

The front page of the October 5, 1918 *Seattle Daily Times* captures the impact of the epidemic on a country still reeling from World War 1.

# Help Bar Deadly Influenza From Seattle

By DR. J. D. TUTTLE,  
State Health Commissioner

Don't get into crowds, don't cough or sneeze without using a handkerchief, get plenty of fresh air, and when the symptoms of a cold appear isolate yourself as far as possible from others.

By SURGEON GENERAL RUPERT BLUE,  
U. S. Public Health Service

First there is a chill, then fever, headache, backache, reddening of the eyes, aches all over the body and general prostration. Persons so attacked should go to bed at once and call a physician.

**NIGHT EXTRA**  
FOR INFORMATION  
on any subject—the time of day, movement of trains, mail and so on.  
Call Main 300

## The Seattle Daily Times

**TIMES WHISTLE SIGNALS**  
ONE WHISTLE—The Times is on the streets at 6:30 a. m. and at 6:00 p. m. Two whistles—The Times is on the streets at 6:30 a. m. and at 6:00 p. m. Three whistles—The Times is on the streets at 6:30 a. m. and at 6:00 p. m.

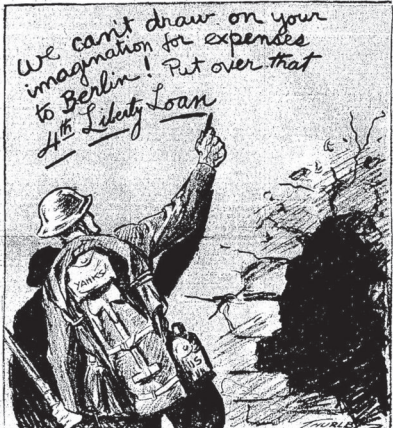
12 Pages. SEATTLE, WASHINGTON, SATURDAY EVENING, OCT. 5, 1918. Price 3c. On News Stands, Seattle, Wash., D. C.

# CHURCHES, SCHOOLS, SHOWS CLOSED

## EPIDEMIC PUTS BAN ON ALL PUBLIC ASSEMBLIES

**MR. LOVERING'S COMMENT**  
There is victory, says Liberty Herald

**SEATTLE TO MAKE FIGHT ON DISEASE**  
Mayor and City Health Officer Will Permit None but Gatherings in Open Air.



# AMERICANS AND FRENCH SMASH FOE

**Associated Press Summary.**  
FRENCH and American troops are smashing into the German position in Champagne and have forced the enemy of withdrawal from valuable ground in the hill country near the Rhine River, says today's Associated Press summary of news from the theater of war.

**POLICE ORDERED TO CLOSE PUBLIC PLACES**  
The following order was issued at the public session this afternoon.

**EVERY show of motion picture amusements in Seattle, including churches, theaters, clubs, schools, and places of public assembly, will be closed until further orders.**

**ONLY ONE-HALF OF CITY'S QUOTA FOR LOAN SUBSCRIBED**  
Blast shatters dozens of towns in New Jersey

**NEW WAGE SCALE IN SHIPYARDS TO RUN FROM AUG. 1**  
No Seattle Worker Will Lose by Delay of Macy Board to Announce Its Awards.

**MR. JERMAN'S DISPATCH**  
The dispatch from Mr. Jerman is reported that the government will not accept the country as a whole, the wage schedule in Italy.

**COLOR MAP OF THE WEST FRONT IN TIMES**  
A color map of the West front in times of war is being prepared by the War Department.

**THE WEATHER**  
Forecast for Seattle, Wash., Oct. 5, 1918.  
Temperature at noon today, 57.  
Temperature falling but moderating, 52 to 60; relative humidity, 82 per cent. Sunrise, 7:14 a. m. Sunset, 6:42 p. m.

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Museum of History & Industry, Seattle

To slow the spread of the 1918-20 epidemic, theaters, concert halls, schools, and other gathering places in Seattle were shut down by the mayor.

# Pandemic in Perspective

Social distancing. Masks vs. no masks. Business interests vs. scientific guidance. Just over a century ago, the global pandemic caused by what was called the Spanish influenza had drastic impacts on America's orchestras. How did orchestras back then cope? Is the past prologue?

by Brian Wise

It ravaged civilization for nearly three years and left at least 50 million people worldwide dead, including about 675,000 in the United States. Yet as the influenza pandemic of 1918-20 swept through the world, American orchestras coped with its effects to varying degrees.

