May 19, 2020

LEAGUE OF AMERICAN ORCHESTRAS

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(Music)

>>> Welcome to the League of American Orchestra's online conference, global stages, local stories. I'm James, manager of artistic and learning programs. The equity diversity inclusion track including this session is made possible by a grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. If you found value from our conference, please consider making a gift. Please click on the button on the left navigation column, click on this session and the button that give us that feedback. We will be taking questions. Please use the chat function in feed loop or Zoom. A
recording of today's session along with other materials will be available in the session schedule by tomorrow. As a tip, if you navigate away from this broadcast in the browser window you will leave the session. But you can easily rejoin. Just click on the session. I will welcome a couple members of the press. We appreciate you attending. We would love to hear about your experience today. There's a link to a brief survey where you can share comments. The feedback is invaluable to the League. I hope you will take a minute to complete it.

Welcome, and welcome to today's session. Outside the Box: An Unconventional Orchestra Musician's Perspective. We have three musicians with highly successful careers. They regularly perform in orchestras, some of which they founded. Soulful Symphony, UPCO, and they have played in bands of leading popular artists. Their music making is heard on countless movie sound tracks. They have appeared on the Tonight Show, SNL, the
late show, Good Morning America, and many
others. They founded thriving
organizations such as diverse concert
artists. Please read their bios, take in
the full breadth of their accomplishments.
Alex Laing, principal clarinetist of the
Phoenix Symphony will be the moderator of
the conversation today. Over to you,
Alex.

>> Thank you. Welcome to everyone
out there, to my wonderful panel. So
excited to talk to you. This session is
on the committing to equity, inclusion
track. Advancing the values of EDI,
critical to the future work of American
orchestras. On the frame we take today,
League orchestras are poorer and worse off
right now, not in the future, right now,
for not having these incredible musicians,
in their ranks. We will take the time to
understand better why they love
orchestras, why they’re choosing not to
pursue full time employment in League
orchestras, how their unconventional
career paths and application of orchestral
training has unfolded and what their practices teach League orchestras. Please say a little bit about yourself, tell us how you find what your work is about.

>> Thank you. Glad to be here.

I'm Stephanie Matthews, I'm a violinist.
I'm the founder and creative director of String Candy. I'm also the co-founder of the Recollective Orchestra. It's an all black orchestra, whose mission is to raise the visibility and profile of black classical musicians. I'm based in Los Angeles and the majority of the work I do is within the TV, film industry. I do a lot of scoring on the day to day and do a lot of collaborating with music directors, artists, labels, directly. I hire musicians and others talents, and singers, drummers, band instruments, as well for tour placements and shows. And for recording and live performances.

>> Fantastic. Tia?

>> Hi, I'm Tia Allen, a violist and I'm currently the violist for Jagged Little Pill on Broadway. In addition, I'm
the founder of diverse concert artists.

The mission, founded to increase diversity been classical and cross over music. I'm also music educator, and a contractor. As an educator, I teach for Harlem school of the arts. I have contracts with some of the largest companies, from twitter to Google, for private functions, to Kennedy Center and also band.

>> Fantastic. Lady Jess?

>> Hi. I work in New York and Los Angeles primarily based in New York, though. I'm a violinist. My favorite job is performing with Beyonce. I also am co-artistic director of UPCO, in New York. In Los Angeles, I work with her, or another mainstream artists, or in the film industry, partly due to Stephanie, I was on the lion King sound track. And Stephanie put me on my first TV gig with SNL. I also contracted, the biggest was for SOLANGE. It's a pretty varied career. Most of the classical work is in New York. I also taught with the harmony program, alongside Tia, and I'm playing, I'm on the
board of harmony programs. I don't
currently teach regularly, but most of my
work in performance is -- of the stage and
active representation at all levels.

> Fantastic. We have had a
number of interesting conversations
leading up to this public session. We
talked about opportunity and how you
sought opportunity, created it, how it has
been denied. We talked about networks,
how some were closed to you, and how you
built your own and what you believe about
the power of networks. We talked about
success, how the training we went through
gave us a definition of success that you
three found unfulfilling, maybe
unsatisfying, so you developed your own
definitions of success. We talked about
resilience, learning by doing, how it
related to your work and how you work now,
especially during the pandemic. How your
path really prepared you for this moment
and how it can teach orchestra musicians.
So, opportunity, networks, success,
resiliency, can we use that to frame the
conversation we have been having for our audience? Take this first one, opportunity, Tia, you had wonderful things to say about that, the importance of opportunity and the floor is yours. Tia?

