

June 3, 2020

LEAGUE OF AMERICAN ORCHESTRAS

What is the Artistic Work of Orchestras for Today?

** Communication Access Realtime Translation (CART) is provided in order to facilitate communication accessibility and may not be a totally verbatim record of the proceedings. **

...

(Music)

>>> I'm Jesse Rosen. Welcome back to our Conference. Big thanks to our sponsor, Boomerang Carnets. Yesterday we took a pause from our public-facing activity and inside, spent time thinking hard about how to keep the center of our focus on the violence against Black people in America. We added a session tomorrow at 1:00, led by Dr. Aaron Flagg, chair of the EDI League's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee and associate director of the ~~jazz program at Lincoln Center~~ of the Jazz Program at The Juilliard School. The title of that is anti-Black racism in American orchestras. We invite you to join us. You will be getting something in email soon. We suspend our fund-raising campaign, "Stronger Together," and encourage you to consider making contributions to those organizations in your communities and nationally, doing the work of confronting racism in America and in particular, Black-led organizations.

We will take questions in each half of the session. Use the chat function, and we will answer as many questions as possible. Try not to leave PheedLoop as you will be put out of the session. But if you do, you can join back in easily. I want to give acknowledgment that there may be members of the press in the audience. We want to hear your reactions to the session. There's a place on the PheedLoop platform on the bottom, for the survey. That's very helpful to us.

Today is a double-header. Two amazing conversations, and I can't tell you how happy I am we're having this conversation. We don't talk enough in our business about business and art. Today, we have illustrations of extraordinary, radically different ways of thinking about what is the artistic work of orchestras and how does leadership get executed. Part one will in conversation with Esa-Pekka Salonen, Music Director Designate of the San Francisco Symphony, and Julia Bullock, and then we will shift to hearing from a team from Paraorchestra in the U.K., the only orchestra of disabled musicians on our planet.

We will take questions after part one, then hand it over to Karen.

About a year ago, San Francisco Symphony CEO Mark Hanson called me and said we have a new director, Esa-Pekka Salonen. There's eight other people coming along. He starts reading a list of names. My God, this is incredible, what is the world is so going on! Now we can find out what's going on. It hasn't started yet but we can at least unpack a little bit of what Esa-Pekka Salonen has been thinking. Esa-Pekka, what are you thinking?

Esa-Pekka Salonen: I think the challenges that all orchestras around the globe are facing, especially in the states, are enormous. One of the main issues is how do we serve a community that's increasingly diverse, and where the concertgoing routine inherited from the grandparents and so on is no longer given. Also, sadly, almost globally the amount of music education in schools has diminished greatly. Many people don't have any kind of background in terms of what we do.

How could I make not only a statement, but somehow enable the organization to deal not only with these issues, but to also create an artistic profile that would be interesting. Obviously, I've been around the block, and I know this business well, how orchestras work. I know how to conduct music. But still, my perspective is that of a 60 something man from the northern country. Obviously, there's a huge amount of the world under human experience that I have no concept of.

I'm also old enough to acknowledge this, and for me, the idea of the music director being somehow the god-like figure, top of this organization, in a high hierarchical way doesn't seem interesting, or attractive. Obviously, there must be someone in charge of certain artistic issues. That goes with the job. But to imagine that I would be able, singlehandedly, to guide the San Francisco Symphony into some kind of glorious future would be idiotic. And unrealistic. So I thought the natural obvious way to deal with this lack of expertise is to invite younger people from various parts of the music business, and, whose work I admire and to have them work with me closely in terms of creating new content.

Also, creating new angles to old content, existing content. Also, to help me and the organization in finding new ways to present this fantastic legacy we all love.

Rosen: I realize we probably didn't the table properly and explain that this venture you're embarking on of 8 artistic collaborators in the leadership of the San Francisco Symphony, can you tell folks who those people are?

Salonen: We have Julia Bullock, here, a curator and a soprano. She has a sociological/intellectual/creative angle to everything she does. We have Nick -- a film composer, who is perhaps best known for his haunting tunes for session -- a violinist, improviser, composer, et cetera. We have Claire Chase, flutist, and also a successful organizer of the International Contemporary Ensemble was her baby.