During this period, the Cleveland Orchestra was born, the Detroit Symphony Orchestra built a new hall in just five months, and other ensembles faced upended schedules with a remarkable sense of optimism. But there were cautionary tales too, including the deaths of three violinists in hard-hit Philadelphia, a cha-

### Postponed Concerts of Philadelphia Orchestra to Begin on November 1

The Board of Health has advised the Philadelphia Orchestra Association that its regular concert season, which was postponed from Oct. 18-19 to Oct. 25-26, cannot begin until Nov. 1-2. Patrons who hold season tickets for the orchestral concerts are advised to use their several tickets on the dates for which they are issued. The tickets for the first and second pairs will be good for other dates, which will be announced later. Announcement concerning the program and soloist for the concerts on Nov. 1-2 will also be made later.

The pandemic forced the Philadelphia Orchestra to postpone concerts in 1918 due to health concerns, as documented in *Musical America* in October 1918.

otic tour by a visiting French orchestra, and a sense of collective amnesia once the pandemic had subsided. Together these events offer a historical view as orchestras seek paths out of the 2020 coronavirus.

First detected in March 1918, the so-called Spanish flu was one of the worst

pandemics in modern history, arriving in three waves. It struck not only the most vulnerable but also people in the prime of their lives, among them the violinist Jascha Heifetz and composers Béla Bartók, Igor Stravinsky, and Sergei Rachmaninoff, all

gatherings were finally banned on October 3, the public health system was already overwhelmed.

Among the reported fatalities were three musicians with the Philadelphia Orchestra. "All three played second violin, and all were

### When public gatherings were banned in Philadelphia on October 3, 1918, the public health system was already overwhelmed.

of whom survived. (I detail some of these cases concerning composers in a June 2020 *BBC Music Magazine* article.) Business pressures sometimes clashed with scientific guidance.

Philadelphia, the hardest-hit city in the United States, with 20,000 fatalities, reported its first cases of the flu in September 1918. But authorities did not want to impede daily life, and allowed a Liberty Loans parade to proceed on September 28, an event that drew over 200,000 spectators—and left thousands infected. When public

young and promising musicians," stated the *Philadelphia Evening Bulletin* on October 24, 1918. Two of the musicians were 20-year-old Harry Silberman and 21-year-old Benjamin Winterstein. A third, David Savidowsky, 17, may have been a substitute player or an extra.

Meanwhile, private gatherings in Philadelphia were not banned, enabling the 100-member orchestra to continue to rehearse out of the public eye. One music critic suggested that the extra rehearsal time gave the orchestra an edge in the

The Cleveland Orchestra, seen here in its earliest existing photo, taken in 1919, made its debut on December 11, 1918, after a citywide ban on public performances due to the pandemic was lifted.



The Cleveland Orchestra.  
Nikolai Sokoloff, Conductor.  
The Duo-Art Piano Soloist, Cleveland, Nov. 13, 1919.

# CITY ORCHESTRA WILL BE FORMED

New Symphony Body to be  
Directed by Former  
Frisco Conductor.

Cleveland is to have a symphony orchestra that will rank with similar orchestras in such cities as Boston, New York, Cincinnati and San Francisco.

The Cleveland Orchestra

A clipping in *The Plain Dealer* on September 13, 1918 announced the formation of Cleveland's new orchestra, but an October ban on public performances due to the flu pandemic complicated plans. The Cleveland Orchestra made its debut on December 11, 1918, after the ban was lifted.

difficult modern works championed by Music Director Leopold Stokowski. Despite concerns about lost ticket revenue, orchestra manager Arthur Judson assured

the *Evening Bulletin* on October 24 that "there is no doubt that everything will be satisfactorily arranged as soon as a specific opening date is announced." Judson rescheduled the cancelled October concerts for the following April, in order to maintain a 28-week season. Yet even then

## Social distancing was key to stemming the flu's spread in 1918, yet workplace rules were inconsistent.

the orchestra was not completely in the clear: Stokowski had briefly contracted the "influenza blight," according to an April 1919 *Musical America* report. "For weeks the conductor has been struggling against the inevitable," the article stated, adding that the conductor, then in his thirties, left town under doctor's orders.