>> When I think about opportunity, I think about that as a driving force that led me through the path of my career and when I speak about moved forward, in terms of cultivating our opportunity, seek it, create and give opportunity to others. I was, I'm conservatory trained. I have four college degrees in music. My entire path was in those schools. I was always taught with the mind set, you practice hard, stay in the practice room, four, eight hours a way, to clock in the hours, then magically apply for jobs that 200 people have applied to. You will win an audition, and that will make you happy. As I was going through my last degree, I was at Manhattan School of Music, we had to seek out people in the field. I wanted to analyze what it was like to have a career that was in one of those spaces I
was taught, an institution I was supposed
to be part of. I talked to a friend in
the opera, in the orchestra pit and a
friend who had a thriving career
freelancing. Looking at those, well, what
is a straight tract, and one can lead down
one path, and what system is in place for
me, that path? What ways can I create
opportunities for myself in that path
besides sitting in a practice room. I
looked down another path that had so many
places for opportunity for me. That's
kind of where my career started to take
off. I decided to go down the freelance
path, to be in a space where I could
create opportunity, create, I didn't want
to sit around waiting for someone to call
me, whether to tell me I advanced to the
next level, or that I won this job. I
wanted to be where I could create, give
that for myself and for other people. That
led me to diverse concert artists. It was
fulfilling, because I was in a space,
creating opportunity for myself, and to
give back for other people. I can't
stress how the importance of that, because really, people think about what can I do to change this field, the face of going to an orchestra concert, who I see on stage, what can you do? Every person can do that. Whether being on an orchestra board, or personnel manager, you can create opportunity for others. It's your choice, what you do, with that space.

>> That's one thing I thought was so compelling about what you said. You speak passionately, talked the create of creating opportunity that, you see that as part of your work in the same way as making a beautiful sound. Stephanie, Lady Jess, any thoughts?

>> Nothing to debate here.

>> Awesome. Looking at this conversation, around networks. That you found, that you created, that you tried to get into and felt denied. Networks you didn't even know existed until later. Stephanie, you had a lot to say about that.

>> I strongly believe that
network, our network influences everything around us. Our career path, even personal network, versus professional network.

It's all networking. It's not just as it pertains to the orchestra field, but I found it interesting after having various conversations with my colleagues and people that I had gone to school with, and met at competitions, it's kind of like your pack. A lot of times I tell students, make sure you're getting the most out of your education, especially when in school because these are people you will see the rest of your career, in some capacity. Now, I find myself being friends with people who are on boards at the Kennedy Center, or starting their own organizations, music directors, conductors. Musicians in these top orchestras. Alex, principal clarinetist.

So network is important. In that, I found it interesting that I had very different experiences from some of my colleagues. This is not just a racial bias thing.

Your teacher and the people that are your
mentors, in this growth process, and
learning experience, like while you're in
school, influence how prepared you will be
entering the field and what options will
be available to you. I have a very good
friend, Jennifer, who now works with the
Richmond Symphony. She was the (sounds
like) organ Symphony for many years. And
we talked about this one day. She said
her private teacher, at Cleveland, helped
prepare her for orchestra auditions. She
landed this job. I can say that being in
an orchestra never really entered my realm
of, what would be, I can't say I recall
having any serious conversations with my
private teachers about preparing for
orchestra auditions. So my private
teachers were not members of any
orchestra. One was in a chamber group,
many years, both were chamber musicians.
One was a professional soloist. That has
something to do with it. I didn't learn
about musical chairs until I was in my
thirties. These are resources that you
need to really know about, to even be
competitive, to get the access point. So network has a lot to do with it. What can be a challenge is when we have opportunities in school, I used to work part time. I had friends that literally were winning auditions. One won her orchestra audition, for the Detroit Symphony and left school to work. I thought, wow, I didn't even know about an audition. So some of the difficulty is when you entrust the information to people who are then being selective about how to disseminate the information, that can be a challenge. You will leave people out. That's what I mean by network. Some people have the information and access. Partially, because there are people who are interested in seeing them get to those positions. Others are left on the outside. It ties in.

>> Can you define quickly what Musical Chairs is?

>> Yes, there's an online resource that lists all of the available positions within orchestras. So, that's
internationally, not just American

orchestras.

>> So you went to Indiana university, Juilliard, and, you know how shocking it is that it wasn't even put on your radar. Lady Jess, Tia, did anything she said spark anything you wanted to talk about?

>> I agree, that's exactly right.

>> Also, in terms of when we talk about looking into spaces, to find spaces where could be part of it. I would go to musical chairs. I'd go to those orchestras, in China, or other places, I'm not even saying a name that looks African American, no name was not of their national origin. So it didn't feel like a space that would be safe for me. I'm not going to be, this is not my space. That's at international level. Same thing happens on our own soil here.