Carol Reiley, a robotics and AI professor at Stanford. I wanted someone outside the music business, to help us find completely new way to approach these issues. Then -- known for his work in the international bands, also emerged as a composer within the so called classical field. And Esperanza Spaulding, an amazing bass guitar player, jazz musician, generally, and also the kind of music she writes and performs is very difficult to categorize.

Rosen: Did you mention Nico Muhly

Salonen: Yes. Well known, a composer, instrumentalist, brilliant guy. I don't think I've seen anyone produce that many -- one sentence, in thirty seconds. He is a very important part of this group.

Rosen: Before getting into how they work, I'm curious how the board fits into this. One can imagine some boards saying, well, we have the new director, but he wants to bring another eight people along. We could see some saying that's not what we wanted, go back and get us just one. How did the board fit in this new arrangement?

Salonen: My impression was that everybody loved the idea. We speak about the audiences getting older and by the way, my great friend and collaborator -- Ernest Fleischmann, said that as long as he remembers, everyone has been complaining about the age of the audience, but we're still in the business. All these issues, and when looking forward organizations such as San Francisco Symphony announces with great noise that they hired a new music director, a 60 something white guy, from Finland, there's a certain element of, oh well, yawn, he might be a good conductor, but it's a big yawn.

It kind of as a gesture, supports the preconceived idea of symphonies being out of touch. So to have this brilliant younger generation collaborators, I thought we can eliminate that part of the discourse. I brought these people with me. Everybody just loved it. It took a little bit of explaining as to what it meant in terms of the daily running of the organization, to be, and I have no idea yet how it will work once we start actually playing concerts together.

But in terms of the conversation we had already, so far, it's been highly stimulating. I've learned so much, and I have started to think about things that I was not thinking about, not even aware of these things before. It's going to be a great, stimulating influence to the entire organization, therefore to be audiences.

Rosen: Recognizing you're still figuring out how this will work, I'm curious, are you thinking of this more as a hub and spoke, where you're the hub with a connection to each artist, or do they work as a team with you?

Salonen: I didn't want to define it. I thought these are such great, intelligent, talented people, that I certainly don't want to be some kind of taskmaster, saying okay, you come up with, and so on. I don't need that, the organization doesn't need that. Also, to get

them physically into the same room has proven pretty much impossible. We're still trying, but it's an ongoing process. The Zoom thing will be the only way to make that happen in the near future.

I thought that everyone would come up with their own projects, own ideas, for the subscription series and for the Sound Box, the alternative performance venue in ~~the~~ our concert hall. Also, most likely events outside of series, where Esa-Pekka is being used, but not necessarily within the grid.

The other aspect is that each of them is informing me and their artistic planning team in terms of the long-term overarching things, and ideas of what we can do. We perform together. The last concerts, both of us conducted this year --

>> I conducted, also.

>> It's most subtle than that. So, we're, we perform together, for the first time ever. I was so happy to somehow show that this is one of my collaborators, and now we're on stage together. This is kind of a preview of things to come. Of course, I was hoping that once, many of these people know each other, but I was hoping there would be some kind of collective projects emerging as well. The main thing was I didn't want to structure the thing from my grid-based point of view. I've been conducting subscription concerts for decades and think in terms of, how many services I have this week, we have so and so many concerts, rehearsals, so what can I do to fit into that grid?

An essential question for orchestras around the globe, especially in the states, is that what if we turn that upside down, and start it from the content? Artistic ideas, we want to do this, so let's make a grid that supports that idea. In order to get to this point, I need help.

Rosen: Many would support that effort. It would be a huge change in our field.

Esa-Pekka, thinking five years from now, say you are onto your next collaborators, what is your hope of what will have been accomplished? What will be the legacy of this body of work?

Salonen: I'm not terribly keen to make sweeping statements about the glorious new future of the San Francisco Symphony. I think, ideally, we would have established a new way to run an orchestra, a new way to look at the role of an orchestra in a community. Ideally everybody would acknowledge that the San Francisco Symphony has made some important steps towards establishing the orchestra's presence, everywhere. Not only geographically, but also globally.

What will happen, happening as we speak, is that every performing organization around the globe is looking into producing remote content. Obviously, I'd like to see the San Francisco Symphony as one of the leaders in that process. In that process, my collaborators will play a very important part.