In contrast to Philadelphia, authorities in St. Louis moved quickly and aggressively to close theaters, schools, saloons, and other gathering spots, and the city fared relatively well. "Theater owners, as some of the largest taxpayers at the time,

protested the closures," noted the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch*. "Musicians and entertainers claimed the quarantine threatened their careers." But Health Commissioner Max C. Starkloff held firm concerning shutdowns and St. Louis saw 3,000 deaths in a population of 687,000,

the lowest among the country's ten largest cities.

Initially, audiences in St. Louis were slow to return to theaters after quarantines were lifted. But when a lavish Christmas pageant was held in late December 1918, the St. Louis Symphony and two choruses were among 600 performers to take part. Soldiers from nearby barracks were invited, though "influenza's efforts to thwart Kris Kringle will result in children under twelve years old being barred from the masque" due to their vulnerability to the flu, as the *Post-Dispatch* reported.

In March of 1917, before the onset of the pandemic, the Philadelphia Orchestra, led by Leopold Stokowski, gave a performance of Bach's *St. Matthew Passion* with enormous musical forces, including the Philadelphia Orchestra Chorus.



Kaufmann & Fabry photo courtesy of Rosenthal Archives/Chicago Symphony Orchestra



The Chicago Symphony Orchestra, October 1919. In October 1918, Chicago authorities closed all theaters and movies houses due to the epidemic, forcing the CSO to call off two weeks of concerts. That October, the orchestra's visit to Cleveland was cancelled when Cleveland prohibited public gatherings.

World Photos/The Cleveland Orchestra Archives



Cleveland Orchestra Conductor Nikolai Sokoloff admires the orchestra's first commercial recording, in 1924. The Cleveland Orchestra had been founded just a few years before.

Matzner Chicago photo courtesy of Rosenthal Archives/Chicago Symphony Orchestra



The Chicago Symphony Orchestra's popular music director, the German-born Frederick Stock, was absent from the podium in the fall of 1918, as he worked to finish his U.S. citizenship application. After World War 1 ended, Stock was granted full U.S. citizenship and resumed his position as music director in February 1919.