>> That's actually perfect. When we were in school, it was kind of like, I didn't really hear about Musical Chairs until my senior year. That was the source
for everything. The center of everything.

Unless you had a connect through a certain way the institution set up, that's where you found out about auditions. But it was also where, many of my friends were not women of color. And they were all, like, because all of us wanted to join orchestras outside of the United States.

I really wasn't looking the at orchestras at home because my assumption was, I don't have that pedigree. Let me skip that and I want to travel, anyway. We look the at overseas orchestras, and they became my filter. I will let them apply, see what happens. There was always a block on the analyst. It was, I have not been in a place to apply for any orchestra job in a while, I'm not current on what it's like now but back then, definitely, everything they said, that's it. So the real crazy thing is to be here at home having to experience those same emotional and artistic struggles. To deal with that at home it crazy, makes you question your previous twenty years of study.
Let's turn to the question of success. You're all three enjoying, in great measure. And let's talk about how our training defines success. How that did or did not create friction within you. How you define success now, and find money now. And how it, and Lady Jess, I love starting with you on this because you tell a story that has orchestras front and center in your origin story, your love for music, making music for other people started. Maybe share about how you first fell in love with orchestras.

I was in the junior youth orchestra, coming out of a string orchestra program through a group of the school system teachers who were, should have an opportunity outside of just the youth orchestra in order to play orchestral music outside of school. Which is a huge, we had an unusual caliber of teachers. They started a string orchestra that expanded. So because of that, I was like, I don't know what this is, but I'm here, and then the natural progression was
to audition for the youth orchestra. I

did that, not knowing it was a full
Symphony orchestra. So at the first
rehearsal, I thought I was walking into a
more advanced string situation. It was
completely symphonic. I was at the back
of the second violin section, the minute,
it was Nutcracker, and it was terrible.
We were like I was shell shocked at the
appearance of these other instruments. It
was a wall of sound. Once I learned to
love listening to classical music, and
understanding that it was interlaced into
many things I enjoyed, it was the jump off
point. So the motivation was always
orchestral. When I went to North Carolina
school of the arts, University of North
Carolina now, my private teacher was
invested in me, but was not into the idea
of orchestra as a career. He wasn't in to
that idea for me. I maintained a stubborn
hold on the idea of orchestra as a
profession, not knowing he could see
beyond me to what I was capable of. His
name was Kevin Lawrence. I owe him a lot.
I clung to the orchestra track. After school, I took two years off and started playing with the Charlotte Symphony. At that time, I was interning under the mentorship of Jonathan Martin, then executive director. He’s in Dallas now. I was not being paid, college credit, but was playing in the orchestra, subbing for Broadway shows that used local players, making connections with New York people at the same time, by promising myself I’d play, that sounds, I had no track for this stuff and it was the only way I knew, was to show up 200%. So I made connections there and tried to learn the administrative business from Jonathan. He was an incredible teacher but wanted me to, because he knew that part of my concerns were fiscal. I wanted job security, benefits, I had never felt a sense of that kind of security before. We were not exposed to -- growing up. All I knew was that I needed to do something that integrated music in a way that would make me feel secure. That was the reason
for pursuing the administrative track.

The skills I used there, I use in contracting now. That's how those things helped me. But I never broke in. At the time I was an administrative intern, I applied to 200 jobs and got preliminary -- to two of them. Playing and moving to New York through performance ended up how I got into NY U, and there, I got to New York. So it's always been just, when you're in it, you don't think about it in terms of success because so much of the drive is being successful despite not being able to break into this standard that I don't know about because I haven't had the same pedigree as others. But at the same time, because I approached things from a money perspective, I've been a Spoletto fellow, and I only, even applied because it was the only summer festival I saw that was paid. In that way, I was exposed to upper levels of playing and I'm right there with them. They all assume I took the traditional track. I have not. That has followed me throughout the
process. The question is posed around success, but when you're in it, it feels like you're just proving people wrong. That was my motivation, to be honest.

>> Stephanie, Tia, anything to add?

>> All of us have experienced some level of that. In particular, I wanted to talk about these opportunities that seemingly are closed door to a lot of us. The pedigree thing is a bit of an obstacle. A lot of people really like to get hung up on the brand name of the school. Not necessarily the holistic value of a person, a talent, an artist.

What's interesting is any of us who have taught at any level or degree, especially young people who are playing at a level where they can viably consider going into music professionally, were like, go for the teacher. Don't choose the school for the name. Go for the teacher. When they get out, they're like, oh, but what school did you go to? So there's this conflicting information. We really have
to be honest about that. Organizations get tripped up on it and there's a big pool of talent that's on the outsters of your sphere of influence. They're not being reached, or tapped into, at all.