Rosen: Thank you. You're in Finland now. I know you're paying close attention to what's

happening here. As you look at what's occurring with the incredible violence toward Black people, and all our issues associated with that, with our police, how are you responding to this? What comes up for you as an artist and artistic leader, looking at what we're experiencing?

Salonen: Despite the horror of the news coverage, and I've been glued to the various news media, in my house, I think something good is going to come out of all this. I think the young people are totally engaged around the globe, not just in the U.S. I saw footage of Black Lives Matter demonstration in Helsinki. I was appalled, people of all ages, mostly young, and I think that's, especially the young people, have had enough. The change will happen. Of course, when I think about my -- what are they going to inherit from my generation? I'm not very proud of that legacy. They're going to inherit the massive, massive environmental problem, which is perhaps the most important problem we, as a, we humans, have ever had to deal with.

That's still waiting, we're dealing with the pandemic, and this racial injustice issue, leadership issues around the globe and so on. The scariest thought is that everything going on is just like play compared to the real issue, which is change. And my generation is handing this to the generation of our children. I feel very mad about that. I'm devastated. I feel so ashamed now that we started talking about this. The good thing is that the youth is engaged. They have seen it and are on the case. They can't be stopped. What we're seeing today is the last breaths of the dinosaurs. The oppressive, ultra conservative authoritarian forces. They're in their, we are seeing the last throes of their existence. The new generation will take over and it will be a challenging, complex time for everyone.

Something good and constructive is going to come out of all this.

Rosen: Thank you very much, Esa-Pekka. I want to turn now to Julia and remind everyone that the bios of both Eka-Pekka and Julia are in the PheedLoop platform. Julia has sung with opera companies all over the world. I heard her in settings of poetry by Langston Hughes. She joins us from Munich. What happened? Did Esa-Pekka call you up and say come do this thing? How did the conversation go?

Bullock: He was on my black list, I will say, for a while, because we were supposed to have worked together in -- and he pulled out of the performance -- progress and we tried many times after that, to find an opportunity to work together. It just never worked out. It may or may not be, so when he texted me out of the blue, sure, we could attempt to connect some way, if you want. I was really surprised with this offer and opportunity. Mostly because anybody who has worked with Esa-Pekka knows him or sees him conduct, he's not a presumptuous person. Everything you just spoke about now, none of us are trying to sell this as if we have figured out exactly how we will be collaborating, influencing each other's work. We don't yet know. Even if some of us, it takes time to figure out how you will, just how a group will function. It just takes time. To be honest about that with each other and transparent with the public about what's happening, but I

feel we're super eager to be in contact with each other, to get to know each other better and to, you have to see where this all can go.

Any time I'm thinking about curating anywhere, I have to first understand the environment I'm entering. So everyone is doing a lot of research on San Francisco right now, to be honest. Doing research about how these, I'm assuming MTT has done amazing things, he's provided a lot for the San Francisco community, but how do we keep the conversation going, and how, the question now is not are we trying to engage in community outreach, saying please come into our hall. The question is now, what is it that the San Francisco community is needing, and we're trying to ask those questions, and go to the people who are, well, on the ground, willing to engage in the conversation.

Again, that takes time. So we can come up with really exciting new programs because each of us has proposed a lot of cool ideas, independently. But over time I'm psyched. I won't stifle that excitement.

Rosen: Great. You use the term, curator to, describe your work. It's a relative new work in the orchestra field. We talk about programming. When you think about that, that word, the work of curating, how would you differentiate that from what we used to think of as programming?

[Laughter]

Bullock: Thanks a lot! Hmm. I don't know if they're so different. Maybe context. Context. With programming, I think just context and content driven programming is how I'd describe curation. I'd have is to think about the impression I'm looking to leave, which is to the just how has my voice sounded in the space. But what are the messages being delivered, are they being received, and if not, that means I have not done my job necessarily, figuring out the most clear way to deliver the material.

That sometimes has to do with the delivery itself, but also how the work is contextualized.