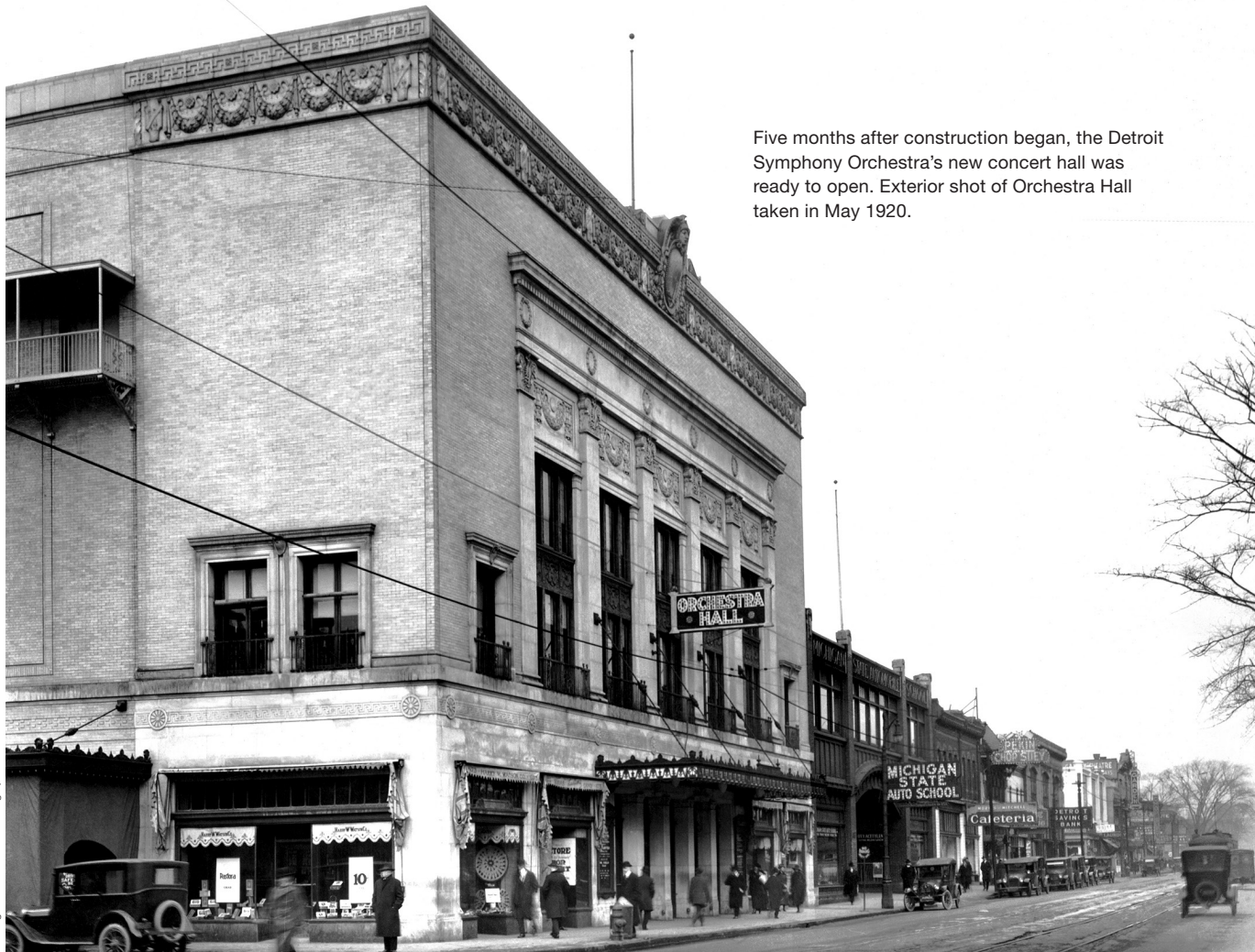
### Masked Audiences in San Francisco

In San Francisco, public gatherings were banned on October 24, 1918, but the real centerpiece of the city's battle against the pandemic was the face mask. An ordinance made masks mandatory in public and compliance was equated with wartime patriotism. *Musical America* described a band concert in Golden Gate Park where "a masked audience of several thousand enjoyed a program which had evidently been arranged to cheer the gloomy listeners." The magazine published a photo of piano virtuoso Leopold Godowsky out for a walk and sporting a facial covering.

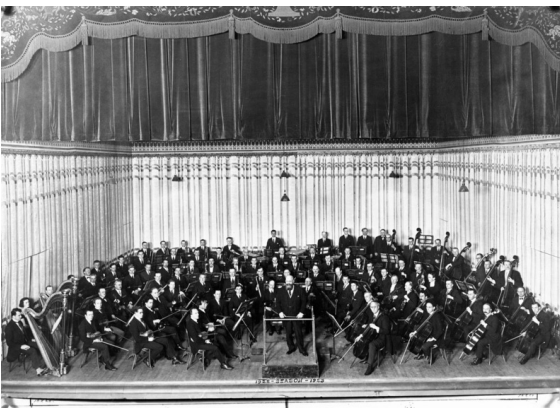
San Francisco Symphony Music Director Alfred Hertz struck an upbeat tone despite the loss of nearly five weeks of concerts. "There is no cause for gloomy prognostications about the symphony season," he assured the *San Francisco Exam-*



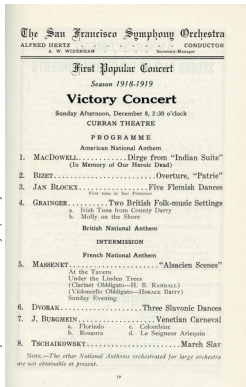
Despite the pandemic and World War I, construction of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra's new, 2,000-seat Orchestra Hall began on June 1, 1919. Photo from late summer or early fall of 1919.



Five months after construction began, the Detroit Symphony Orchestra's new concert hall was ready to open. Exterior shot of Orchestra Hall taken in May 1920.



Courtesy of San Francisco Symphony



The San Francisco Symphony's concert on December 8, 1918 was billed as a "Victory Concert." World War 1 had ended just a month before.



The Cleveland Orchestra Archives

Adella Prentiss Hughes, founder of The Cleveland Orchestra. Plans for the new orchestra met delays due to the 1918 pandemic.

The San Francisco Symphony cancelled nearly five weeks of concerts due to a ban on public gatherings in 1918. In photo: Music Director Alfred Hertz and the San Francisco Symphony, 1922-23.

iner. "This epidemic is a terrible calamity, and the prompt action of the authorities in forbidding public gatherings was the best thing that could be done to mitigate its severity. But there seems every reason to believe that the ban, which bears par-

ticular weight upon musicians, will mean the speedy suppression of the disease." After multiple delays, Hertz opened the orchestra season at the Curran Theater on November 29, 1918. Concerts continued into the New Year, when the virus flared up again in the city. "The return of the influenza made the size of the audience particularly remarkable," *Musical America* wrote of a January 12 concert. "Many persons wore masks, but even this did not put a damper on the enthusiasm."