>> Tia, anything to say?

>> When I was in school, and people would apply to Juilliard to study with my teacher in his viola studio. He only accepted two or three there, but had a studio of 30-40 plus at Cincinnati. Why didn't you apply there? But people wanted that name. And for me, it was, I always did my research. It was the teacher, but also what city am I living in? In Oxford, Ohio. That was definitely a part of it. I just did not feel I was in a space where I felt comfortable. Move to Cincinnati was more of a diverse space in general and New York, a space I felt comfortable, to create and seek opportunities. Then, in terms of redefining what success means, it was literally me have to turn off what I was, orchestra job, get this job, that's success. I had to redefine, when I had
done college essays about what my career looked like when I got out of school, I said, playing chamber music, playing in orchestras, and I was actually doing all those things. So what was the problem? Just because it didn't have a box that said New York Phil, but I was playing in orchestras, traveling, so then, what was it that was not making me happy? When I could finally create opportunities for myself in this space and feel I was in safe. Redefining what success meant, just was a different thing.

>> It's a reclaiming of control. Over your own narrative. You give emotional, physically, spiritually, to this thing. So many hours alone, so many hours working wards this metric, when this spot and this spot, it's like, you invest all of that. Where is the coin? You need a return on that. I never found the return on that investment, that wasn't moments on stage. That were spiritual.

>> I agree. The investment is huge. When you think about the countless
number of private lessons, you take to get
yourself to the point you're competitive
even consider getting into a
music school program. The summer
festivals. The instrument, instrument
maintenance. There are costs to these
things. They're not free. Once you come
out on the other side, your hope is that
you can sustain yourself and not be living
in debt for the rest of your natural life.
The auditions, at least for me, I had
toyed with the idea of auditioning for
orchestras at a time, I had when I was in
high school, I was in the NSO, youth
fellowship program. I was in the D.C.
youth orchestra program. I had considered
it. I didn't have any real information
about how it would happen. But man, it's
cool, my first time getting bit by the
travel bug. I traveled for the first time
with the youth orchestra. When you
consider the cost, coming back to
investment, it takes money. I'm still
paying back Sallie Mae, who handed me over
to -- the reality is, you have to play for
pay. You're flying everywhere. You have
to put yourself up, hopefully you have
family or friends, but if not, hope you
make it through the round and just to say,
well, you know, maybe next time. Then you
start all over. It costs money. So God
bless the people that have the resources
to do that. But for me, my parents don't
have that kind of money. I don't. So I
had to really look at what my options
were and it didn't seem realistic. At the
end of the day, I want to make a living,
like anything else. I love music. I've
invested my entire life doing what I do.
I started playing at three. Formal
private lessons at four. It's not like I
just, decide on a whim, maybe I will try
this thing out. I had to really look at
what could, this kind of redefining
success. And I definitely had teachers,
colleagues, who were, like, either you're
not a professionally managed soloist or
chamber group, if you don't win an
orchestra spot, you just didn't cut it, so
the buck stopped there. so I had to really
hit a mental reset.

>> I'd like to exercise a little personal privilege and make the point to the audience that it goes unremarked upon the degree to which musicians who more often than not, do not currently hold full time positions inside the mainstream structure, fund and subsidize the job search for every orchestral position. And contrast that with how the orchestras approach a director of development. I'm not saying that's an inequity. I just want acknowledgment that the field of underemployed musicians are the ones would subsidize these options that appear at every job opening, they write section violinist, XYX orchestra, sometimes it's hundreds of thousand of dollars, especially if you value people's time. Forget about the airline costs, cartage, and hotel, food, but also the hours of those 80 people, hundreds of hours of practice. The total value going into one audition is significant and borne by the field of underemployed musicians.
We're all investing in an industry where the contributions of the people that came before us do not have equity, be it in educational standards, in audition rep, sometimes for organizations that exist for us, we don't have representation. So I should say, when you are fighting to be recognized, as someone who's equal, when you come from a different socioeconomic background than the people around you, who are not racist, but just literally live a different life experience. If you're already feeling left out and asked to devote so much of yourself to music that doesn't include contributions from people that look like you and have shared more importantly your experience within the classical corner of the field, it's twice the labor. Twice the emotional labor. You have to think, you're okay, you're the only one who looks like this on the stage or booth. All that is mental work. People talk about emotional labor within terms of romantic relationships, but that crosses those
boundaries. It exists in music. We’re
artists. All that soul, commitment,
passion, is compounded by the struggle to
even just feel like, why, I don't know, I
don't know. I don't know if I belong
here. I guess. I love it. So I guess.
I will convince myself. But if you're not
surrounded by support, or not coming from
a place where it's standard that you will
go to college, just do it, ten that can be
a really alienating situation. That's
just more labor.

