



**STRATEGIC PLAN**  
**2012 - 2015**

**Approved**  
**March 14, 2012**

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## Introduction

Founded in May 1938 under the direction of Maestro Mario DiCecco, the Waterbury Symphony Orchestra (WSO) has spent the past several decades promoting the understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of symphonic and orchestral music. The WSO is now led by Leif Bjaland, Musical Director and Conductor since 1994. The Symphony draws over 200 talented musicians from across New England to perform in its concert series at the Naugatuck Valley Community College Fine Arts Center and the Palace Theatre, both located in Waterbury.

From December 2011 – January 2012, the staff and Board of Directors of the Waterbury Symphony Orchestra conducted a process to create a strategic plan for the organization. The purpose of the plan is to guide the priorities and activities of the organization and the Board of Directors in the next three years. Anne Yurasek, a Principal of Fio Partners, LLC, provided consulting support including the facilitation of key meetings and focus groups, analyzing the information base, and drafting the final plan. The Board of Directors also responded to a Board survey, provided guidance and oversight to the process, and participated in making key strategic decisions.

Board members and staff engaged in the process included:

### Staff

Steve Collins, Executive Director  
Leif Bjaland, Music Director and Conductor  
Kathryn Dennen, Marketing Director

### Board of Directors

Kristen Jacoby, President	Mike Guay
Malcolm Forbes, 1st Vice President	Lori Hart
William Miller, Treasurer	Kris Jacobi
Estelle Mackenzie, Recording Secretary	Lori McGovern
Maureen Donnarumma, Corresponding Secretary	Alexander Palesty, MD
Marie Baskerville	David Sfara, Esq.
Antony Casagrande, Esq.	Phillip Sterling
Isabelle Curtiss	Christopher Szpryngel
Benedict Ebner	Maura Tobin
James Flint	Barbara White
Carol Gilbert	Alyce Cognetta Bertz, Concertmaster, Ex-Officio
Nancy Grasing	
Lori Greene	

## Process and Summary of Information Base

The creation of a shared base of information from which to make key strategic decisions was the main output of the process.

- The Executive Director and Board Chair participated in the completion of an internal capacity assessment of the organization, using Fio Partners Strategic Growth Guide. The assessment identified key areas of capacity that were not fully developed as well as validated the organizational activities currently being undertaken by the organization.
- The Board of Directors revised the mission of the organization, created a new vision for the organization and a set of organizational values.
- Anne Yurasek conducted a series of ten interviews with key external stakeholders.
- Surveys of the musicians, staff and Board of Directors were distributed and analyzed by Anne Yurasek.
- The Executive Director was also engaged in analyzing the current programs and developing program goals.

The information gathered and key learnings from each effort are outlined below:

### Internal Assessment/Information

#### Internal Capacity Assessment

Based upon the results of the internal capacity assessment, Waterbury Symphony Orchestra functions at the following levels. *(Visually depicted below.)*