### In the Midwest, a Show-Must-Go-On Spirit

In Cleveland, public gatherings were banned on October 14, 1918, thwarting an appearance by the Chicago Symphony

## DISPEKER ARTISTS INTERNATIONAL

### CONDUCTORS

- Daniel Boico
- Christoph Campestrini
- Steven Fox
- Bernard Labadie
- Mathieu Lussier
- Gregory Vajda

### PIANISTS

- Anderson & Roe Piano Duo
- Katherine Chi
- David Kadouch
- Alexander Korsantia
- Benedetto Lupo
- Jorge Federico Osorio
- Dubravka Tomic
- Gilles Vonsattel

### VIOLINISTS

- Mayuko Kamio
- Kerson Leong
- Elina Vähälä

### FRENCH HORN

- David Jolley

### GUITAR

- Grigoryan Brothers

### ENSEMBLES

- Aeolus Quartet
- Busch Trio
- Calefax Reed Quintet
- Jasper String Quartet
- Naumburg Trio
- New York Brass Arts Trio
- Signum Quartet
- Trio Valtorna

### SPECIAL PROJECTS

- Acte II
- Concerto Italiano & Rinaldo Alessandrini
- Troupe Vertigo
- Ute Lemper

### SOPRANOS

- Hélène Brunet
- Tracy Dahl
- Karina Gauvin
- Kelley Nassief
- Christina Pier

### MEZZO-SOPRANOS

- Abigail Nims
- Barbara Rearick

### CONTRALTO

- Emily Marvosh

### TENORS

- Frank Kelley
- Christopher Pfund
- Steven Tharp
- Daniel Weeks
- Lawrence Wilford

### BARITONES

- Anton Belov
- Jochen Kupfer
- Richard Zeller

### BASS-BARITONES

- Stephen Bryant
- Michael Dean
- Kevin Deas

### CHORUS

- La Chapelle de Québec

Orchestra later that month. The ban also complicated plans that had been stirring to give Cleveland its own hometown orchestra. Adella Prentiss Hughes, head of the Musical Arts Association, and conductor

how arts organizations were “relegated to the limbo of unessential industries” and predicted (incorrectly, it appears) that “when the season finally does get underway, it will be a sadly dislocated affair.”

**“This epidemic is a terrible calamity, and the prompt action of the authorities in forbidding public gatherings was the best thing that could be done to mitigate its severity,” said San Francisco Symphony Music Director Alfred Hertz in 1918.**

Nikolai Sokoloff were masterminds of the effort, spending the fall recruiting musicians and exploring venues such as high schools and even factories. By early November Clevelanders were growing frustrated with the city’s lockdown. A *Cleveland Plain Dealer* music critic bemoaned

The ban on public gatherings was lifted on November 10 and tickets immediately went on sale for the Cleveland Orchestra’s inaugural concert. After ten rehearsals, the 54-member orchestra was born with a performance on December 11 at the Grays Armory. The program was repeated

the following week. Cleveland Orchestra Archivist Andria Hoy believes that the dearth of culture during the citywide closures helped stoke the public’s favorable response to the city’s new orchestra.

