



50th
ANNIVERSARY
SEASON
2026-2027

◆ RYAN WEBBER, MUSIC DIRECTOR ◆



WHERE WE WERE

October 10 | 7:30 PM | Little Falls | Community High School Auditorium

October 11 | 2:30 PM | Brainerd | Gichi-ziibi Center for the Arts



WHERE WE ARE

December 5 | 7:30 PM | Little Falls | Community High School Auditorium

December 6 | 2:30 PM | Brainerd | Gichi-ziibi Center for the Arts



WHERE WE'RE GOING

April 3 | 7:30 PM | Little Falls | Community High School Auditorium

April 4 | 2:30 PM | Brainerd | Gichi-ziibi Center for the Arts



WHERE THE JOURNEY CONTINUES

June 12 | 7:30 PM | Brainerd | Lyman P. White Park Amphitheater

Admission: FREE

Donations accepted at the door, online at heartlandsymphony.com or mail to:

HSO | PO Box 241 | Little Falls, MN 56345 | 1-800-826-1997

This activity is made possible by the voters of Minnesota through grants from the Minnesota State Arts Board and the Five Wings Arts Council, thanks to a legislative appropriation from the arts and cultural heritage fund. In Little Falls, the Laura Jane Musser Fund provides additional support.

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Heartland Symphony Orchestra

The Heartland Symphony Orchestra (HSO) was incorporated in 1977 by a group of musicians from Little Falls and Brainerd. Hazel Johnson Wunsch was the first conductor of the orchestra. Today it has grown to a 50-piece volunteer community orchestra with players of all ages. The Symphony's goals are to bring orchestral music to concertgoers in our area, to acquaint young people with the beauty of classical music, and to provide an opportunity for trained musicians to play together regularly.

HSO is unique because it is not based in one community but draws its players and concertgoers from a large area in central Minnesota. The fall, winter, and spring concerts presented each season are performed in both Little Falls and Brainerd, and sometimes in surrounding communities upon request. Weekly rehearsals alternate between Brainerd and Little Falls.

The orchestra is governed by a volunteer Board of Directors from central Minnesota. These board members actively serve on committees concerning all aspects of running the orchestra. To inquire about serving on the board or to become a much needed HSO volunteer, call 1-800-826-1997 or visit us online at www.heartlandsymphony.com.



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OUR CHOIRS

The Legacy Chorale: Auditioned community choir for adults of all ages

Legacy Youth Chorale: Auditioned youth choirs for school age singers in grades 3-12

Still We Sing: Memory choir for people living with dementia and their care partners

SEASON EVENTS

October 10: Voices of the Lakes Area Gala | Baxter

November 15: Legacy Youth Chorale Fall Concert | Brainerd

November 21 & 22: Legacy Chorale Fall Concerts | Crosslake & Baxter

December 5 & 6: Legacy Chorale w/ HSO | Little Falls & Brainerd

December 13: Still We Sing Fall Concert | Brainerd

February 13: Legacy Youth Chorale Broadway Benefit Show | Brainerd

April 10: Legacy Youth Chorale Honor Choir | Baxter

April 22: Legacy Youth Chorale w/ Aitkin Choirs | Aitkin

April 23 & 24: Legacy Chorale Spring Concerts | Little Falls & Baxter

April 25: Legacy Choirs 25th Season Finale Concert | Brainerd

May 2: Still We Sing Spring Concert | Brainerd

LEGACY CHOIRS OF THE LAKES AREA

1001 Kingwood Street 114 | Brainerd, MN 56401

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◆ 2026–2027 BOARD OF DIRECTORS ◆

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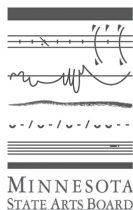
◆ HEARTLAND SYMPHONY SUPPORTERS ◆ VOLUNTEERS

The Orchestra Guild | The Classics

Dorothy Adamson	Deb Griffith	Nancy Paulson
Lina Belar	Donna Hanson	Mary Steinke
Carl & Joan Brenner	Judith Hartman	Ramona Steinke
Dennis Dosh	Joanne Lavern	Patricia Tadmori
Wilma Durham	Cindy Loidolt	Mary & Frank Voigt
Robert Eliason	Lauren Nickisch	Don Wennberg
Dean Fitch	Helen O'Brien	David Winkelman

◆ BECOME A CLASSIC! ◆

Your volunteer assistance is needed in many ways. No monthly meetings, just a willingness to roll up your sleeves and help to keep quality orchestral music in Central Minnesota. For more information, e-mail HSO at heartlandsymphony@gmail.com or call 1-800-826-1997.



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◆ RYAN WEBBER ◆

Music Director



Ryan Webber became Music Director of the Heartland Symphony in 2019. During his tenure, he has led premieres of works by Quinn Mason, Allan Stephenson, Dominic Dousa, Kyle Brown, TJ Huggins, Robin Butler, Chris Fogderud, Ian T. Jones, Jacob Shay, Sonya Leonore Stahl, and Lindsey Wiehl. He has also had the pleasure of collaborating with artists including pianist Stephen Carlson, baritone Nathan Herfindahl, violinist Steven Zander, Brainerd's Rusty Crayfish Brass Band, as well as numerous members of the Heartland Symphony.