Rosen: When I think about your residency at the Metropolitan Museum of Art, you were painting with a big palette. In other words, it was a whole scale of five programs, each, uncovering new dimensions of both intellectual and musical life and the visual arts. Having had that experience, in a highly curated set of programs, what did you learn that help you see think about your future work in partnering with other organizations?

Bullock: The most, had the most amazing support team around me. Limor Tomer -- who runs the Met Live Arts, she didn't present the Met Museum, as this is the ultimate artistic space to enter, something important here. She was just, say what you want to say, share what you want to share. And gave me resources and just support, and an ear, so I'm, and good, honest feedback. We had a super cool and candid, always, very candid, exchange, talking about the work I wanted to do.

That's one thing. San Francisco is so available, and wanting to be present, but this is

also a big transitional time in the organization. So we're getting to know each other. They have been, honesty, clarity, that's the main thing. That's what excites me about thinking about other organizations. I don't make decisions to go and work in a place or on any project now, and that's a privilege to be able to say, but in my early times singing, I was discerning about the people I want be engaging with. And if I was given a platform, what I also given space and enough, when we really tried to develop something, not just present a glossy, well produced product.

Rosen: Forgive me if this question asks for things that aren't figured out yet, but thinking about the San Francisco relationship, the same question I asked Esa-Pekka, are there aspirations you have, things you imagine this relationship unfolding, at the end of this?

Bullock: I'm hoping I will be a conductor.

[Laughter]

No. I'm not going to project in the future that way. Not helpful. At least right now, I really have no energy to project that far.

Rosen: So staying close to the here and now, I know you're also, in Germany, paying close attention to what's happening in the United States. You regard your work as being associated with change, and social justice, and activism. Because what you know through your heart and head right now.

Bullock: Very personally, it's so hard not to be back in the U.S. right now, not to be on the streets right now. I know that's not the only way you can create change, put your resources, and really work. It's not the only way to protest. I'm just, that's very present, though I'm struggling personally with that.

I'm having, it's interesting, with yesterday, the Blackout Tuesday, because in some ways, it was, most arts organizations, yes, showing solidarity, saying we're here together, our minds on this. Then, it turned into a situation where there was a misunderstanding, the whole thing took off and ended up Blackout an entire day of the way for those activists on the ground and those protesting being in touch with each other. In an, it shows me how, how good efforts can be, to, how much more aware we must be about, just, we can not just rest on the fact that we are wanting our mind and energy to go towards something and hope good things will come out of it. It was such proof that everyone's actions have serious results, we spend our time and energy going over patterns of human behavior, looking at human, clocking human emotion, trying to make sense of things. But if we're not hypervigilant about what we learn from these stories we're telling, and why are we having to tell similar stories again and again and again, and making very clear to the audience, we have to keep saying this, the same thing in multiple ways, is because we still have are not all awakening in some place together. We haven't all received the clear message yet.

In some ways, this is not new, what's happening. It has been going on a long time, it's

now out. Everyone, there's now this awareness, a global awareness, and only because we all had to stop, physically stop, on our own personal pursuits and look around, at each other. The beauty of being in a musical space, physically, in a shared space, we're all becoming more aware, hyper-aware of each other. Listen to each other.

Feeling the impact as a group, while also having our individual experiences. So you can see my mind is all over the place when I'm talk about this. I'm not prepared, I'm not prepared to make a curated statement about what's going on right now. Maybe something more digestible will come through in questions.

Rosen: I hear one powerful theme in what you're saying. The need to continue, this is not something we take a day off from, where we make some gesture, then go back to normal. This is ongoing. I hear the frustration of telling the same story over and over again, without change happening. It's been a frustration in our community of organizations, that the change in our field has been so slow in coming.

Speaking of persistence, you have a work called history's persistent voices, which is planned to have a future, as an ongoing life, hopefully with San Francisco, and that was my timer going off saying we're out of time. Let's give you a second. Can you say a few words about that?

Bullock: We're waiting until we can do it together while we're in person because part of that piece is about, creation of community and all that, but the origin of *History's Persistent Voice*, yes, it started at the Met Museum and was based on words by some visual artists, transcribing interviews, and their life stories. I know that before that, the project, I want to do something around new settings of songs by Jessie Montgomery. I was reading Brian Stevenson's book, *Just Mercy*, and he talked about the links between slavery, Jim Crow, and mass incarceration. He printed a poem of one of the client's he was working, works of an inmate, that got me thinking about the 21st century slave song.