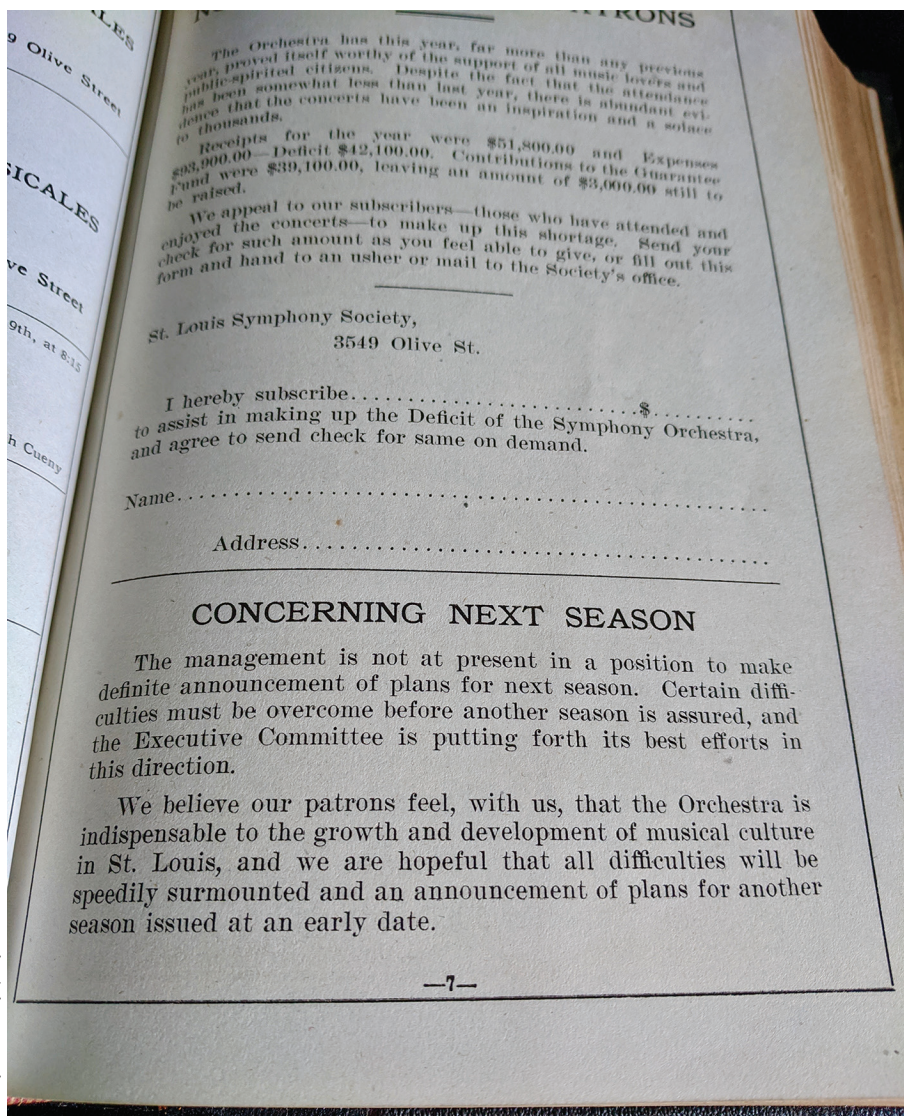
A show-must-go-on spirit also drove the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, which in May 1918 tapped Russian pianist Ossip Gabrilowitsch as its next music director. Gabrilowitsch had signed a one-year contract on the condition that the orchestra build a world-class concert hall. Meanwhile, the flu slipped into Detroit from the U.S. Naval Training Station at River Rouge and public gathering spots were shuttered by mid-October. Despite the pandemic and backdrop of World War I, plans for the 2,000-seat Orchestra Hall forged ahead. Construction began on June 1, 1919 and the hall was largely complete four months and 23 days later.

But the Orchestra Hall story had a tragic coda. Horace Dodge, vice president of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra board, who donated \$100,000 towards the hall’s construction, contracted influenza during the third wave of the epidemic. He died from complications including pneumonia in December 1920. DSO musicians—who had serenaded at his daughter’s wedding reception that June—now performed at his funeral.

### No Social Distancing

Social distancing was key to stemming the virus’s spread in 1918, yet workplace rules were inconsistent. The Minneapolis Symphony Orchestra, as the Minnesota Orchestra was then known, continued to rehearse throughout late 1918, even as the city of Minneapolis banned public gatherings for six weeks. On November 10, while the ban was still in effect, the local health board allowed the orchestra, led by Emil Oberhoffer, to give a free concert for U.S. military soldiers and sailors. A week later, the ban was lifted and the season-opening concert, featuring violinist Mischa Elman, proceeded.

In Cincinnati, the health department denied requests by the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra to allow it to continue rehearsing during the city-wide ban on gatherings. The orchestra pleaded that it would take additional precautions, such as barring musicians whose family members had contracted the flu. But the health



Courtesy of St. Louis Symphony Orchestra

Planning was difficult during the pandemic, and the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra responded with flexibility and regular updates in the local press and its program books.

authorities held firm, and eventually the orchestra moved its rehearsals to the village of St. Bernard where a ban was not in effect.