>> I like that idea of emotional
labor within a relationship as it relates
to our relationship to the art form. I'd
like to talk about the current moment and
return to the original framing. This is
not about making some better future for
orchestras, but how they are poorer right
now. For not having musicians like you,
having missed the boat on you three. How
has your path prepared you for the moment,
how, what do you think has to teach
audiences from League of American
Orchestras? And Tia, starting with you?
In terms of this moment, even when I was, got the call and told I was in Jagged Little Pill for Broadway. Most people go, boom, I got a full time job, I'm good. Benefits, let's go! But it wasn't the case. It was, I think those people have have been there a while, freelanced, knows what's it's like when I show opens and closes a month later. It can close in six years, what do I do now? It's the same mind set of someone who toured with an artist, you're making point, get back, and okay, where's my network now? Who is or what's next? At the same time, I'd, I never lost my other goals. I never said, well I have jagged pill now, now, I have have a bigger platform, now this is something, that only, the founder of diverse concert artists, has background but now I also play full time on Broadway. What else can I do to broaden my other platforms, create other opportunities. That's what's happening now. I'm trying to use the time right now that all the times I needed a
breath, woke up at 7:00, to practice, run
to a rehearsal, and another. Then a
plane, then I think, I don't have a day
off for three weeks, so I'm going. Using
this time now to take that breath I really
needed. And let the air clear, then
redefine how I can come back into the
space even better, stronger. And still
not with the mind set of a go getter, but
a go giver.

>> Go give or, emotional labor,
great one liners. Stephanie? You're
still doing a lot of work right now.
Speak to how your path prepared you for
the moment and recognizing our audience,
how you think that has something to offer
orchestras.

>> It's an interesting shift to
witness. Everything I've encountered on
my career path and in my journey as an
artist has prepared me for a moment like
this. That's simply being proactive,
instead of reactive. With regard to
creating my own opportunities. I never
really felt like I felt like I could lean
on any source of income with certainty. I
was constantly, it's like chess. I don't
have parents that can provide that
financial blanket. That can catch me if
everything falls apart. They helped me
get to this point. As a kid, private
lesson is, but I had to think
strategically. That's when
entrepreneurship comes in. I find that
the artists that are business minded,
organizations that have strong
entrepreneurship at the front, are the
ones that are going to weather this thing
and emerge stronger and more resilient.
Starting the recollective orchestra, with
Matt Jones, shout out to him, and also
String Candy. I started these entities
out of necessity. Not because I went to
business school. That's not why I felt
equipped. I can't say that I felt
equipped. It was necessary. When I
decided to start my company, and I was
sure Tia can share this, I'm frankly not
at a point where I can wait around and
hope you think I'm great and hire me. I
have bill to pay. They won't wait until
you decide you want to bring me onboard.
I had to search within my immediate
network, that's important for any artist,
to consider. Look within your immediate
network, and cultivate that. That's what
enabled me to start my company and for me
to book the kinds of gigs I book, to have
a network of musicians and artists that I
can reach out to that I can hire that, I
can refer for various opportunities.
Creating opportunities is great. In the
course of that, starting a business, with
no business, formal background, but just
the sheer desire to work, create
opportunity, and to not be tied down and
burdened by anyone else's, or entity's
perception of what I should do. That
prepared me for this. None of us with
fully prepared, but to be able to brace
for it, I was never dependent on a salary,
on one particular source. It's always
thinking three, four, five steps ahead.
Broadening the platform. There was never
a point where I was, okay, this is it. I
never had that moment. So I'm not saying there's anything wrong with being in a salaried position. That's great. Who doesn't want and need benefits? To be able to know how much you will make month to month. Now, because I was kind of working on my own terms, people come to me so a lot of what I'm doing is what I've been doing many years. I've been remote recording for years. A friend is a cellist in L.A. She's done so many remote recordings, for years. Now, all those years of self investment, she's working on her own terms. She's scoring films every day from home. So I think this is a great opportunity speaking to the current audience, where entrepreneurship needs to kick in. This is an unprecedented time with unprecedented opportunity to access an entirely new audience to, broaden your platform, if you allow yourselves to do so.