Where, what do those sound like, who's responsible for writing that? Do they come from many places? They come from many places. We focused the energy thinking about justice the words of these visual artists that were in this exhibition at the Met at the same time. But my idea always was to bring in the words of those who were incarcerated, and in San Francisco, Bay Area, San Quentin prison had an ongoing program, arts program, writing program, and yes, I spent time looking through poetry from those who are currently incarcerated.

Now we have a bunch of new compositions across the U.S., there's interest now in every place we would bring this piece. There would be an additional commission, we will see how much it grows. We're excited about the support that's been, and energy that's been put towards that already.

Rosen: I let us go over, but let me thank you, Julia, Esa-Pekka. Maybe two simple ideas to pull away from your comments, comments, is the extraordinary artistic potential that is available to us in the orchestra field, so far beyond what we ever imagined, and how by

bring new voices to the table, we really fulfill that possibility of opening up the musical possibilities for our musicians, our audiences. Thank you both for illuminating those ideas for us. I hope you will stay for our part two, and with that, I will hand this over to Karen Yair, for the second game in today's double header. Thank you.

Yair: Thank you so much, Julia, and Esa-Pekka. And Jesse. That was a very interesting discussion. I'm very happy to introduce our three speakers this afternoon, Joanne Roughton-Arnold, a collaborating artist with Paraorchestra, and founder of the opera company, and Charles Hazlewood and Jonathan Harper. I encourage all to look at their bios on the website to get a full sense of their accomplishments. We will learn about an artist model, in which disabled and non-disabled are co-creators of new orchestral works.

We want to share a short individual to give you a sense of what the social network about.

(Video)

Thank you very much. That was the Nature of Why, from 2018, in a collaboration between the Paraorchestra musicians and -- six dancers -- Charles, can I turn to you, ask you to talk us through what we saw on screen and what it says about the Paraorchestra's artistic vision.

Charles Hazlewood: Thank you for joining us. It was lovely to hear Esa-Pekka and Julia, unfolding this beautiful new model for, it's ironic because it ties in with what we have been doing here in Paraorchestra. The idea of narrative of why, pretty much all the other projects we initiated in the last few years has been entirely collegiate. In a way, the old model of the composer writing a piece for the orchestra, which they rehearse and perform, it's not broken, but there's another way, organic that, creates further investment on half of all the collaborators and other artists involved.

It's Paraorchestra is an eclectic range of musicians and musical works, much more broad than a conventional symphony orchestra. We have sitar, lap top players, and, you have a composer saying, writes us, I think it's unlikely you'd find any human being on the planet who could write it deeply, authentically for all those fields. In R and D, the composer comes, a representative sample of musicians from the umbrella, to understand their personalities and spirit, to get their heads around the unusual instruments they play. A number of them play by a digital platform, you may have an impairment so can't play an oboe, but you can play a digital platform. So there's a whole new world and the only what way a composer can write with a grassroots value, so I've been around the block a few times, and there's no, I've never been in an environment before where the musicians hit the stage with a deep, deep sense of investment because they have been so much a primary part of the creation of the work.

With assistive technology, to think how to embrace digital platforms when the orchestra has instruments that have been around for several hundred years. What we would say is

actually the embracing, to have unusual platforms, that's been about leveling the playing field, very important, why would we miss out on essentially millions of people who make music to highest level because they don't fit into a box. It's given us an amazing artistic opportunity. It opened the door on the whole plethora of extraordinary instruments that emerged since the birth of electricity. Why would we not take advantage of all the sonic possibilities?

Yair: Thank you so much. Joanne, we saw you in the video and heard your voice in the *Nature of Why*. What brought you to that moment?

Roughton-Arnold: I transitioned from being a professional violinist. I auditioned for professional opera companies, my vision is not -- had to hide it from audience. I was advised to, been a principle artist, a chorus member, et cetera, et cetera, I did auditions, no big deal but I'm partly sighted, but not a safety risk. The reaction was usually embarrassment, and no work. I stopped saying anything and began to be secretive about my eye condition. I had my first contract singing with -- seasons working with a company. I spent four seasons keeping quiet in case someone noticed I couldn't see the conductor well.

