensure that the
90 NHSO has the human and financial resources, dedication, and leadership to implement the Plan.

91
92 The Plan is based on an overarching vision and mission of the NHSO, which underpin its
93 strategic goals, principal enabling objectives, and key initiatives. In recognition that our needs
94 and solutions will change over time, the Plan provides the necessary flexibility for the
95 organization to adapt. As a living document, the Plan needs to be reviewed regularly and updated
96 as necessary. It provides a framework for continuous measured results, constant reassessment,
97 and timely adjustments.

98

99 The Plan is presented in eight sections:

100 ♪ Overview

101 ♪ Vision and Mission

102 ♪ Strategic Goals

103 ♪ Principal Enabling Objectives and Initiatives

104 ♪ Annual Review of Objectives and Initiatives

105 ♪ Key Performance Indicators

106 ♪ Time Frame, Monitoring, Resource Allocation, and Risk Management

107 ♪ Conclusion

108

VISION AND MISSION

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110 The enduring *Vision* of the NHSO is to celebrate our classical heritage, enriched with new

111 American compositions, through expanded opportunities for orchestral performance and music

112 education.

113

114 We carry out our Vision through:

- 115 1. Artistically excellent and diverse performances by orchestra members and guest artists to
 - 116 wider audiences centered in symphony and pops concerts and performances by chamber
 - 117 orchestras and ensembles
 - 118 2. Promotion of a wider appreciation of American music through commissions,
 - 119 performances, and educational programs in multiple venues that feature the rich diversity
 - 120 of cultural influences on American music
 - 121 3. Support of classical music education, especially through partnerships with school music
 - 122 programs, integrated curriculum development, and youth and community orchestras
 - 123 4. Performances that introduce to children and families our classical music heritage and the
 - 124 major forms of its presentation
 - 125 5. Social networks, recordings, broadcasts, and new media that celebrate the rich heritage
 - 126 and variety of classical music
- 127

128 Our *Mission* is to increase the impact and value of orchestral music for our audiences through

129 high quality, affordable performances and educational programming. Our musicians aspire to

130 inspire, delight, challenge, and unite larger and more diverse communities.

131

132

STRATEGIC GOALS

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134 As with other American symphony orchestras, the NHSO faces both challenges and

135 opportunities. To address these challenges and to achieve our Vision and Mission, this Plan

136 focuses on three strategic goals: (1) **increase our impact by programming the NHSO for**

137 **sustained success;** (2) **improve our organizational effectiveness;** and (3) **share our story**

138 **persuasively, consistently, and effectively with regional communities.** These goals will guide

139 the NHSO as it decides when and where to apply scarce monetary and human resources to better

140 serve our communities and meet commitments to our musicians, staff, funders, and volunteers.

141

142 ***GOAL 1: Increase our impact by programming the NHSO for sustained success***

- 143 ♪ Grow the NHSO’s value and audience by increasing the number of performances with
 - 144 various sized orchestras in more venues
- 145

146 ♪ Enhance our financially sound business operations by increasing performance and service
147 revenues, expanding the Symphony’s fundraising and marketing efforts, and
148 strengthening and building new strategic partnerships and other relationships across the
149 region

150 ♪ Investigate new options for individual musician career opportunities, thereby enabling
151 our musicians to increase their role as members of the NHSO and to enhance their
152 commitment to the expansion and growing impact of the NHSO

153

154 ***GOAL 2: Improve our organizational effectiveness***

155 ♪ Strive for higher artistic performance and educational capacity through a more flexible
156 and effective organization with improved business practices and infrastructure

157 ♪ Devote particular emphasis to the development of well-prepared, well-equipped, and
158 appropriately empowered personnel – musicians, staff, volunteers and board members –
159 committed to the NHSO’s mission and culture

160

161 ***GOAL 3: Share our story persuasively, consistently, and effectively with regional communities***

162 ♪ Build a unified and integrated communications and community engagement capability,
163 using both conventional and electronic media, to improve information flow within our
164 organization and to external audiences so we can reach the right person the first time,
165 enhance collaboration, connect with communities not yet served, and listen more closely
166 to what our audience is telling us, thereby earning audience loyalty and building brand
167 equity

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169

PRINCIPAL ENABLING OBJECTIVES (PEO) AND INITIATIVES (I)

170

171 In order to achieve these strategic goals, it is essential to prioritize our activities. Certain actions
172 are a necessary part of the planning process; others will guide changes in organizational
173 operations. The NHSO leadership has set six Principal Enabling Objectives (PEOs) as the
174 framework for the Initiatives (I) needed to reach the Goals of this Strategic Plan.

