



The Stamford Symphony aspires to build a lifelong appreciation of classical music among all populations of Stamford and its neighboring communities in southwestern Connecticut. It fulfills this mission through passionate, professional performances of the highest caliber, diverse and innovative programming, and inspiring education initiatives. *The New York Times* has called the Stamford Symphony "a major cultural force."

Founded in 1919, the SSO achieved full professional status in the 1970's under the leadership of the legendary Skitch Henderson. From 1980 forward, Roger Nierenberg spent the next 24 years recruiting the New York metropolitan area's top players, crafting an ensemble of unparalleled caliber and remarkable versatility. In October 2005, Maestro Eckart Preu ascended our podium. Maestro Preu is an unpretentious, young and vibrant conductor bringing a fresh approach to classical music. His innovative programming is attracting new audiences and his style has been described as *Serious Fun*.

Fairfield County's only orchestra comprised of full-time, professional musicians, the Symphony's players also perform with the orchestras of the Metropolitan Opera, New York City Ballet, and New York City Opera, the American Symphony Orchestra, the New York Pops, the Orchestra of St. Luke's, the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra, and the Philadelphia Orchestra. The Symphony reaches an annual audience of 20,000 at ten classical concerts, one free pops concert, three *Mozart and Friends* recitals, one *Stern Showcase Recital*, three *Exploring the Orchestra* family mini-concerts, and numerous community enrichment activities. Maestro Eckart Preu's pre-concert lectures, presentations in the community, and his arts column in the *Stamford Advocate* newspaper provide ongoing adult education.

The Stamford Symphony collaborates in music-enrichment activities with organizations such as the Stamford Museum and Nature Center, the Waterside (charter) School and the Boys and Girls Club. Working as a community partner, the Symphony helped raise funds for area not-for-profit organizations such as AmeriCares, Center of Hope, SoundWaters, St. Luke's LifeWorks, Stamford Hospital, and Stamford Shelter for the Homeless.

Education is an integral part of the Stamford Symphony's mission. The orchestra provides outreach programs to area schools at all grade levels, and its arts education program has brought the Stamford Symphony's musicians into classrooms in Stamford's elementary schools. Each year the Symphony invites fourth- and fifth-grade students from Stamford's Public Schools to a free student concert. All season long, children are eligible for free tickets when they attend Sunday concerts with an adult. The orchestra's Scholarship and Commendation awards recognize accomplished young performers and help them pursue their study of music. An extensive free ticket distribution program through community service agencies serves the elderly, disabled, and at-risk youth.