In Chicago, the influenza epidemic first appeared at the Great Lakes Naval Training Station on September 8, 1918. As it spread through the population, the city's health commissioner ordered all theaters and movie houses closed on October 14, prompting the Chicago Symphony Orchestra to call off two weeks of concerts. When theaters were allowed to reopen, it was on the condition that they close promptly by 10 p.m., "and with threat of pains and penalties for the patron who should cough or sneeze without smother-

halls darkened and the orchestra's tour was thrown into disarray, the musicians waited out the flu bans in the recording studio, cutting albums of Bizet, Saint-Saëns, and Delibes for Columbia Records.

New York City did not impose any significant theater closures during the fall of 1918, in part because a pronounced wave of infections that spring had afforded a significant natural immune protection, says John Barry, author of *The Great Influenza: The Story of the Deadliest Pandemic in History*. "It was almost unique in that regard," he writes in an e-mail. The *New York American* newspaper reported in October 1918 that "the specter of the Hispanic malady [sic] has had little effect

been more damaging so far as the patronage of music is concerned, than war and burdensome taxes." Yet flanked by advertisements for diva recitals and player pianos, the article sounded a hopeful note. "There seems to be a disposition in every quarter to secure, as nearly as possible, a full quota of musical entertainment."

As we face the 2020 pandemic, the lessons from a century ago are stark. The premature lifting of restrictions on gatherings led to further outbreaks of the flu in 1918 and 1919. Misinformation and a frequent disregard for science thrived in the pre-digital age just as it does now on social media. Today's orchestral field, meanwhile, is far more complex, with fraught implications for scheduling, musicians' contracts, media agreements, fundraising, and more. But the public's need for orchestral music remains—whether it means beaming performances into hospital rooms or delivering smaller, remote concerts to audiences isolated at home. It's the art form's greater healing role that may point to new paths forward. **S**

Courtesy of St. Louis Symphony Orchestra

**Symphony Concert Dates Changed.** The first popular concert of the Symphony Orchestra has been tentatively postponed from next Sunday until Nov. 17, on account of the influenza quarantine. The ban on gatherings was held to apply to rehearsals, which were to have started tomorrow. The week lost at the beginning of the season will be made up at the end, the closing concert taking place March 30 instead of March 23.

The St. Louis Symphony Orchestra's 1918-19 season didn't start until November, when the influenza quarantine was mostly over. Nevertheless, the orchestra postponed the season by a week, as reported in the *St. Louis Post-Dispatch* on November 3, 1918.

ing the explosion in a handkerchief," according to *Musical America*. Attendance dipped after the hiatus, but this was due to several contributing factors, says Frank Villella, director of the CSO's Rosenthal Archives. The orchestra's popular music director, the German-born Frederick Stock, was absent from the podium that fall, as he worked to finish an incomplete citizenship application. And with the signing of the Armistice that ended World War I on November 11, patrons may have been exhausted following what was called "the war to end all wars."

**Unexpected Effects**

If there was one ensemble that earns points for tenacity during the Spanish flu pandemic, it may be the orchestra of the Paris Conservatory, which arrived in New York on October 12, 1918 for a 60-city U.S. tour, under the baton of André Messager. The orchestra played two concerts at the Metropolitan Opera House before the flu claimed the life of a musician, violinist Eduardo Fernandez, whose body had to be transported back to Paris. As concert

on concert givers, though the dread of contagion is keeping many music lovers at home or out of doors." The New York Philharmonic gave a full slate of concerts at Carnegie Hall that season.

The classical music field of 1918-19 tended to put a brave face on the pandemic, and it's unclear whether any orchestras suffered lasting setbacks from the flu's second wave (the third wave in 1919 appears have been far less consequential). Creative responses were few. Darius Milhaud's Sonata for Flute, Oboe, Clarinet and Piano includes a dirge for the victims of the epidemic. Songs like "Spanish Flu Blues" and "Oh, You Flu!" took a lighter approach. There were no grand requiems or symphonic laments for the victims despite the fact that, globally, some 50 million people died in the pandemic—ten million more than had perished in World War I.

"The last traces of the Spanish Influenza epidemic are percolating through the musical news of the country," reported *Musical America* on November 30, 1918. "In its actual effect this plague ... has

BRIAN WISE writes about music for outlets including *BBC Music Magazine*, *MusicalAmerica.com* and *Strings*. He is also the producer of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's national radio broadcasts.

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