175

176 ***PEO 1: Program Planning and Regional Development for Sustained Success***

177 I.1. Enhance the NHSO’s organizational capability for multiyear program and regional
178 planning to enable better analysis, design, and development of alternative scenarios for
179 increasing the size of audiences and the scope of the NHSO artistic programs, including
180 options for composition selection, various orchestral sizes, types of performance, number of
181 soloists, target audiences, days and times for performances, and venues for repeat or unique
182 performances

183 I.2. Develop NHSO regional partnerships for expanding access to live performances through
184 repeats of NHSO symphony series, other concerts, and special projects with local
185 sponsorships. Search for examples of partnerships and relationships formed by orchestras
186 with local organizations serving regions in other parts of the nation that might inform our
187 partnership development.

188

189 I.3. Analyze the various options above by comparing estimated costs of rehearsals,
190 performances and operations and projected audiences and revenues by individual types of
191 performances and by season. The planning must provide for assessment of risks and
192 opportunities as well as periodic evaluation of results for mid-course corrections.

193

194

195 ***PEO 2: Better Integrate Orchestral Performances and Education Programs***

196 I.4. Increase projects that integrate orchestral performances and education programs with the
197 intention of increasing student interest in playing and appreciating orchestral music and
198 relating their familiar contemporary music forms to classical traditions

199 I.5. Increase cooperation with other music education providers to assist schools in
200 strengthening their programs and encouraging family and community interest in NHSO
201 music

202

203 ***PEO 3: Increase Financial Resources***

204 I.6. Increase earned income and contracted services from a variety of performances during
205 different times of the day and evening; increase Board giving, annual donations,
206 sponsorships, and corporate giving; diversify and increase foundation grants; and grow
207 endowed funds

208 I.7. Develop a special strategy for planned giving, including legacy commitments

209

210 ***PEO 4: Strive for Continuous Improvement***

211 I.8. Provide a creative and supportive artistic environment to attract and retain high
212 performing musicians and staff who are both committed to the vision and priorities of the
213 NHSO and well-prepared and capable of both independent and collaborative action on behalf
214 of the NHSO

215 I.9. Investigate employment structures that offer individual musicians the option to commit a
216 more substantial part of their time to NHSO education and coaching, thereby enhancing their
217 personal advancement and the expansion of NHSO programs

218 I.10. Develop key performance indicators (KPIs) to assess the overall backing and
219 endorsement for our services and our market presence in selected service areas

220

221 ***PEO 5: Better Connect the Orchestra with Audiences and Communities***

222 I.11. Assess current capacity for regional communications, including use of social media, and
223 evaluate audience relations and engagement to determine how to strengthen these capacities,
224 both externally and internally, to more effectively connect with both current audiences and
225 targeted new audiences in locales and diverse communities not currently served by the
226 NHSO

227 I.12. Design and implement a plan for regional communications, community engagement,
228 and more special benefits to our communities

229

230 ***PEO 6: Market for Expanded Service***

231 I.13. Identify our target audiences then assess current marketing efforts and revise the
232 marketing plan as appropriate to encompass regional extension of NHSO performance and
233 education services. The plan should focus on providing greater opportunity for community
234 access and event attendance, donor and sponsor support, and customer satisfaction through
235 various channels, such as the NHSO website, social networks, recordings, broadcasts, print,
236 and communication events.