In the fourth season, I was approached by the Royal National Institution of Blind People, and they ask is if I'd be interested in helping run a workshop for children. It made me come out to the producers at the opera company. I decide, 2012 came and gone, the Paralympics had come and gone and it was time to have a voice, so I told them I was visually impaired. I explained I hadn't said anything because to a lot of people, two and two make five and they think you will fall off the stage, something ridiculous like that. But I got involved in the work shop that year and following year, ran that workshop. It was a relief to be able to say, when you talked to the cast, can you use names, because I can't tell if you're looking at me. I commissioned a new one -- produced, perform in London. I was asked to sing with Paraorchestra, and the *Nature of Why* came along and wow, it was the most phenomenal project to be part of.

Yair: Can you give us more detail about that? It would be great to hear what's new about that experience.

Roughton-Arnold: This is a highly competitive profession. Wherever, you're always wanting to be sure you give reasons to hire you, hence the need I felt about being quiet about my disability. The ability to be loud and proud about, nobody at rehearsal, know that everybody has your back, understands that we all have challenges, whether or not you identify as disabled. Everybody has things they're dealing with. In the rehearsal room, knowing that I could say, I don't know if you're making eye contact with me so could you give a huge up beat. It, Paraorchestra is my family. It's just the most wonderful, loving place to make music. And the fact that we can share this with the rest of the world, get reactions, like in the *Nature of Why*, two incredible experiences spring to mind.

You see on the video, the audience is on the stage with us, moving around us. We're moving around them. You get close enough to smell a dancer. I can sneak up behind people and start singing, great game for an opera singer. I had to sing a high B flat. I suddenly realized, I was near a little girl, about 18 months old, and I was thinking, little ears and an operatic voice, I need to float this. Please don't cry, please don't cry. She held my gaze the whole duration of the long note, with an amazed look of delight on her face. It was magic.

Another moment, there was, were lovely young women in the audience. One of them looked across the room at me, reached out her hand and I thought, you're asking me to dance. So I took her hand. She came into the center of what became a natural circle and we improvised this dance. She just put her hands on my shoulder, and she stayed with me while I sang. At the end, there were beautiful happy feelings, amazing.

Yair: Thank you. You spoke about the kind of emotional burden you carried in terms of having to conceal your impairment. The release from anxiety, could you talk about how that affected your creative direction?

Roughton-Arnold: Why can't we do this in the opera world? You know what, we can. So I got together with a good friend of mine, from New Zealand, and she and I decided to co-found -- our thing is to break down barriers on and off stage. Like the Paraorchestra, we use a healthy mix of disabled and non-disabled professional artists. There's no compromise on quality. It's making great art and we're putting accessibility at the heart of the creative process. The normal process, when an opera company adds on, are bolted on after the creative process. You might get a signer on the edge of the stage.

But our approach is that every show should be accessible to everybody. We put those accessible elements into the show, not on the edge. Our first production last year was a double bill of *Hotspur*, paired with *Pierrot Lunaire*. And we collaborated with Signdance International. They extended sign language into dance beautifully. We had a dancer playing the same character as me, expressing her inner consciousness. There was no ping pong looking at one, then the other, it was all in the center. With *Pierrot Lunaire*, someone mimed, and we put subtle visual cues in so he knew how to move. We will experiment with another idea of making opera available to people in deaf audiences.

Yair: Charles and Jonathan, because the mission is fundamental to Paraorchestra's vision, I wanted to take you back and ask where the mission originated.

Hazlewood: I have four children. My youngest is now 13, born with a form of -- in her short life, my only daughter, she started to make me think about the issues, I can count the number of musicians I encountered. There's no sign saying you're not welcome, if you're disabled. But the barriers are so grassroots. In the U.K., with a relatively enlightened attitude toward disability, but there are a large number of holds here where you can't get onto, you have a wheelchair. It's so basic.

For people who use digital platforms that aren't well understood, we have no teachers in

schools skilled in the areas to train up musicians in the future. For most people, educated, liberal minded people, it's still hard for them to put the words, disability, and excellence, in the same sentence. It's a fact. With the Paralympics, it's taken over 50 years for people to trust it. It's not about getting disabled athletes out the door. The 2012 games in London was the moment where the paradigm shifted. Nobody watching it for the extraordinary levels of sportsmanship. So the universal language of music, what are we doing?