A passionate educator, Ryan looks forward to annual collaborations with St. Francis Music Center and the Brainerd High School Orchestras. In 2024, he took part in the Heartland Symphony's first collaboration with Legacy Youth Chorale. Beyond Minnesota, he has worked with the Northern Valley Youth Orchestras (Fargo, ND), Lawrence (KS) Youth Symphony, Youth Orchestras of Kansas City, and Community Youth Orchestra of Southern California.

In 2021, Ryan was invited to guest conduct Sinfonietta Memphis, one of the country's leading period-performance ensembles, and returned to work with the group in August 2024. In addition to his work with the Heartland Symphony, Ryan has served on the faculty of Bemidji State University since 2017, where he directs the Symphonic Band and teaches courses in low brass and film music. From 2017 to 2024, he served as Music Director for Northern Light Opera Company in Park Rapids, and in 2025, he was appointed Music Director of the Bemidji Area Community Band.

Beyond the podium, Ryan enjoys sharing his passion for music with audiences and students of all ages. He has presented pre-concert lectures for the Minnesota Orchestra and Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra and has written program notes for ensembles of all sizes, including notes for releases on the Naxos label. Since January 2023, he has contributed regularly to *Film Score Monthly*, one of the leading publications devoted to film music.

Ryan's conducting mentors include Mathias Elmer, Paul Popiel, and Kevin Sütterlin. Away from music, he enjoys training for half marathons on the trails around Lake Bemidji, discovering new restaurants, and spending time with his wife, Miriam, and their dog, Chewie.

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◆ CHRISTOPHER FOGDERUD ◆

Assistant Conductor

Christopher Fogderud is currently in his 19th year as Director of Bands at Brainerd High School. His responsibilities include teaching the BHS Wind Symphony, Concert Band, Jazz Ensembles and CIS Musicology as well as the BHS Marching Band and Pep Bands. He received his B.A. in Music Education from Gustavus Adolphus College and his Masters of Music with a concentration in conducting from The American Band College of Sam Houston State University. He has served as clinician and guest conductor for MSHSL music contests and MBDA honor bands. Mr. Fogderud holds memberships in NAFME, MMEA, MBDA, ASBDA, and Phi Beta Mu.



As a performer, Mr. Fogderud is an active musician in the community. He is assistant conductor and principal trumpet of the Heartland Symphony Orchestra and has also performed frequently with the Lakes Area Music Festival. He is the lead trumpet, composer and arranger for the Rusty Crayfish Brass Band whose debut album *"Anywhere But Here"* can be heard on all of the streaming platforms.

Apart from teaching and performing, Mr. Fogderud enjoys camping, reading and spending time with family. He lives in Brainerd with his wife Sarah and their two children, Harrison and Grace.



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◆ LESLIE ZANDER ◆

Concertmaster

Heartland Symphony Orchestra's Concertmaster is Leslie Zander. She has taught Orchestra in the Brainerd Public Schools since 2000. Ms. Zander's current position is teaching 6th, 7th, and 8th grade Orchestras at Forestview Middle School as well as Sinfonia Orchestra and Chamber Orchestra at Brainerd High School.



Besides her work with the Heartland Symphony Orchestra, Ms. Zander has performed throughout central Minnesota with groups such as the St. Cloud Symphony Orchestra, Great River Strings Ensemble, the Legacy Chorale, and the Long Prairie Chamber Orchestra. Past summer engagements include the Sierra Summer Festival in Mammoth Lakes, CA, the Lake Chelan Bach Fest in Chelan, WA, and the Lakes Area Music Festival.

Ms. Zander began her violin lessons at the age of three at the Aber Suzuki Center at the University of Wisconsin – Stevens Point, where her teacher was Patricia D'Ercole. She studied with Mark Bjork at the University of Minnesota – Twin Cities, earning a Bachelor of Music in Instrumental and Classroom Music Education. Ms. Zander also holds a Master of Arts in Differentiated Instruction from Concordia University – St. Paul.

'Meet the Musicians'



**Beginners, professionals, How did it all begin?
Who inspires them? Which music do they love?**

Find out more about HSO's talented musicians:
www.heartlandsymphony.com



Heartland Symphony Orchestra is excited to present its 50th Anniversary Season!

Throughout the years, the HSO has been at the forefront of classical music performances in Central Minnesota. We pride ourselves in not only performing the classics that patrons know and love, but also performing state and world premieres.

Additionally, through our commitment to education outreach, we present you with the best of the best in youth performers.

We have taken the brave step in no longer charging our patrons to attend our concerts and now apply for grants as well as fundraising opportunities to continue to bring quality classical music to our area.

1. Please consider leaving a cash donation with one of our volunteers in the lobby after the concert.
2. Visit our website at heartlandsymphony.com and click on the "Donate" tab.
3. Use the QR code.



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