Marin Alsop
Music Director
Baltimore Symphony Orchestra

Marin Alsop is an inspiring and powerful voice in the international music scene, a Music Director of vision and distinction who passionately believes that “music has the power to change lives”. She is recognised across the world for her innovative approach to programming and for her deep commitment to education and to the development of audiences of all ages.

Her outstanding success as Music Director of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra since 2007 has been recognised by two extensions in her tenure, now confirmed until 2021. As part of her artistic leadership in Baltimore, Marin Alsop has created bold initiatives that have contributed to the wider community and reached new audiences. In 2008 she launched ‘OrchKids’, which provides music education, instruments, meals and mentorship of the city’s neediest young people. Engaging the local community, the BSO Academy and Rusty Musicians schemes also allow adult amateur musicians the chance to play alongside members of the orchestra under Alsop’s baton. Alsop and the orchestra celebrate their centenary in 2016.

Alsop took up the post of Principal Conductor of the São Paulo Symphony Orchestra (OSESP) in 2012 and became Music Director in July 2013, with her contract now extended to the end of 2019. She continues to steer the orchestra in its artistic and creative programming, recording ventures and its education and outreach activities, as well as their annual Campos do Jordão International Winter Festival. Alsop led the orchestra on a European tour in 2012, with acclaimed performances at the BBC Proms in London and at the Concertgebouw in Amsterdam; they returned to Europe in October 2013, with concerts in Berlin, London, Paris, Salzburg and Vienna.

Since 1992, Marin Alsop has been Music Director of California’s Cabrillo Festival of Contemporary Music, where she has built a devoted audience for new music. Building an orchestra is one of Alsop’s great gifts, and she retains strong links with all of her previous orchestras – Bournemouth Symphony Orchestra (Principal Conductor 2002-8; now Conductor Emeritus), Eugene Symphony Orchestra (Music Director 1989-96, now Conductor Laureate) and Colorado Symphony Orchestra (Music Director 1993-2005; now Music Director Laureate).
Marin Alsop has guest-conducted the great orchestras of the world: Philadelphia, Cleveland, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Royal Concertgebouw, La Scala Philharmonic, Orchestre de Paris, Bavarian Radio Symphony. In Europe, she regularly returns to the Frankfurt Radio Symphony, Royal Stockholm Philharmonic and the Czech Philharmonic. Alsop has a close relationship with the London Symphony and London Philharmonic, appearing with both orchestras most seasons, as well as with the Orchestra of the Age of Enlightenment. She is also Artist in Residence at the Southbank Centre in London.

In September 2013, Marin Alsop made history as the first female conductor of the BBC’s Last Night of the Proms in London. She returned to the Proms in 2015 to conduct the Last Night and an all-Brahms programme with the OAE. 2015/16 highlights include a historic return for an American musician to Cuba, conducting Lang Lang and the National Symphony Orchestra of Cuba. In March 2016, Alsop will celebrate Carnegie Hall’s 125th anniversary conducting Bernstein West Side Story in the Knockdown Center, a restored factory in Queens.

Marin Alsop is the recipient of numerous awards and is the only conductor to receive the prestigious MacArthur Fellowship, given to US residents in recognition of exceptional creative work. She was only classical musician to be included in the Guardian’s “Top 100 women”, celebrating the centenary of International Women’s Day in 2011. Alsop is an Honorary Member of the Royal Academy of Music, London and the Royal Philharmonic Society and was recently appointed Director of Graduate Conducting Program at the Johns Hopkins Peabody Institute.

The latest disc of Alsop’s Prokofiev symphonic cycle with OSESP (Symphony No.3) was released in May 2015 and the first (Symphony No.5) was Orchestral Choice in BBC Music Magazine. Alsop’s extensive discography on Naxos includes a notable set of Brahms symphonies with the LPO, Brahms Ein deutsches Requiem with the MDR Leipzig Radio Choir and Symphony Orchestra and a highly-praised Dvořák series with the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra. Other award-winning recordings include Bernstein’s Mass (Editor’s Choice, Gramophone Awards 2010) and Jennifer Higdon’s Percussion Concerto (Grammy Award 2010). Alsop has also recorded for Decca Classics, Harmonia Mundi and Sony Classical.