We don't have the right situation in place to allow for it so I formed Paraorchestra. They performed at the 2012 games. It's not just about leveling playing fields. It's about the extraordinary opportunities that musicians with disabilities have. People assume the disabled to able bodied thing is a one way street. The assumption is that they will do everything they can is to become members of the able bodied world. But this is in no way one direction. The able bodied have so much to learn from musicians with disabilities.

I like to jam with people, sit down, make spontaneous music. Wherever I am in the world, we always get the same scenario. There's a terrible, long silence because no one wants to be the first, fearful of looking stupid, waiting for someone else to take the plunge, that goes on, so it's like all the oxygen is sucked out of the room. Eventually, everyone dives in. It takes ages to people, for people to start. It took us about two minutes because if you have to use a chair, a sight impairment, if you can't hear the way most people hear, you have a courage about you, open-heartedness, lack of petty issues of ego, and within minutes, beautiful music was emerging, people trusting, therefore, 100% open to everyone else.

Yair: I'd love to hear more about what that's like in the room. We talked about R&D. What does this feel like?

Hazlewood: It's the most liberating feeling in the world. The conductor is the facilitator, it's because of Jonathan Harper and our storied team, they created a strong, stage, environment, a play ground so we can just hit the sky. Every project is done in this way, everyone has a seat at the table, a say in what's going on. Constantly holding a mirror up to everyone else so we reflect back to each other, finding the flow.

It's unstoppable. I'm proud that in the early days, people would watch our gigs because they felt they were supporting a worthy cause. But the point is, having had a bloody amazing time. You can have an orchestra, and 40% of the musicians can be disabled. You can embrace any form of integration and make the orchestra a universal entity. The orchestra is a supreme example, that music should reflect that universality.

Yair: Thank you. You talked about working on new commissions. Dancers, composers, can you talk about how the pieces fit together and specifically the composer's role.

Hazlewood: We have an interesting project, due to be premiered late this year. It's been put on ice, of course. It's called Beethoven-Rendering, taking the 5th Symphony, the 8

years of extraordinary testimony to this genius. It's easy to put them on a cloud. If you look at Mozart's manuscripts, it's hard to believe he didn't breathe different air from us. But the sketches of the 5th Symphony give you a sense of the humanity of the man, the pitfalls, moments of annihilating self doubt. We commissioned four astonishing young composers, and it happens, two females, two males. Two disabled. They would take elements of the sketches, and use them as starting points to new music. The orchestra worked at the idea of rubbing out the fourth -- it's wonderful to experience it in a great hall, but there's another way.

When I was a child, I was sitting alone in an auditorium and the conductor said, did you ever sit in the middle of an orchestra? Knowledge prepared me for this huge sound. We have been trying hard to recreate that way. So there's a 60 piece orchestra, but the audience, making their own experience, through that experience of the piece. So it's a giant sonic installation.

Yair: You talked about a strong safe and fertile playground -- what makes it strong and safe?

Roughton-Arnold: The incredible atmosphere, where there's no fear in the room, no ego. We all have a voice, can share ideas. I'm, there's not worry about what if I get it wrong. No fear.

Hazlewood: Being wrong is only an opportunity, there's no such thing as wrong, every time someone does something wrong opens the door to an arena of new opportunity. I have no doubt, that we're reaching the end of a curve, and the night is darkest before the dawn. In rehearsals, leading up to the premiere. A piece, it's exploring the moments of vulnerability, wearing it on the outside, not the inside. The disabled musicians are tremendous at doing that. It always creates no opportunity.

Yair: Jonathan, we have a lot of orchestra managers on the call. I'd love to hear from you, management wise, how do you make that happen?

Harper: The starting point of Paraorchestra is that we don't have a corporate model. The organization is five years old. The team come from all different sectors from inside and outside the arts. We don't start by thinking what does a classical orchestra do, we must copy that. In terms of the model, we framed it around creating an environment where an artist can flourish. That's about the team really buying into the project from the start. That's easy with Charles and artists like Joe. It becomes a team effort, not just a leader telling you what to do. It's a collaboration. So we created an environment where we push each other, some of the team is disabled, some but we're all proper allies. We push ourselves to improve the environment for disabled artists, to understand more.

