New York, NY (April 22, 2016) – When blind auditions for musicians were implemented in the 1970s, a vast shift in the gender balance of American orchestras commenced. Today, male-female parity at U.S. orchestras is nearly even. Yet women players remain concentrated in traditionally “female” instruments like harp, violin, and flute. In the Spring issue of Symphony, the magazine of the League of American Orchestras, Heidi Waleson examines the reasons behind the phenomenon, speaking with female musicians and revealing that growing numbers of women are taking up traditionally “male” instruments, often as principals and section leaders.

“The country’s demographics are shifting in many ways right now, and the new issue of Symphony looks at how those trends are reflected at orchestras,” says Symphony Editor in Chief Robert Sandla. “Today, more and more women are playing non-traditionally gendered musical instruments. We report on programs by orchestras that aim to broaden musician diversity through fellowships for advanced young musicians, talent-development programs for teens, and training programs for small kids. One pipeline of future musicians: American youth orchestras, which are flourishing, highly diverse, and accessible.”
Symphony is available in print, or read it free of charge online at https://issuu.com/americanorchestras/docs/symphony_spring_2016-issuu

Symphony’s Spring article line-up includes:

**Forward Steps:** A report on at what orchestras are doing to increase diversity among their ranks. By Steven Brown

**Instrumental Change:** Why are women still more likely to play the flute than the tuba, or the violin than the double bass? By Heidi Waleson

**Growth Spurt:** Too cool for school: the activity and variety of youth orchestras in America are growing rapidly. By Chester Lane

**Remembering Pierre Boulez:** Reminiscences of a great musician from those who knew him.

**Finding Your Bliss:** How summer festivals fine-tune their musical offerings.

**Plus...**

**Critical Questions:** The League’s new Strategic Plan offers a roadmap to the future. By Jesse Rosen, League of American Orchestras’ President and CEO

**Conference Preview:** Diversity is the focus of the League’s 2016 Conference. By Ken Cole, the League’s vice president, Learning and Leadership Development

**Board Room:** An excerpt from Effective Orchestra Governance: A Guide for Boards, the League’s forthcoming handbook for board members, to be published this summer

**Coda:** Leif Ove Andsnes discusses conducting Beethoven from the piano and starting his own summer festival

**Symphony’s Summer Festivals 2016:** Your guide to what’s on this summer

The League of American Orchestras leads, supports, and champions America’s orchestras and the vitality of the music they perform. Its diverse membership of more than 2,000 organizations and individuals across North America runs the gamut from world-renowned symphonies to community groups, from summer festivals to student and youth ensembles, from conservatories to libraries, from businesses serving orchestras to individuals who love symphonic music. The only national organization dedicated solely to the orchestral experience, the League is a nexus of knowledge and innovation, advocacy, and leadership advancement. Its conferences and events, award-winning Symphony magazine, website, and other publications inform people around the world about orchestral activity and developments. Founded in 1942 and chartered by Congress in 1962, the
League links a national network of thousands of instrumentalists, conductors, managers and administrators, board members, volunteers, and business partners. Visit americanorchestras.org.