



December 16, 2024

Dear Supporter,

Thank you for supporting the Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra (HRO) Foundation! As the end of 2024 approaches, we celebrate another outstanding year for the HRO made possible by your generosity.

This year, I'd like to share three observations I have made as a Foundation member with a front-row seat to the orchestra's ongoing evolution:

1) Not only is the HRO a key social hub for its members, but the orchestra also holds a special role as a nexus for promising young musicians. It is Harvard's foremost instrumental ensemble, affording its members a conservatory-level performance experience *with* the opportunity to explore their vast and often competing intellectual interests. The orchestra also includes numerous students from the selective Harvard-New England Conservatory dual degree program. Finally, the students are inspired by Music Director Federico Cortese's charisma, ambition, and intellect. This combination of opportunity and inspiration makes the HRO attractive to some of the world's finest young talent.

Yet to fully realize its growing artistic ambitions, maintain its size year to year, and share its gifts beyond Harvard's campus, the HRO needs far more financial support.



Music Director Federico Cortese and the Harvard-Radcliffe Orchestra perform music from *Tristan und Isolde* (April 2024)

2) Most alumni are surprised to learn that although the HRO carries the Harvard-Radcliffe name, its operating budget is funded almost entirely by private donors like you. For those wondering if the HRO could function as a self-sufficient business, consider that ticket sales will cover only 15 percent of this year's modest \$65,000 budget – and this is a non-tour year.

3): The HRO's operating budget does not meet the magnitude of its talent. By way of comparison, Harvard Lacrosse *alone* was able to fund operating expenses of \$1,029,919 in 2024. The HRO – which continues to train iconic classical musicians like Alan Gilbert '89, Scott Yoo '93, and Stella Chen '15 – will operate this year at 6 percent of Harvard Lacrosse's budgetary scale.



**The Harvard-Radcliffe  
Orchestra Foundation**

Still, despite its financial constraints, the HRO – now in its 217<sup>th</sup> Season – is brimming with enthusiasm and virtuosity. In September, a record 153 students auditioned for the HRO. Just weeks later, the orchestra performed Mahler’s Symphony No. 3 to a rapturous ovation from the sold-out audience. The HRO’s second concert – which sold out two days in advance – was a phenomenal success as well. It featured this year’s James Yannatos Concerto Competition winner, Calvin Alexander ’27, performing Beethoven’s Violin Concerto with a seldom-played Op. 61a cadenza. The orchestra also performed Sibelius’s Symphony No. 7 conducted by Enoch Li ’26 and *Cross-Currents* composed by John Austin ’56.



Concertmaster Cal Alexander ’27 performing  
Beethoven’s Violin Concerto



Jonathan Cohler ’80 (clarinet) and David Sogg ’79 (bassoon)  
performing “Mars” & “Jupiter” from Holst’s *The Planets*

For the finale, 63 HRO alumni (some professional musicians and some not having played in 20+ years) joined students for a side-by-side performance of “Mars” and “Jupiter” from Holst’s *The Planets*. With 130 musicians on the Sanders Theatre stage, it was an unforgettable sight! The following day, *The Crimson* hailed the program as “A Powerful Display of Harvard’s Orchestral Community.”

The HRO’s upcoming concerts in March and April 2025 will feature Shostakovich’s Symphony No. 11 and Brahms’s Symphony No. 1, respectively.

Your contribution—of any amount—will mean so much to the HRO. By giving to the Annual Fund today, you become part of a community dedicated to ensuring that the HRO receives the support it truly deserves.

Warmly,

*Byram Karanjia*

Byram Karanjia ’05  
President, HRO Foundation



**A note on major gifts:**

There are opportunities for you to ensure the long-term health of the HRO while addressing specific areas of need. Donations of \$50,000 and above are contributions we would handle through the Harvard College Endowment and can therefore “double-count” as gifts to the College Endowment *and* to the HRO. A target of 5-7 percent of the HRO’s Endowment balance is available to the orchestra annually, which enables the HRO to not only benefit from some income from the Endowment but also allows the Endowment to grow over time.

Such gifts can be made in annual installments and come with the option to permanently attach your or a loved one’s name to the HRO.

Examples include:

- A sum to endow a dedicated HRO administrator, who would ease routine logistical burdens on the students and Music Director, and provide continuity for the running of the orchestra
- A sum to endow the Concertmaster’s chair and certain other Principal chairs, *in perpetuity*
- A sum to endow the HRO’s student ticket policy, *in perpetuity*, providing access for students who might not otherwise attend a classical music concert
- A sum to attach your name to the HRO’s tours abroad, *in perpetuity*
- A sum to name the HRO’s four annual concerts as single concerts or as a series, *in perpetuity*

Contact: [karanjia@hrofoundation.org](mailto:karanjia@hrofoundation.org)



Yonah Zur (GSAS Music) and Federico Cortese (Music Director) congratulate violinist Michelle Stern '25 on the final concert of 2024



The new HRO Exec Board! Back Left to Right: Ben Fortuin '27, Justin Shaw '27, Caleb Graupera '28, Brendon Lau '26  
Front Left to Right: Kobby Owusu '27, Veronica Li '26  
Missing: Lizzy Huang '27 and Louis Auxenfans '27

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