>> That sums up the frame for this. On the other side of this call, there are people who work within
orchestras, at various levels, who wish
that they had access to you as a might be
of their group, all three of you, your
networks, way you crafted your practice
and project out music right now. We have
a great question, nicely transitions to an
activity we did. I asked Lady Jess and
Stephanie and Tia to engage in a little
imaginary exercise, to craft a job
description for a job in an orchestra that
would attract them away from the career
and lives they made right now. To put it
in a real context, we talked about
orchestras are poorer for not having these
amazing musicians, having missed out on.
We will end with another exercise, to
finish the sentence, I knew I was in the
right place, when. I want to take a great
question from the audience. The question
is, how can a local orchestra be on the
forefront to help tear down racial
inequities and foster inclusion by
encouraging all students to pursue a
career in music. How do we get around the
issue of access. If you're okay, I will
read a couple more. Curious about the
panelists' thoughts about what the union's
responsibility is to close the information
gap. Musical chairs is a platform the
union doesn't want to be. Someone wants
to show what's on your wall hang.

>> What's going to draw someone
in, when I was looking at orchestras, I
wasn't just looking at, I see a listing
that says viola position. I said, let me
do more research. I want to know about
the city I'd possibly be moving to,
research what they're doing in terms of
bringing in an audience, audience
engagement, about what they're doing for
out reach. Who was on their list in terms
of the solo of thes brought in that year
who, was on their program, and my biggest
thing as a barrier was, I'd go to lists
that were posted, public platforms, you
can see who every musician is. And I go
through the entire list, if I don't see
one person that looks like me, or like in
some way, that you're trying to bring in a
diverse audience, that wants to see
themselves on stage, hear diverse repertoire, reflective of your audience and community, this is not for me. I want to be in a space I feel safe, as well. I'm not talking about the safety of having insurance. A safe space to be my most authentic, creative artistic self.

>> I will read with your permission, your description of an orchestra challenging, changing the face of the modern orchestra through diversity, inclusion and diversity vertically integrated into all parts of the organization including performing arts, repertoire and community audience engagement. That's a description of, for you to look beyond those two words, section viola. There was a question about what can an orchestra do. And what do you think should be union do?

>> Regardless of the size of the orchestra, the current, with the internet, social media, doesn't matter. If you take marketing seriously, optics, seriously, then it won't matter how big or small the
orchestra is. UPCO is a small group, relatively new but the kind of programming has been revolutionary, more than all my orchestral experiencing in terms of educational programming, we partnered with opportunity music project, a nonprofit in New York, and gave children from underserved communities, I hate that term, the opportunity to study chamber music seriously over a consistent amount of time and perform that with their coaches at a high level. Not just baby sitting, it was an involved program and we got to know the groups and formed a bond with them. Those kinds of things that are happening in an orchestra that's a chamber orchestra and knew, are things that should be a piece of cake for any orchestra to get into their program. It doesn't matter how big or small. A marketing department who knows what's going on, and is in touch with mainstream culture, and a development department working in harmony with them. And understand how to talk to new people who can provide fiscal support and also
relate to the community.

>> I agree. We were talking about, this is a business. Organizations are make decisions based on dollars. So that's spot on. You definitely want to have a marketing team that knows how to talk to different types of people. If you don't, you're probably not going to get a varied audience. That's it, it's important, especially local organizations, to get into their community. For instance, I can't have an event and think I can lazily send out Facebook invites, then be mad that no one shows up. Lazy operating, there's no more room or time for it. If you have time, be comfortable with where you are. Going back to young people, they represent the future of wherever you're headed. There are middle schools, high schools, even elementary schools. I don't know how many organizations, some are great, some are terrible at this, but it can be great to go into schools, have phase time with the kids, give them, talk to them about the
reality of being in an orchestra. The grassroots effort, we need to get back to, where you are really connecting with people. Children are people, too. They will decide to go into music schools, especially those with orchestra programs, or youth, like D.C. youth orchestra program. I don't recall talking with someone who worked at an orchestra. There are some organizations that are doing that, but too few.

>> I will read a little bit about what you wrote about descriptions of orchestras. Maybe we can make this available to people afterwards. Shout out to -- talked about the inadequacy of orchestra position job descriptions, how we miss an opportunity to sell our story. How is it that two positions with a hundred thousand dollars difference in similarly, salary, in wild the different parts of the country, will describe their position the same way. Two words. The instrument, and the title. Section viola. How is it, from the met, to a smaller
institutional, those are the same. And Wes and -- talk about by being creative about the descriptions, you can use the hire as a ministrategic planning session. Jess described the organization, why we care and how we operate. This is her orchestra. Core values include a commitment to active, diverse current programming, openness to creative evolution and growth. Musicians are respected for who they are, commitment to the community in which we exist. We believe an active community and board engagement and ask this of each musician on stage. We see the orchestra as a company and a service. You would show a commitment to artistic excellence and openness to adjust and effective action, community engagement. You have a say in program choices. Have the option to engage in mentor relationships with a diverse group of students. From Stephanie, we got, Los Angeles based orchestra seeks classically trained musicians from various backgrounds, ethnic and cultural, LGBT
plus musicians encouraged to apply.