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ANNUAL REVIEW OF PRINCIPAL ENABLING OBJECTIVES AND INITIATIVES

239
240 Each year NHSO committees, operational units, and staff will review progress on the Objectives
241 and Initiatives, and report on progress to the NHSO Board for approval. The Initiatives may be
242 adjusted after each annual review of the Work Plan to reflect progress toward long-term strategic
243 goals. As each milestone is achieved, new initiatives will be added based on a three-year rolling
244 Period of Focus (PoF).
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KEY PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

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249 The NHSO is committed to measuring our progress in achieving the Principal Enabling
250 Objectives and the Strategic Goals in a systematic, collaborative, and integrated manner to
251 ensure continuous assessment and improvement. To this end, we will employ three
252 complementary sets of processes:

- 253 ♪ Systematically poll current audiences and participants on their satisfaction with the
254 delivery of specific services and products and their recommendations for improvements
255 and additions
- 256 ♪ Poll prospective audiences and participants on their views of the Orchestra's offerings
257 and their inclination to attend and conduct other market research
- 258 ♪ Identify peer orchestras then, as appropriate, benchmark our outcomes by comparing
259 such metrics as audience growth, retention, and satisfaction; financial results, including
260 percentage of earned and unearned income; number of services; and size of endowment,
261 all in line with recognized best practices

262
263 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs) are the measurements used to audit, track and identify the
264 Plan's success. The measures that matter are those that reinforce the vision and mission of the
265 NHSO. They will help NHSO to identify the strengths it can build on, the weaknesses that we
266 must correct, and the opportunities that can be exploited. We will use KPIs to measure *the*
267 *overall backing and endorsement for our services* and our *market presence in selected service*
268 *areas*.

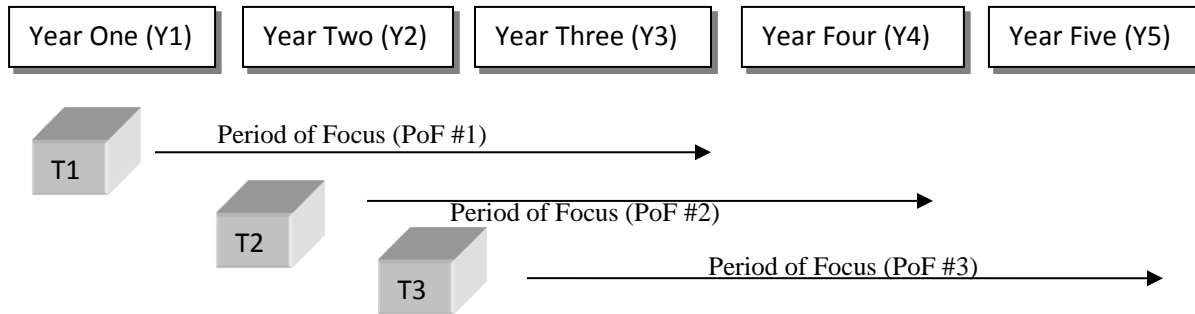
269 The key performance indicators (KPIs) may include but may not be limited to:

- 270 ♪ Annual attendance (paid and unpaid)
- 271 ♪ Added venues and extended performances
- 272 ♪ Donor contributions, grants, and sponsorships
- 273 ♪ Earned and net income (e.g., actual versus projected budget, series and concert earned
274 income, trust and endowments, contributed income, annual fund, special events, cash
275 position)
- 276 ♪ A ratio of paid NHSO concert attendees and the number of likely music buyers in
277 communities served
- 278 ♪ A ratio of students reached by our programming in a given school system and the number
279 of students in that system, with special emphasis on systems with limited or no formal
280 classical music offerings
- 281 ♪ Artistic peer review of the orchestra's performance
- 282 ♪ Audience reactions, including number of standing ovations and other feedback

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**TIME FRAME, MONITORING, RESOURCE ALLOCATION,
AND RISK MANAGEMENT**

286
287 This Plan (in conjunction with the Supplemental Organizational Work Plan contemplated
288 hereby) employs a three-year rolling Period of Focus (PoF) aimed at turning purpose into
289 performance, intention into results, and vision into reality. The diagram below illustrates the
290 three-year rolling time frame.



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303 The Plan encompasses a project-based approach to implementation and management through the
304 development of a portfolio of variable-termed actions as described earlier. These actions are
305 basically smaller-sized units of strategy planned at a more detailed level by key management
306 personnel and reviewed by the Strategic Planning Committee and Board over a shorter time
307 frame than that of the strategy itself (which is reviewed annually).