Born in New York City, Marin Alsop attended Yale University and received her Master’s Degree from The Juilliard School. Her conducting career was launched when, in 1989, she was a prize-winner at the Leopold Stokowski International Conducting Competition and in the same year was the first woman to be awarded the Koussevitzky Conducting Prize from the Tanglewood Music Center, where she was a pupil of Leonard Bernstein.
Jamie Bennett
Executive Director
ArtPlace in America

Jamie Bennett is the executive director of ArtPlace America, a partnership among 16 foundations, 8 federal agencies, and 6 financial institutions working to position art and culture as a core sector of community planning and development by investing in, researching, and supporting those who lead and execute creative placemaking projects.

To date, ArtPlace has invested $85 million in 233 projects in communities of all sizes across the United States in which artists and arts organizations are working with their neighbors to help shape communities' social, physical, and economic futures.

Until December 2013, Jamie was Chief of Staff and Director of Public Affairs at the National Endowment for the Arts, where he oversaw the national rollouts of the "Our Town" grant program and partnerships with the US Departments of Agriculture, Defense, Health and Human Services, and Housing and Urban Development.

Previously, Jamie was Chief of Staff at the New York City Department of Cultural Affairs, where he oversaw the agency’s partnerships with the NYC Departments for the Aging, of Education, and of Youth and Community Development.

Jamie also provided strategic counsel at the Agnes Gund Foundation, served as chief of staff to the President of Columbia University, and worked in fundraising at The Museum of Modern Art, the New York Philharmonic, and Columbia College.

Before entering the public sector, Jamie served on the board of the HERE Arts Center. Jamie received a B.A. in drama and theatre arts from Columbia University.
Alex Laing
Principal Clarinet
Phoenix Symphony

Alex Laing began studying the clarinet at age 11 in his hometown of Silver Spring, MD.

In 2002 he joined the Phoenix Symphony as principal clarinet.

A longtime believer in community engaged music making, Alex also recently founded and directs The Leading Tone, a nonprofit, after school project dedicated to exploring music as a context for youth development, serving just over forty students.

A graduate of Northwestern University, he received his master's degree in Orchestral Performance from the Manhattan School of Music, an artist's diploma from the Sweelinck Conservatorium Amsterdam and a certificate in nonprofit management from Arizona State University's Lodestar Center for Philanthropy and Nonprofit Innovation.

Alex is fortunate to have garnered a number of awards and honors during his career including fellowships from the Tanglewood Music Center, New World Symphony, Aspen Music Festival and the Detroit Symphony Orchestra.

Earl Lewis
President
The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

Earl Lewis became the sixth President of The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation in March 2013. Under his guidance, the Foundation has reaffirmed its commitment to the humanities, the arts, and higher education by emphasizing the importance of continuity and change.

A noted social historian, Mr. Lewis has held faculty appointments at the University of California at Berkeley (1984–89), and the University of Michigan (1989–2004). He has championed the importance of diversifying the academy, enhancing graduate
education, re-visioning the liberal arts, exploring the role of digital tools for learning, and connecting universities to their communities.

Prior to joining The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, Mr. Lewis served as Provost and Executive Vice President for Academic Affairs and the Asa Griggs Candler Professor of History and African American Studies at Emory University. As Provost, Lewis led academic affairs and academic priority setting for the university.


A native of Tidewater, Virginia, Mr. Lewis earned an undergraduate degree in history and psychology from Concordia College in Moorhead, Minnesota, and a PhD in history from the University of Minnesota. He has been a fellow of the American Academy of Arts and Sciences since 2008.

In 2015, Mr. Lewis was awarded an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters from Rutgers University-Newark and an honorary Doctor of Humane Letters from Dartmouth College; he also received an honorary Doctor of Humanities from Concordia College in 2002; Outstanding Achievement Award from the University of Minnesota in 2001; and the Harold R. Johnson Diversity Service Award from the University of Michigan in 1999.