

First Person

Every issue of *Symphony* delivers the news about more than a hundred orchestras, musicians, administrators, board members, volunteers. The Coda page presents the perspectives of individuals from inside—or outside—the orchestra field. As we head into 2020, here's a sample of what some of them had to say over the past few years.

If you are an arts organization, you are expected to be a leader in the culture. And that requires a big-picture kind of creativity beyond simply executing art.
—Teddy Abrams, conductor

These days, so many people say that orchestras sound the same everywhere. It's not true.
—Leif Ove Andsnes, pianist

Some of the skills you learn studying music and playing football are the same. In football, the players make it look easy. It's the same with music. Great musicians make it look effortless. Once you start playing, or you're on the field and moving, you realize that it isn't easy. But as long as you keep practicing, you can get there.
—Lorenzo Carter, New York Giants linebacker

I am often asked if it's hard to go from early training as a classical musician to play jazz, to go from something that is often quite codified to making music where it's in the moment. Classical musicians have their rules, and we have our rules. We play the same instruments. I'd like to see more back and forth.
—Ron Carter, jazz bassist

The canon of American roots music and the body of classical music speak to our souls. With them, something resonates in your heart, in your soul, that never becomes irrelevant. If world peace ever happens, it will be because people played

their music to each other. It's not going to be politicians. It will be artists.
—Rosanne Cash, singer-songwriter

The symphony orchestra is a major column at the core of our civilization, not a luxury or a special-interest art form. What could be more inspiring than 80-some dedicated musicians, focusing their lives of discipline generously and passionately to create something beautiful?
—Ben Folds, singer-songwriter

Film music is seeing a huge upswing in popularity right now, and that makes sense: for a majority of our audiences, movie scores are their first (and often only!) exposure to symphonic music. I've done a slew of films with live orchestra, and it's great to see halls filled with film buffs enjoying symphonic music.
—Sarah Hicks, conductor

I generally use a computer when I compose. When I'm away from the computer, I write ideas down on the back of an envelope to help me remember. If I'm on my bicycle, I'll stop my bike and just quietly sing something into my phone.
—Gabriel Prokofiev, composer

We created Chiragh—the South Asian Symphony Orchestra because we believe music speaks the language of peace. There is magic to music. It rises above the strife between nations. The right to music is a basic human right.
—Nirupama Rao, diplomat

We can warm up classical music simply by taking it temporarily off the pedestal of our concert hall and relaxing with it. Doesn't everyone deserve such beauty and pleasure?
—Rick Robinson, bassist

When I look at the tradition of classical music, I see a tradition of innovation. Music has constantly been evolving. I see a lot of effort to create new outreach, and one of the questions on so many people's lips goes something like this: "How can we bring more people into the concert hall?" Perhaps we could start with a bigger question: "Where can we find more opportunities to share the music we love?"
—Joshua Roman, cellist

Public support for the arts does not come without serious relationship-building, case-making, and advocacy efforts. The arts have a way of transcending barriers and moving people in the most fundamental ways—and it's through the support of our communities that we are able to succeed.
—Melia Tourangeau, orchestra CEO

The concert experience as we know it has flourished for a mere few hundred years, and for it to continue to thrive will require us to be creatively adaptive in transformational ways. But let's remember that "tradition" and "traitor" have the same Latin root. Therein lays a warning: while undergoing necessary transformation, let us not betray the essence of our tradition.
—Robert Spano, conductor

To me, the arts are something in which one learns a lot about how to experience life more beautifully, more completely; how to understand more profoundly the experiences of other people. I've thought a lot about how to open up our world to people who haven't spent their lives inside music. It seems to me that the new ways that television is interfacing with the Internet can be a part of the process.
—Michael Tilson Thomas, conductor