

# Choate Hosts Wallingford Symphony Orchestra's 50 Year Anniversary Celebration Concert

On Saturday, April 26, Choate Rosemary Hall hosts the WSO's 50th Anniversary celebration concert in Ann & George Colony Hall. The public is invited to the celebratory music of Golden Sounds—A Magical Night. A pre-concert reception includes music, drinks, and hors d'oeuvres at 5 p.m., followed by the concert. Limited tickets are available.

Featured Guest Artists include Hayes Greenfield '75, Tenor Saxophone, Kariné Poghosyan, Piano, WSO Vocalist Susan Yankee, and Wallingford's Young "Rising Star" Miguel Angel Vasquez. The program features Copland's "Fanfare for the Common Man," Gershwin's "Rhapsody in Blue" with Kariné Poghosyan, and jazz classics by Hayes Greenfield.

Head of School Alex Curtis said, "Since 1974, it has been Choate's great honor to host the Wallingford Symphony Orchestra in residence. As the WSO celebrates its 50th anniversary, we are especially grateful to the visionaries, led by our dear friend and longtime faculty member Phil Ventre, who founded the orchestra, and to the extraordinary musicians who have carried its mission forward across the decades. Their dedication has created a vibrant and enduring way for our community to experience and celebrate the arts. We are thrilled to continue that tradition by hosting this special anniversary concert."



Regarding Choate's unwavering support over the past 50 years, WSO President Colleen Galushko and the WSO Board expressed gratitude "for the generous use of the Paul Mellon Arts Center, and now Ann & George Colony Hall, bringing the magic of music to life for our community. The School's commitment to the arts and its partnership with the orchestra have been invaluable."

Last fall, Wallingford Mayor Vincent Cervoni and his band Peaches & Diesel played a memorial concert with the WSO. The Mayor said he was honored to be included, "giving our little band a chance to perform with and alongside

renowned musicians. The WSO has created five decades of world-class professional performances for our community, making them a very accessible and affordable experience."

Philip T. Ventre, Founder & Music Director of the Wallingford Symphony Orchestra, started the orchestra in 1974 with the late Terence Netter in collaboration with the Wallingford Bicentennial Commission, to enrich the cultural lives of nearby residents through music. After the WSO's first year, Choate Rosemary Hall took over the funding until it was incorporated in 1978 as a professional symphony orchestra. Ventre retired in 2020 as the Head of Instrumental Music at Choate Rosemary but continues as conductor of the WSO.

The orchestra's years have been marked by many other remarkable moments, including

One evening, jazz great Dave Brubeck brought his quartet to the PMAC stage to play with the WSO while his son Matt played violoncello in the orchestra.

Outstanding singers such as Maria Spacagna, Jerry Hadley, Harry Dworchak, and Benita Valente have joined WSO performances.

Prominent ballet dancers from the Kirov and Bolshoi Ballets have performed with WSO.

The WSO continues its purpose of enriching the cultural lives of nearby residents each year with four classical concerts held on the Choate campus.