

It would be impossible to remove “Racine” from the “Racine Symphony.” It is the people of our community who have kept us strong for 87 years. It is YOU, whether you are a concert attendee, patron, advertiser, sponsor, musician, volunteer, Board Director or community partner, we owe you a debt of gratitude.

Highlights from the 2018-19 Season

We began our season in June with “Mad, Hot Opera,” featuring the local vocal group, The Belle Ensemble. The summer **Lakeside Pops** Season concluded with the wildly successful “Racine, Live!” Concert which featured six local guest artists: MeriKatherine Bock, Eric Carlson, Lashel Newkirk, John Knepper, Ilse Merlin and Irving Ruiz, as well as the local youth sensation, The Young Strings.



The Young Strings at the RSO August concert. Photo credit Ted Gast.



Lashel Lewy performs in the Racine, Live! Concert on August 24, 2018. Photo credit Ted Gast.

Racine, Live! was a new project for the RSO, and one which you embraced magnanimously. Your enthusiasm and reception of these performers was electrifying, adding a new level of excitement to our Lakeside Pops atmosphere. This showcase of homegrown talent deepened our roots within the community as we shared the stage with these amazing artists. We look forward to repeating the project in August of 2019 with a new group of local talent.

Our **Masterworks Series** opened as we welcomed 2018 Artist-In-Resident (AIR), French Hornist, Jeremiah Frederick who performed Mozart’s Concerto No. 3 in E-flat, K 447 on October 6. We also continued our 15-year Haydn Project (see page 9) with Symphony No. 87 in D Major. This project was sponsored by generous grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and the Racine Community Foundation.

Every year, the AIR engages over a thousand people of all ages at more a dozen different venues during their visit. He or she performs and interacts with audiences at venues including churches, community centers, nursing homes, preschools, high schools, middle schools and elementary schools.



2018 AIR, Jeremiah Frederick, performs at Case High School. Photo credit Beth Bender.

The holiday season wouldn't be complete without our **Holiday Pops Concert** and **High School Choral Invitational**. Multiple rehearsals with Maestro Laurino and the Orchestra helped to prepare these young singers for this unique opportunity. We were thrilled to welcome students from Park High School and The Prairie School to collaborate for yet another SOLD OUT performance on December 7. The Holiday Pops Concert has become a tradition for many of your families and for us, as we welcomed you for this seasonal celebration. This project was sponsored in part by a generous grant from the Racine Community Foundation.



High school choirs at the December 7, 2018 concert. Photo credit Neil Staeck.

Over the past 56 years more than 100,000 fifth grade students have been introduced to symphonic music through the interactive **Concert for Fifth Graders**. All fifth grade students in Racine County are invited to attend these free and open-to-the-public Concerts. This year's Concert on Tuesday, March 13 was attended by 1,400 Fifth-graders. The Orchestra performed Chicago-based composer Jim Stephenson's "Compose Yourself!" which teaches students about the instruments of the orchestra and elements of composition.



2019 YAC winner, Noah Mercadillo performs with the RSO during the May Masterworks Concert. Photo credit Neil Staeck

We concluded our 87th season with our **Masterworks Season Finale Concert** in the Chapel of the Siena Center on May 4. This Concert combined two of our favorite music education programs: the Young Artists' Competition and Side-by-Side Youth Invitational. Young Artist Competition (YAC) Winner, Noah Mercadillo, was our featured guest artist; he performed Haydn's Cello Concerto in C, Hob VIIb;1. All high school-age instrumental music students in Southeastern Wisconsin are invited to compete for scholarship prizes and guest artist billing at our April Masterworks Concert as part of the YAC. We also welcomed nine high school students who sat alongside RSO musicians for a week of mentorship and experience with a professional orchestra for our Side-By-Side Invitational (SBS). Both the YAC and the SBS draw the most talented rising young musicians in the area. This project was sponsored by a generous grant from the Racine Community Foundation.

This spring marked the third year of our revamped **Introduction to Strings Program**. For this Program a quintet of RSO musicians visited several RUSD schools to deliver an interactive, 45-minute long performance and each musician – violin, viola, cello and bass – gave a short demonstration of their instrument. This year we were able to expand the program to five schools in RUSD and three in Burlington.



*RSO Concertmaster Sascha Mandl addresses the students during a Third Grade Concert.
Photo credit Beth Bender.*

The end of a Season always brings changes to our Board of Directors. This year we bid farewell to Keith Griffin, Curt Hubmann, Tammy Leverich and Cathy Meyer. Their dedicated service to the RSO will not be forgotten and we continue to count them as friends of the RSO. For 2019-20, we are excited to welcome new Board Directors Rhonda Deneka, Mark Feldmann, Tracy Lutterman, Justin Peterman and Peter Reynolds. We look forward to adding them to the RSO family.

On the financial side, we welcomed the National Endowment of the Arts and the Lang Family Foundation as grantors and continue to receive major grant support from Racine Community Foundation, SC Johnson, United Performing Arts Fund (UPAF) and the Wisconsin Arts Board. We are extremely grateful for our generous sponsors, new and continuing, and most importantly, YOU!

Everything we have accomplished and strive for in the future is because of YOUR loyal support. We thank you for allowing us to continue our mission to enrich, educate and entertain our communities through the power of music. We salute you and welcome you to the 88th season of YOUR Racine Symphony.