Individuals with strong connections to the Latino and African American community, actively working to empowering those communities are strongly encouraged to apply. There are similar themes there.

Anything you want to say?

>> I specified Los Angeles based is because we were talking about where we would want to be. That was my specification. I also included individuals with connections to the Latino and African American community because Los Angeles is in southern California.

Whatever that community looks like, that's why it was included. The out reach component is hugely important. This is a conversation that has crept up in so many conversations with my friends. It's so offensive to be invited to be part of an educational, or any out reach engagement capacity, and not be good enough to be in the orchestra. That's tokenism at its the finest. Incredibly offensive. If your outreach hires don't represent what your
orchestra looks like, that's something to consider.

>> Tia?

>> I don't know if we have time to read the testimonial I wrote because that's the answer to the later question. That gives context to why I wrote my job description. I started at the testimonial. It's easier for me to think in terms of, like what I didn't get and what I wish would be in place.

>> Absolutely.

>> I don't have anything else to add.

>> Let's do this. Let's turn to that activity, answering the question, I knew I was in the right place, when. What does the right place sound and look like?

>> I was offered the option to make a higher salary based on community and academic engagement. In my pretrial plus audition, in person interview, the orchestra laid out clear plans to engage the community and continuously seek
musicians that could relate to its 
audience in a socioeconomic way, including 
a system of accountability between members 
of the board and musicians themselves for 
artist care and community engagement. I 
read about this in the job description, 
but didn't believe it was true until I 
took the trial. I felt my perspective and 
value as a member of the organization 
versus the normal feeling of being one in 
a sea of all others, all subject to a 
traditional hierarchy that out weighed the 
priorities of its members on and off 
stage. Benefits were outlined, it was 
made clear -- followed by a discussion 
about previous orchestral experience, I 
didn't feel pressure, feel some experience 
isolated to paper. My interviewee and 
orchestra committee had a human interest 
in how I found myself applying for a spot. 
The interview was conversational, without 
losing the formality of process. I was 
given the choice to know who would be on 
the audition panel. It was later that 
afternoon, but it helped soothe my anxiety
to feel I had a plan. That was a
preexisting internship program that
paired administrative and educational
interns with symphony musicians outside of
the office, also had a calming effect. It
was have more appealing after learning the
orchestra offered internships for pay and
for school credits. I was compensated for
travel expenses and told I, if I passed
the screen audition round, further travel
would be covered by the orchestra.
Throughout my application and audition
process I felt respected. My experience
was factored into the process, and this
was unprecedented for an orchestra.

>> So you knew you were in the
right place, fantastic.

>> That's incredible. I'd love to
have walked away from an experience like
that. Overwhelmingly positive.
Supportive. That requires an organization
putting its money where its mouth is. I
knew I was in the right place, I'm not
like a full time member of a traditional
orchestra. I work within -- orchestra,
sitting along side people who are members of L.A. Phil, opera, chamber orchestra.

When I truly felt visible, appreciated and value the. After years of school, in the work place, in the traditional classical work place, I felt devalued and sometimes invisible. I knew I had found my place when I stopped being anxious about what people thought about me and my playing. Committed to the creative space without the weight of bias and prejudice. I worked for the sphinx orchestra, a number of years. They touched many of us in a positive way. I truly support their mission and vision and what they continue to do. Outside of that, there was no full time creative position, there's not an orchestra that I can be hired for and salaried by through that entity. So I started the company in 2012, after I left school. Honestly, I want work on my own terms. I felt I was tired of the emotional roller coaster. The emotional labor. I felt so anxious, every time I entered the space. And I started kind of
having little spot placements here and there, while I was teaching, doing other things, including my time in Trinidad. I thought I could start my own company, try my hand. It hit a fever pitch in terms of my level of frustration. And fast forward to today. I can't tell you how many mind blowing moments I have. Every experience is unique. I'm grateful to all the artists, including Tia, Jess, you, and all of my artistic colleagues I met along the way that I connect to, have dialogue with. But it does incredible to be and connect and have direct communication, or meeting, with people like Hans Zimmer, and various artists, music directors who value my talent, my creative input. That's when I knew I was in the right place.

>> Tia, how did you finish that sentence?