#### Fully Established

Financial Management

#### Growth

Programmatic Strategy

Systems Participation

Physical Plant

Quality Assurance

Information Management

#### Between Start Up and Growth

Marketing and Public Relations

Fund Development

Human Resources

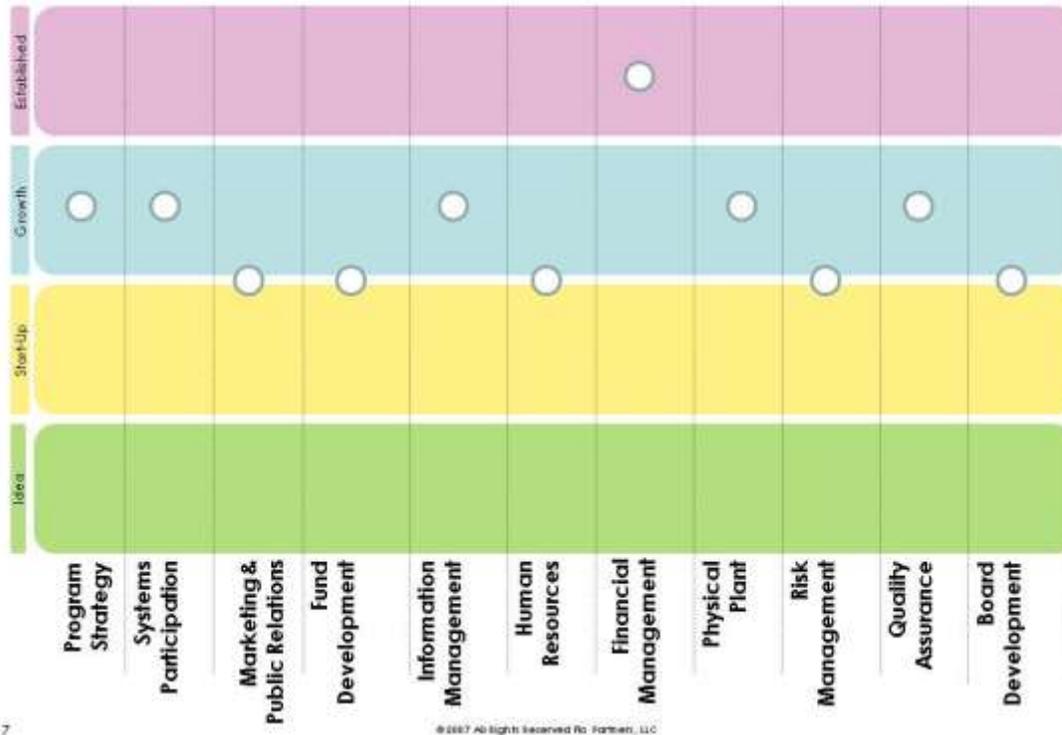
Risk Management

Board Development

#### Start Up

None

## Functional Mapping



### Observations on Key Task Level Results

Looking first at the results overall, the Waterbury Symphony Orchestra appears to be entering the growth stage relative to its investment in management infrastructure, with some areas in the Growth stage and quite a few straddling Start up and Growth. Decisions to improve capacity in specific areas of management infrastructure will be driven by the selection of the Waterbury Symphony Orchestra's programmatic strategy.

The information from the assessment was used to identify specific strategies to strengthen the internal capacity of the organization. Progress can be assessed by re-administrating the indicators at the conclusion of the plan.

### Internal/External Perspectives

To garner additional feedback, Anne Yurasek of Fio Partners conducted a series of 10 interviews with the individuals noted below:

- David Sfara, Carmody and Torrance, LLP & WSO Past President
- Leif Bjaland, WSO
- Ruth Ann Leever, Leever Foundation
- Jane Sendzimir, Donor
- Olav van Hezewijk, Musician
- Carol O'Donnell, CT Community Foundation

- Tom Leever, Leever Foundation
- Neal O'Leary, Waterbury Mayor
- Frank Tavera, Palace Theater, Executive Director
- Kristen Jacoby, United Way of Greater Waterbury & WSO Board President

An online survey was also distributed to the Board of Directors as well as the staff of the organization and the musicians in the orchestra.

In discussion, the Board noted the following themes in the information gathered:

- A perceived sense of ambition and accomplishment in the progress the WSO has made thus far in its history
- Inherent connection and perceived potential conflict between performance and community education efforts
- Education efforts must be more clearly defined both internally and with external stakeholders
- Encouragement to continue to increase professionalism and quality of performance experience as well as focus on differentiating the orchestra
- Concern about audience development and encouragement to continue to expand geographically
- Continue to ensure that the orchestra has financial stability
- Musicians expressed interest in staying more connected to the orchestra, while expressing concerns about the orchestra's ability to pay a competitive wage

Broadly, the information gathered depicts an organization in transition - a volunteer-led organization that has evolved quickly in recent years towards a professional staff with an evolved Board of Directors. It is clear that the dedication of these volunteers, in combination with strong staff and artistic leadership, have brought the orchestra to where it is today. Artistically, there has also been an evolution with external stakeholders noting the improvement of the orchestra's performances and the improved professional presence of the orchestra. The artistic choices were also noted as a strength of the organization. There is also a tremendous amount of respect for the organization and its successes as well as a significant number of strategic opportunities the organization could pursue.

Critical issues that are addressed in the plan are:

- Balance between performance and education efforts
- Artistic vision of the orchestra
- Financial stability of the orchestra
- Role of the orchestra in the community – within Waterbury and beyond
- Audience development
- Continued evolution of the Board and the organization

## Our Mission

To improve the quality of life for the people of Northwest Connecticut through high quality orchestral performances and experiential music education programs.

