



<http://www.binghamtoncommunityorchestra.org>

*Binghamton Community Orchestra
P.O. Box 1901
Binghamton, NY 13902*

Mission

To empower music lovers to fuel their passion through quality orchestral experiences

Vision

- Enhancing the community through the presentation of live, high-quality, orchestral performances
- Providing an organization for dedicated community musicians to individually and collectively explore and perform great orchestral works

A History of the BCO – A Personal Remembrance

For many years, amateur musicians enjoyed performing with the Binghamton Symphony and Choral Society founded in 1955 by the late Dr. Fritz Wallenberg. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, the Binghamton Symphony was evolving from a “community” orchestra into a fully professional organization. Several players from the Binghamton symphony, including me, left. We left for a variety of reasons including avoiding unionization, increasing performance pressures, and the turning of music making into a business which was unacceptable to many of us, as well as other personal reasons. Those players as well as other musicians around the region felt disenfranchised. Among those “musicians without a country” as I liked to think of ourselves was a man named Dr. John Hagopian. The mere mention of his name probably brings smiles to many faces for John was certainly a vivid character whom you either loved or hated and certainly remembered. He was of Armenian descent and embodied most of the Armenian stereotypes that first come to mind. Primarily, he was passionate and obstinate. John would call me on the phone, rarely identifying himself before the tirade began about the unacceptability of having nowhere for us to play. I wasn't alone. John shared his complaint and dream with anyone who would listen. John coined the phrase “a great longing and a heartfelt need.”

During the winter of 1983, John, Tony DiOrio, Bernie Shifrin, Tom Kowlaski from SUNY and I sat down and started to map out a strategy for starting an orchestra. We put together a mailing list and summoned all interested people to a meeting in the classroom building at SUNY. We created a survey, primarily to determine what night potential players were available, their interest in musical styles, and other information possibly useful in creating an orchestra structure.

The first order of business was to set a rehearsal night. As I recall, we were about split down the middle regarding our availability on Wednesdays and Thursdays. Through some process lost in the dim, dark past, Thursday night was selected as a rehearsal night. Bernie was instrumental in procuring the use of Binghamton High School as a rehearsal venue and rehearsals were scheduled to begin in the fall of 1984. The orchestra was actually operated as a night school class through Binghamton High School District and tuition was paid by members. The instructor's salary was then returned to our conductor as a portion of his salary. Speaking of conductors, a young man named Asher Raboy (brother to Nathan Raboy who is currently well known to the local musical community and now a member of the BCO Board of Directors) was selected as the first music director and conductor.

While there were several of us involved, I still fondly think of John as “Father of the BCO.” Cecily O’Neil (then Cecily Kinsley) and Lori Cyr were on the Board of Directors from the first moments of birth and with Lori’s organizational and decision-making skills, boundless energy and “Sergeants” training took the newly hatched baby and ensured it a future. Lori and Cecily almost single handedly managed the group and did about 99% of what was needed to stage our concerts, do fund raising, and the incredible number of other behind the scenes jobs.

Rehearsals began with John Hagopian reserving “last stand, second violin” for himself. After John’s untimely death, as I recall we symbolically left an empty chair in that spot in his memory.

The orchestra performed its first concert on November 18, 1984. The program included the First Serenade of Brahms and the Gershwin Piano Concerto in F with Cynthia Petersen as soloist. I can still hear Asher muttering under his breath as he walked off stage about that being the very last time he'd ever perform Brahms without more violas! The concert had moments of brilliance, Chris Lewis King's trumpet solo in the slow movement of the Gershwin being among them. The piano soloist was stunning (I guess Asher really called in some favors). Coupled with that were the disasters, including my own screw up in the Brahms that prompted Asher to restart one movement.

And, as is so often said: "the rest is history." Fitzroy Stewart replaced Asher Raboy as music director for the 1987 -1988 season and led the group through several successful seasons. In fall 1994, Dr. Timothy Perry assumed the podium and for the next ten years stretched the group by greatly expanding its repertoire and performance abilities.

Tim was succeeded in by an amazing young woman name Cayenna Ponchione in the fall of 2005 to start our 21st season. Cayenna continued to stretch the group by commissioning new compositions and bringing unusual soloists to perform with the BCO.