>> I took this as literally situational. It was a two part answer. I knew I was in the right place in my career where I was in a place I could create opportunity and give back. Currently,
being in Jagged Little Pill, when I first walked in the first rehearsal, for a recording, it was all the producers, a lot of people involved, I looked around and saw how diverse it was. And all these creatives in the room, and the first thing we did, we said who we were, our pronouns. I knew, I was in the right place. I knew this space was here to create a space for me that I would feel space in. I will never forget that feeling. It was literally the first I would be in a work space, where they said we will introduce ourselves, what you do and what's your pronoun. When you see the show, you will see the pronouns printed in the program. Very important.

>> That's unique. It doesn't happen in classical music in the ways you'd think. I've seen it in the classical work in New York, when UPCO, we use nongender specific dress codes. I use them, it's part of the reason I use -- in my contract. You don't see that in the places where the salaries are. It
shouldn't be revolutionary. I feel that on a deep level. That extends to the festival space, spaces that exist for black people. I don't know that there's a (indiscernible) at some of the festivals. The question is never asked. There are things that expand beyond just this narrative, that we don't see in classical music as a whole. That's limiting the amount of fiscal progress these orchestras can actually make right now. It requires almost nothing. You don't have to download software. Just get current. That's the only thing.

>> We have a little bit of time.

I will do a, first, thank you. I'm grateful to you and your time and story and willingness to share. I'm sure the audience feels they only have this moment with you. To honor everyone's participation, there's one question regarding, Lady Jess, your job description. I want to clarify, that's not a job or process that Jess experienced in the real world, but were she to
experience it, she would know she's in the
right place. Orchestras won't be better
in the future, when they have more
diversity. They're poorer right now for
their lack of that. Also questions about
could, would you be willing to share those
statements? The answer largely is yes.
There's also a question from our friend,
Jen Arnold, who wants to know, let's
pretend America orchestras have an
inclusive work culture, and fair
auditions. If in that context, an
orchestra personally reached out to you,
to have the audition, would you be more
likely to attend the audition? Answer for
yourself, but also as a broad thing.
Would that be helpful for orchestras to
engage in that?

>> Possibly. I can't say for
sure, yes, because there have to be a
range of thing that's I'd say, in this
mythical organizations that would lead me
to believe they're truly interested in it.
We're not living in the Beethoven era
where it's mainstream, the way it can and
should be. So I’d have to see that. And
then --
>> So you're saying you would
probe for yourself whether or not they
truly had inclusive work culture. Before
they favor you a call, you would have
questions for them and want to know is it
real or are you just following a script to
get you to come to the audition.
>> Yes, often, organizations say
things and build in wonderful catch
phrases that land them great grants. But
the actuality of putting their money where
they mouth is, and having receipts for the
work they're actually currently doing, to
support said statements, I have to see
that.
>> Tia, the question is, how can
artistic administrators promote diverse
artists and provide a platform for
opportunity while avoiding tokenism?
>> It's trying to say that, it's a
baited question. It's trying to say that
having diversity in the space, and
creating opportunity is like a commodity,
which it's not. It's representative of
culture, of where we are right now, it's
not, not a trend. Diversifying your space
is not a token. It should have been going
on for years. It led to so much
frustration, I had to finally do something
this. I can't sit around and wait. If
you want to see what my orchestra is
doing, get on board, okay.

>> Thank you to my friends and
colleagues, it's been a pleasure working
would you, let me extend my thanks to the
Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, who provided
funding for this and important to note,
that foundation and the new world is
allied with the national alliance, trying
to close the gaps we talked about, relate
to getting to auditions, knowing about
them, broadening networks. I invite
orchestras that have not heard about this
to investigate through, reach out to all
three of those organizations, New World,
the League, Sphinx, and Mellon, to find
out how you can support and engage. Just,
I'm grateful, it's been such a pleasure.
Out there in the world, everyone is
joining me in giving you a huge hand.
James, if you're with us, I toss this to
you. It's been hugely inspirational.

>> Thank you so much, Jess,
Stephanie, Tia. And Alex, for leading
this really important honest inspirational
class conversation. It's been fantastic today.
That wraps up today's session. So thank
you to you and the audience for joining.

A few reminders. Please take a minute to
do the survey, the link is in the settings
below. If you can make a donation to our
stronger together campaign, we will be so
grateful. Click the stronger together
button. In the feed loop. I understand
that's down right now so please visit our
website. Thank you, Alex, for mentioning
the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Thank
you for sponsoring this session. For
those of you in the audience, please check
out your constituency meetings in the
schedule as we are regularly adding new
sessions. Also, drop by our exhibit hall,
and we look forward to seeing some of you
again tomorrow at 1:00, eastern, for our
next session, building scenarios for an
uncertain future. Thank you again to you,
Jess, Stephanie, Tia, Alex. Have a great
day, everybody. Thank you.

>> Thank you.

>> Bye, thank you.

>> Thank you.