## Our Vision

- All people who attend a performance of the orchestra or participate in one of our educational programs will be positively and emotionally impacted by their experience.
- The community feels engaged in the work of the organization and the organization is viewed as improving the quality of people's lives.
- We will be known for being innovative in the presentation of our performances and artistically brilliant.
- We will help break down the perceived barriers between Waterbury and surrounding communities by acting as a convener to bring communities together.
- We will expand the number of orchestral performances and expand our educational programming.
- We will offer our performances and educational programs in a number of communities in Northwest Connecticut.
- We will be financially sustainable and thriving, with sufficient resources to ensure the orchestra's future.
- We will have a committed group of professional musicians who view the Waterbury Symphony Orchestra as their "orchestra of choice".
- Our professional staff will grow to accommodate the growth of the organization's programs and relationship building efforts.

## Our Values

- *Accessibility:* We believe all people have the right to experience live music and we will work to remove barriers that may prevent access to music in the communities we serve.
- *Individual Experience:* We believe in the uniqueness of each individual's experience when listening to music and participating in the creation of music.
- *Live Performance:* We believe in the preservation and promotion of live performance as well as protecting and cultivating the process of creation.
- *Integrity:* We hold ourselves to the highest standards of both artistic expression and organizational management.
- *Orchestral Music:* We believe in promoting and preserving orchestral music both in its traditional form and contemporary interpretations.
- *Respect:* We believe in music as a tool to develop respect for others and others' contributions to the collective experience of performance.

## **Goal #1: To continue growth and improvement of orchestral performances, while strengthening and expanding educational programming**

### ***Key strategies:***

- Create an artistic vision document to guide the organization’s artistic activities (Staff)
  - Possible elements
    - Focus on innovation and differentiation
    - Focus on visual consistency
    - Shorter, interactive performances
    - Professional both in high quality of music and presentation
    - Considered best in class - known for new and unique concert experiences
    - Maintain musical quality and invest funds accordingly
    - Ensure that the philosophy underlying artistic vision links to educational activities as well
  - Develop “talking points” of the artistic vision for Board members which should also be incorporated into marketing efforts
- Continue subscription concert series model with additional geographic expansion into suburban locations (*see Program Goals*) (Staff)
- Initiate Bravo! Waterbury program and explore additional opportunities for educational programming, including after-school programs (*see Program Goals*) (Staff)

### ***Program Goals***

By the conclusion of the 2014-15 season the WSO will.....

- Perform 6 subscription concert series\* with 5 runouts\*\* in suburban locations
  - Average attendance over 90%
  - Subscriptions will grow by 20% in Northwest CT Towns
  - Single ticket sales will grow by 100% in Northwest CT Towns
- Education programming will grow to include
  - Bravo Waterbury in one Waterbury community, 75+ students
  - Young People’s Concerts, school residencies and after school programs will grow in enrollment by 20% and include 3 suburban locations/principal partners
  - One education staff member, separate from Bravo Waterbury
- Total performance revenue will consistently grow to \$150,000 (Including contract concerts) and education support will grow to \$165,000.
- Educational programming will be a driver of an increase in subscriptions to orchestral performances. Together, they will create a sustainable foundation of financial support for the orchestra.

*\*= This would be achieved by adding one classical concert, most likely Handel’s Messiah as an annual event. \*\*=Runouts are defined as repeat performances in additional venues and/or geographic areas. There would be one additional runout added in 2014 and 2015 seasons.*

## **Goal #2: Define and implement a strategy for Waterbury Symphony Orchestra to engage supportive groups of constituents and garner broad financial support**

### ***Key strategies:***

#### **Systems Participation**

- Develop a relational map for the organization to identify and prioritize key stakeholders/stakeholder groups and assign responsibility for relationship maintenance and cultivation (Staff/Board)
  - Develop a tool to track relationship contacts and messaging
  - Ensure that all relationships are meaningful, supportive of mission, and appropriately supported with collateral materials
  - Review relational map quarterly and adjust accordingly
- Maintain, strengthen, and develop collaborative relationships with other arts and nonprofit organizations, including after-school programs (Staff/Board)
- Initiate and cultivate relationships to improve referrals to educational programming (Staff)
  - Track referral efforts and adjust accordingly
- Strengthen relationships with community and municipal leaders including mayors, Board of Education officials, Economic Development Czars, etc. (Staff/Board)
- Monitor and cultivate relationships with key funders and other grant providers (Staff)
- Develop relationships and maximize state-driven funding opportunities for arts/culture/tourism. (Staff/Board)
- Support art advocacy efforts in Waterbury and state-wide (Staff/Board)