After Cayenna left at the end of 2010, the BCO experienced a season of guest conductors while we searched for a new Music Director. The search committee initially considered over forty candidates for the position from as far away as Korea and Germany. Through the tireless work of the search committee under Carol and Jeff Barker, three "finalists" were selected and auditioned by the orchestra membership. After the auditions, Dr. Jeffery Jacobsen was offered the position and he graciously accepted the baton.

2013 found us again in transition as Dr. Jacobsen resigned from the orchestra at the end of our 2012 season. With the departure of Jeff, we invited guest conductors to lead each of our concerts this season. Barry Peters graciously offered to conduct the fall concert, Timothy Perry came back to conduct the winter concert, and Brian DeMaris conducted our spring concert.

Subsequently, Dr. Tim Perry was hired and has again proved to be an outstanding Music Director. During his "second term", Tim has significantly improved the orchestra. The number of musicians has grown and the performance level of the orchestra has improved markedly. Our concert audiences have likewise grown during this time.

As planned, Tim retired after the spring concert of the 2018-2019 season. As part of a search for a new Music Director, the Board invited two candidates to lead audition concerts during the 2019-2020 season. The fall and winter concerts were performed as scheduled with each of the two candidates conducting one concert. Because of the COVID-19 pandemic, the 2020 spring concert was cancelled.

The Board of Directors selected Evan Meccarello as our new Music Director. The Board has been working hard with Maestro Meccarello to plan a 2020-2021 season with several contingency options that meet CDC, other federal, and NY State regulations.

As of July 2020, we are confident that the BCO will return to the concert stage as soon as it is safe for the orchestra members and our loyal audience.

In 2020, the orchestra's 35th anniversary season, the musicians on stage include members who have played from the early years of the orchestra. The group includes even a few founding members. As we enter our 36th season, whenever it is safe to do so, the number of musicians who have been playing since the earliest days of the BCO truly vindicates John Hagopian's passion in pushing so hard for our founding and supports the "heartfelt need" portion of our marching orders now almost 36 years ago.

David L. Banner
Revised 2020-02-07

Binghamton Community Orchestra Board of Directors

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BCO FALL SCHEDULE 2021

All participants will be vaccinated.

Nate Raboy will be verifying vaccination status. (nraboy@stny.rr.com)

Program of String Orchestra, Woodwind, and Brass Ensemble, for safety. *The Horn section plays in both Woodwind and Brass ensembles.

Inside = masks and distancing to CDC guidelines, with playing masks and bell covers for winds.

For first two rehearsals, Sept 16 and Sept 23:

6:30pm Woodwinds Outside at Highland Park Shelter

7:15pm Brass Outside at Highland Park Shelter

8pm-9pm Strings Inside at ME High School

Starting Sept 30 and continuing for the remainder of the fall cycle:

6:30pm Strings - 7:30PM Brass / 8:15PM Woodwinds

Separate groups, all **inside** (Wind players use masks and bell covers)

Sept 30

Oct 7

Oct 14

Oct 21

Tuesday, October 26

Oct 28

Nov 4 **7-9:30pm**

Dress Rehearsal: Friday Nov. 5, **7-9:30PM** - **Rehearsal Order: Strings, Woodwinds, Brass**

Start times TBD

Concert: Saturday, Nov 6 **7pm**

Pre-Concert Talk: 6:15pm

Concert Order: Strings, Woodwinds, Brass

Fall Cycle Repertoire

Brass

Hovhaness - Requiem and Resurrection

Casals/Stokowski - O Vos Omnes

Woodwinds

Strauss - Serenade Op. 7

Jacob - Old Wine in New Bottles

Strings

Hovhaness - Psalm and Fugue

Ken Benshoof - Sweeter Than Wine - I. Souvenir

Florence Price - Adoration

Tchaikovsky - Serenade - III. Elegy and IV. Tema russo

Wallenberg Festival Partnership – January 29, 2022

The Binghamton Community Orchestra is delighted to partner with the Binghamton Philharmonic and the Binghamton Youth Symphony for this event honoring the history of orchestral music in our region.

Our orchestra's history is deeply tied to the Wallenberg legacy. Soon after the formation of the fully professional Philharmonic, former members of Wallenberg's original "Binghamton Symphony" created the Community Orchestra. This gave passionate and dedicated musicians the opportunity to meet on a weekly basis and perform great music.

