

Suddenly, one of the most beautiful things that humans do—gather together to make music—has become one of the most dangerous. As COVID-19 metastasized across the planet, orchestras, conservatories, and concert halls postponed and then cancelled entire swaths of their seasons out of safety concerns. No one knows how long the pandemic will last, what the human toll or economic impact will be—and that includes orchestras, which are rethinking how to keep musicians, staff, and audiences safe and healthy even as they face an unpredictable crisis and precipitous loss of income. Yet in the midst of the pandemic, orchestras are keeping the music alive. Musicians are playing from their front porches; orchestras are giving concerts, with masked, socially distanced musicians, at drive-in movie theaters; everyone is performing online. Several scientific studies are underway to determine safer options for live performances. Meanwhile, orchestras are meeting this unprecedented challenge with creativity and deeper understandings of their missions.

On May 25, George Floyd, an unarmed Black man, was murdered while under arrest by a white Minneapolis police officer. Video of the tragedy sparked weeks of protests about police violence and racial injustice across the U.S. and abroad. Musicians, orchestras, and classical music organizations nationwide stepped forward with responses, many of which went beyond well-meaning statements and moved into actions. This issue of *Symphony* includes an in-depth article by Aaron Flagg that examines the orchestra field's historic and ongoing lack of ethnic and racial diversity and offers ways to work toward a more equitable and inclusive future. The article addresses an important, painful topic that is seldom discussed. Yet, as James Baldwin wrote, "nothing can be changed until it is faced."

Robert Sandla



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Performing Arts Against AIDS

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Classical Action: Performing Arts Against AIDS

is a not-for-profit organization which draws upon the talents, resources and generosity of the performing arts community to raise funds for AIDS-related services across the United States. Funds are raised through special events, private house concerts, recording and merchandising projects, individual donations, and foundation and corporate support.

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symphony

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EDITOR IN CHIEF **Robert Sandla**
MANAGING EDITOR **Jennifer Melick**
PRODUCTION AND DESIGN **Michael Rush**
ADVERTISING DIRECTOR **Stephen Alter**
ADVERTISING ASSOCIATE **Danielle Clarke-Newell**
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520 8th Avenue, Suite 2005, 20th Floor
New York, NY 10018-4167
E-mail (editorial): editor@americanorchestras.org
E-mail (advertising): salter@americanorchestras.org
Phone (advertising): 646-822-4051

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Images of orchestras responding to the pandemic and to racial injustice, clockwise from top left: Alexandria Symphony Orchestra musicians perform for residents of a senior living facility (photo by Janet Barnett); Charlotte Symphony Orchestra Principal Viola Ben Geller performs from his backyard (photo by Logan Cyrus); the Minnesota Orchestra's "Music of Power and Grief for a Community in Pain" video captured protest and grief in Minneapolis; Beong-Soo Kim plays cello on the porch of his home in Pasadena, California (photo by Christina House); New York Philharmonic Principal Clarinet Anthony McGill in his video protesting police violence; a graphic promoting the Charleston Symphony Orchestra's livestreamed "Call and Response: A Concert for Equality;" masked, socially distanced Dallas Symphony Orchestra musicians in performance (photo by Ben Torres); Lynchburg Symphony Orchestra French Horn Drew Phillips and Principal Trombone Kevin Chiarizzio perform for an assisted-living residence; violinist Jennifer Koh performs a new work for her "Alone Together" commissioning project; the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra's brass quintet recorded "Georgia on My Mind" for a video honoring frontline workers.