If anyone has a bias, we try to talk about it and remove it. We are lucky to have an arts funding system that allows us to take risks. We get some state funding, but we still have to be a commercial organization. We care about brand and audience. It's been interesting, because the journey of starting with, taking a repertoire, looking at what's

relevant for now means the audiences are younger, more diverse. So the story becomes interesting to future audiences, as well. It's been the first time in my 25 year career where it has really felt like a team effort. We're open to discussion, reflect on the things that don't work and improve for the future. We have values around kindness, well being. The way we work with the musicians, we provide the support and care they need to work at the top of their game, whether there's an assistant, or the right hotel room, travel requirements.

That flows into the way the team works and care for each other. It creates a wonderful environment, to make great art.

Yair: What does that mean in terms of your response to the pandemic, could you share about that?

Harper: Like everyone, everything stopped. We were meant to be in Hong Kong, touring the U.K., premiering this, but we realized quickly that the important thing was about work with the musicians, the reality check of that, if you're disabled, you're more likely to be affected by COVID-19, in terms of vulnerability and in the sense of the environment you live within and the work you get in the future. So the team's priorities have been all about the people we work with. Supporting their finances, well being, ability to apply for funds, and I hope as the sector reopens, we will also be at the forefront of working with them, they're not second in line.

Yair: Your focus on the individual artist begs the question, how do you make decisions about who's involved in shaping this work. How does it play out in practice through the Beethoven video.

Hazlewood: I recognize that a lot of people watching this are, for orchestras, can't be as fleet of foot as we are able to be. The Paraorchestra family is an umbrella of many musicians, 40% identify as disabled. In a way, it's about talking to them about what's in our music world, what ingredients we have. Seeing what excites them. It's about, again, the presence, a model to theaters, the thing about getting under the bonnet of music, and getting under the instruments, understanding how they work.

One of the trumpeters had a terrible car accident, and he's now paralyzed from the neck down. He plays an instrument called head space, an extraordinary thing, he blows a small amount of air down a tube which works into software on his laptop and he has a whole orchestra's worth of instruments he can play in all manner of ways. Understanding the parameters of his instrument, there's always a sense of deep, organic connection. Our projects take time to build. Well being, you, Bernstein's quote about when you need to do something great, there's not enough time.

We like to take our time, let things breathe and do workshop try outs, get interesting ideas, feedback. We have a percentage of resource supplied by the arts council, and of course, the proof is in the success of the work. It's a very ground up process. Every

musician on the stage 100% believes in what they're doing.

Yair: Thank you so much. I've enjoyed hearing about the process of creation, and a safe, rich space for creative exploration including everyone. Thank you so much for sharing that.

We will show how this plays out in practice by sharing a video. It's based on the rehearsals last year for Beethoven-Rendering.

Harper: This film is a few minutes from our first research and development period for the Beethoven-Rendering product we made to share with potential producing partners and to have at conferences. This is a perfect place to show it.

Yair: Great. Take it away. Thank you.

(Video)

Yair: Thank you so much for sharing that. Wonderful to see the process. Some of us had poor video quality so it will be posted online. I will close, and thanks our wonderful speakers. Thank you to Julia and Esa-Pekka, to Jonathan, Joanne Roughton-Arnold and Charles. I want to thank Julia for her emotional labor for being present with us and sharing her personal thoughts. Thank you so much, Julia. Thank you to all our panelists, Jesse and everyone for joining us today. Thank you to our sponsors, too, we really appreciate your support.

Today's session takes place in the context of deep pain and fear being expressed by our colleagues and families of color. We all have so much work to do, so many ways, in the year to come and I want to honor Julia's words. She said we can't rest on the hope that our good intentions will lead to change. I want to echo Jesse's urge that, we should donate to local and national organizations fighting for racial injustice and in Black-led organizations. And I invite you to join us tomorrow's 1:00 session, Anti-Black Racism and American Orchestras. Thank you for a wonderful session today. Thank you all.