

Where Arts Intersects with Technology

It's hard to find optimism much less joy while living through a pandemic. I can think of a few silver linings and that's through performance art. In particular, orchestral music and the ability to reach shut-ins, the sick, and those with limited means. Though the impact of COVID was felt in the performance industry it certainly did not spare others. The **Stamford Symphony** was no exception. It did, however, present opportunity to open the door to new and existing audiences through technology – video-streaming services. The costs are nominal and that's very appealing to nonprofits.

The Stamford Symphony [insert website URL: www.stamfordsymphony.org] has not been spared the challenges of cancelling an entire performance season in response to the pandemic. But it is a testament to its staying power of 65 years and its ability to pivot. In May 2020, the organization responded with the creation of its video streaming platform, **The Symphony Channel**. Music Director, Michael Stern announced the launch of the Channel in a short video entitled, "[In 2020, the Music Has Not Stopped.](#)" The video demonstrates the pivot in programming made as part of this launch.

"We needed to move quickly in response to COVID and with so much fantastic archival video footage, the Stamford Symphony Channel really became our central focus for 20+ months." – Russell Jones, President and CEO.

[The Stamford Symphony Channel](#) has become the Symphony's primary communication platform with the community. Whether an online Gala fundraiser or live simulcast and pre-recorded performances, it enabled the Symphony and its professional musicians the opportunity to perform as we all struggled to adjust to lost opportunities and economic uncertainty. Another positive side affect of the Channel was the ability to repurpose past performances to share with community groups here in Fairfield County.

One such example of repurposing was the Symphony's presentation of "An Evening of Klezmer," an online performance (December 11, 2021). The Stamford Symphony partnered with Shoke Jewish Family Service and their [Anachnu program](#), which supports Holocaust Survivors and other seniors throughout Fairfield County, to share a rebroadcast of the Klezmer event. The Anachnu participants range in age from 76–101 and are primarily Russian speakers. Stamford Symphony's musician, [Pavel Vinnitsky](#) (clarinetist) provided a live introduction to the group in both English and Russian. Using the power of language and music, a magical experience emerged, connecting these seniors to a world beyond their living rooms.

“I don't have enough words to express our gratitude for the wonderful program yesterday! These people, who don't have much joy in their lives, were able to enjoy the great performance and were so happy to be a part of this event! Our survivors are so grateful for this great pleasure! The live introduction made this program even more meaningful!” -- Marina Sapir, Anachnu Program Director, Schoke Jewish Family Service.

More About “An Evening of Klezmer”

The musical selection included Anna Vinnitsky, Paul Schoenfield and Sergei Prokofiev. Stamford Symphony's Music Director, **Michael Stern** hosted a conversation with Grammy-award winning jazz musician, **Branford Marsalis**. Other featured performances by Grammy-award winning **The Klezmatics** and **Lamroth Hakol**, a Klezmer group from Buenos Aires, Argentina. Zalmen Mlotek, Artistic Director of the National Yiddish Theatre Folksbiene, was a featured speaker and presented excerpts from ***Fiddler on the Roof*** in Yiddish.

The FREE rebroadcast is available [here](#).

We thank our partners, the Jewish Historical Society of Fairfield County, UJA-JCC Greenwich, and United Jewish Federation of Stamford, New Canaan, and Darien with the performance underwritten by Caryn and Tomas Haendler. The Stamford Symphony values its community partners in its continued mission to reach larger audiences.