308
309 As noted earlier, measuring, auditing and tracking are keys to the Plan’s success. The NHSO
310 management and Board must regularly review and measure progress, which may necessitate plan
311 adjustments. Thus, it is recommended that the Executive Director deliver a brief strategic report
312 at every Board meeting, which should note any milestones reached or missed and address any
313 other matters of strategic significance. Indeed, it is highly recommended that strategy be
314 included as an item on the agenda for every Board meeting to reflect its importance to the
315 organization.

316
317 We will use traffic light summary dashboards that show the overall status of each Strategic Goal,
318 Principal Enabling Objective, and Key Initiative (red, amber, and green). In the event of amber
319 or red signals, the Executive Director and Music Director will investigate each shortfall and
320 together develop milestones, outcomes, and brief explanatory notes then will present progress
321 reports and any proposed changes to the Plan to the Board of Directors.

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323

324 **Responsibilities**

325 Within the Plan, key stakeholders are assigned the following responsibilities:

- 326 1. *Development of the Strategic Plan* – NHSO President, Executive Committee, and
327 Strategic Planning Committee in consultation with musicians, staff, and community
328 representatives
- 329 2. *Approval of the Strategic Plan* – NHSO President and Board of Directors
- 330 3. *Development of the Supplemental Organizational Work Plan*, including objectives,
331 measurements, and tactics, for achieving the organizational strategy – NHSO Executive
332 Director and Music Director in consultation with the Strategic Planning Committee
- 333 4. *Approval of the Supplemental Organizational Work Plan* – NHSO Executive
334 Committee, Executive Director, and Music Director
- 335 5. *Actual planning review* – NHSO Executive Director, Music Director, and General
336 Manager, with input from musicians and community representatives
- 337 6. *Review of strategic performance* – NHSO Board of Directors and Strategic Planning
338 Committee after consultation with the Executive Committee and community
339 representatives

340

341 **Providing Resources for Planning Process and Managing Risk**

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343 *Resources for Planning* The strategic planning process is vital to determining the courses of
344 action most likely to realize the NHSO’s Vision and Mission. The process must be an
345 integral and on-going part of the organization’s work. Resources must be budgeted and
346 secured to implement the Plan beginning in the first three-year cycle after its enactment. In
347 particular, the NHSO management and Board must specifically allocate Board member and
348 staff time and commit the necessary financial resources for the appropriate special studies,
349 alternative programmatic scenarios, analysis, implementation and evaluation, which will
350 likely require outsourced expert assistance. We recognize that such allocations are essential
351 investments in our future, just as for-profit corporations must make commitments to
352 planning, research and development.

353

354 *Managing Risk* It is critical for the NHSO to enhance its risk management procedures for
355 identifying and assessing vulnerability of critical assets to internal and external threats;
356 determining the likelihood and consequences of potential risks; and identifying ways to
357 reduce those risks and to prioritize risk reduction measures based on the Strategic Goals, the
358 Principal Enabling Objectives, and the Key Initiatives. In addition, the overall strategic
359 planning process must be permeated with close attention to analyzing potential “risks”
360 associated with alternative proposals for major changes in strategic direction. This overall
361 focus on risk analysis will help the NHSO select the best options among possible major paths
362 of action so the NHSO can seize the most attractive opportunities while mitigating any
363 unavoidable risk.

364

CONCLUSION

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367 The 2013-2018 Strategic Plan serves as a decision-making guide for individuals and teams and is
368 designed to promote creative and decisive thinking, planning and actions on issues large and
369 small. It explains the “how and why.” The next stage is to plan for implementation and
370 management of the strategy, which is the “when, where, and who.” This will be embodied in the
371 Supplemental Organizational Work Plan. Once fully implemented, the Plan will set direction and
372 priorities, help get everyone on the same page, simplify decision-making, drive alignment, and
373 communicate the NHSO message.

374

375 The NHSO has made great strides since it developed its last strategic plan in 2010. Building on
376 this sound foundation, NHSO is poised to become a preeminent regional symphony orchestra
377 that combines exceptional artistic quality and range with sustainable financial security.
378 Achieving the goals set forth in this Plan will enable the NHSO to better serve and help unite the
379 diverse communities in which it performs and provides educational services. Increased agility
380 and flexibility, coupled with creative and rigorous strategic thinking and ongoing assessment
381 against stated objectives, will turn purpose into performance, intention into results, and vision
382 into reality.