Concert 2 - Schedule

November 11

December 2

December 9

January 6

January 13

January 20

January 27 (at the Forum - dress for Wallenberg Festival 7-9:00 PM)

January 29 (Wallenberg Festival performance at the Forum)

February 3

February 17

February 22 (Tuesday Dress rehearsal 7-9:30 PM)

February 24 (Dress rehearsal 7-9:30 PM)

February 25 (snow date in case of rehearsal cancellation)

Performance, Saturday, February 26, 2022, 7:00 PM (pre - concert talk at 6:15)

Concert 3 - Schedule

March 10

March 17

March 24

March 31

April 7

April 21

April 26 (snow date in case of rehearsal cancellation)

April 28

May 5

May 10 (Tuesday 7-9:30 PM)

May 12 (Dress rehearsal 7-9:30 PM)

Performance, Saturday, May 14 2022,
7:00 PM, (pre - concert talk at 6:15)

Binghamton Community Orchestra Audition Policy

Membership in the orchestra can be gained in two different ways. Players can be appointed or can audition for entrance to the orchestra.

New members can be appointed to the orchestra. A candidate whose credentials, reputation, or experience leaves no doubt that he/she would be an asset to the orchestra may be appointed to the orchestra. This candidate need not audition. The appointment is made by the conductor. The conductor can seek input from the orchestra members as they see fit.

The second method of attaining membership is through audition. The audition shall consist of the applicant sitting in their respective section of the orchestra for two rehearsals. At the end of the second rehearsal, members of the orchestra who are familiar with the abilities of the applicant are welcome to comment on their fitness for membership. The final determination is made by the conductor. The conductor may use the input provided by the orchestra members to make their final decision.

Participation in the orchestra is limited to people who are at least 19 years of age and are no longer in high school.

Binghamton Community Orchestra Attendance Policy

As a member of the orchestra, your attendance at rehearsals is vital to the success of the orchestra's performances. As a member, it is your responsibility to make every effort to be at all rehearsals. The members of the orchestra have a right to expect that from each other.

In the event that you are unable to attend a rehearsal due to illness or unavoidable conflict, it is your responsibility to notify the personnel manager, Steve Hine by email Hine62@hotmail.com or text (607) 760-5132 at least 24 hours in advance of the rehearsal. In addition, you need to see that your music is at the rehearsal in case it is needed for some reason.

Orchestra members who miss rehearsals should not go beyond three absences per normal rehearsal cycle, which are generally ten rehearsals. Anyone missing more than three rehearsals needs to discuss the situation with the conductor, getting his permission to go beyond the allotted three absences. In the event that there are less than ten rehearsals for a concert, no more than 25% of the rehearsals may be missed.

The director, at his or her discretion, may re-seat any member who misses more than 3 rehearsals on a given program in order to maintain the integrity of the ensemble.

At any time, an orchestra member who feels that they cannot attend the required number of rehearsals per concert has the option of excusing them self from the upcoming concert, after discussion with the director.

Concert Dress Policy

Women: All black, shoulders covered, slacks or floor length skirt

Men: Black coat, black pants, white shirt, black bow tie, black shoes

Inclement Weather Plan

If Maine-Endwell Schools are closed, rehearsal will be cancelled or moved to an alternate location. BCO members will be notified via e-mail. There will also be announcements on the local radio and television stations.

Set-up and Tear Down of Rehearsals and Concerts

The BCO is responsible for maintaining the rehearsal and concert space facilities. Members are asked to come early and/or stay late to help set-up and tear down. Peter Roseboom is in charge of taking care of this task. If interested in assisting in set-up and/or tear down, he can be contacted at towerofbabel32@hotmail.com.

Volunteering with the Binghamton Community Orchestra

The BCO is a volunteer organization. All daily operations for this organization are run by members who volunteer their time to complete tasks such as advertising, fundraising, booking concert and rehearsal facilities, maintaining the website, publicity, concert ushers, box office ticket sales, program advertising sales, etc. Orchestra members, along with their family members, are encouraged to help the organization. To discuss opportunities to help the BCO, please contact any BCO board member or email us at info@BinghamtonCommunityOrchestra.org.

Fundraising

Advertising revenue is a significant part of our budget. In the fall we ask members to obtain ads for our program. Ads will be due at the end of October each year. We appreciate any offer to obtain ads.

Binghamton Community Orchestra Contact Information

**To help keep our records accurate, please return this information sheet at the end of rehearsal.
Thank you!*

Name _____

Address _____

City _____ **State** _____ **Zip Code** _____

Home Phone Number _____

Cell Phone Number _____

E-mail _____

Instrument _____

(please indicate if you are 1st or 2nd violin if applicable)