#### **Fund Development**

- Develop financial projections that outline all programmatic and operational expenses, and the resources required from different sources to achieve the vision over the next three years (Staff/Board)
- Establish a development plan with specific goals (based on financial projections) for each selected strategy with a focus on relationship creation and cultivation (Staff/Board)
  - Develop and launch a planned giving program
  - Cultivate major gifts
  - Grow Annual Fund
  - Grow the endowment
  - Design and conduct intimate events (recitals) with supporters
  - Create a Signature Event
  - Foundations/Grants
  - Create a plan to move subscribers to givers and track progress
  - Cultivate local talent within orchestra to build relationships
- Recruit at least 3 Board members who are established members of the giving community (Staff/Board)

- Build understanding of fund development among management and Board of Directors (Staff/Board)

## Marketing and Public Relations

- Develop an organization wide marketing plan (Staff)
  - Segment markets and target communication messages and strategies to segments; adjust accordingly
  - Develop marketing materials to support fundraising - both individual and corporate
  - Use performances to communicate strategic vision and educational efforts of WSO
- Collaborate with other nonprofit organizations for marketing support (Staff)
- Develop a group sales program for targeted special interest groups (Retirement Communities, Bar Association, Professional Associations) (Staff)

## Goal #3: Strengthen Waterbury Symphony Orchestra's infrastructure to support internal operations and future programming

### *Key Strategies:*

### Information Management

- Develop information management plan that is organization wide (Staff)
  - Supports ability to manage, implement and report about programs
  - Supports targeted communications
  - Supports donor development
- Ensure data collection efforts meet funder requirements and are timely enough to improve program practice (Staff)
- Invest in system to capture program data (specifically educational programming) (Staff)
- Conduct audience surveys and present key results in organization-wide dashboard (Staff)
- Ensure that capital budget includes investments in IM infrastructure routinely to maintain currency (Board)

### Human Resources

- Develop a policy to guide the timing and activities involved in reviewing the organization's personnel policies (Staff/Board)
- Develop annual performance appraisal process for staff and contractors (as applicable) (Staff/Board)
- Develop an approach for determining compensation including salary, benefits in order to remain competitive (Staff/Board)
- Develop and conduct periodic analysis of the musician's pay rate including a comparison to other markets and/or competitors (Staff)
- Conduct training on maintenance and management of personnel files (Staff)

- Monitor organizational climate through the use of an online survey on an annual/biannual basis; in non-survey years, consider using focus groups of musicians to monitor the organizational climate (Staff)

## Financial Management

- Develop key results areas for financial health (Staff/Board)
  - Global indicators/ratios/compared to last year/benchmarks from other orchestras
- Develop organization-wide dashboard of key metrics to communicate organizational progress to Board of Directors and key external stakeholders (Staff)
- Ensure that artistic choices are determined and then linked to budgetary efforts; initiate multi-year budgeting efforts, using scenario planning (Staff/Board)
- Rebid audit (Board)
- Rebid insurance (Staff/Board)

## Goal #4: Improve quality assurance efforts

### *Key Strategies:*

- Meet with funders to discuss evaluation requirements and expectations for funding (Staff)
- Develop means to solicit feedback from concert attendees (Staff)
  - Subscriber Surveys
- Adjust programs as needed based upon feedback from audience and program participants (Staff)
- Define evaluation model for each program (Staff)
- Focus on consistency of implementation of educational efforts (Staff)
  - Create a “checklist” of required elements to ensure quality
  - Develop pre/post educational program assessment
  - Review assessment results and adjust programs accordingly
  - Share outcomes of assessments with staff/teaching musicians and other constituencies.

## Goal #5: Continue to develop the Board of Directors

### *Key Strategies:*

- Develop annual goals for the Board with linkages to Committee workplans (Board)
- Review committee workplans and determine criteria for items that will require full Board approval (Board)
- Identify ways to ensure Board member engagement and track progress over time via a bi-annual Board survey (Board)
- Review Governance Committee responsibilities to include closer tracking of Board member responsibilities and nominating activities (linked to overall strategic plan) (Board)

- Continue to develop fundraising culture of the Board and strengthen Board members engagement in fundraising efforts (Board)

### **Strategic Plan Key Results**

- Increase in subscriptions
- Increase in education funding
- Increase in donations solicited through various fundraising strategies
- Improvement in selected financial ratios and organizational metrics
- Engaged Board who are active in organization's fundraising efforts