

# THE SCORE

News, moves, and events in the orchestra industry

When this issue of *Symphony* went to press, we were nearly a year into a pandemic that has cost hundreds of thousands of American lives, created great financial hardship, and affected nearly every aspect of daily life, with a disproportionate impact on communities of color. Yet against this sobering backdrop, orchestras and musicians continued to make music and stay connected to their communities—while staying safe—in extraordinary ways.

Things were far from normal due to the pandemic as the fall/winter performance season got underway, but it began with a burst of musical activity, for reduced audiences, outdoors and in concert halls that had been shuttered since March. Orchestras continued to expand the ways they share music. There were concerts at drive-in theaters and the beach, in driveways and amphitheaters, even in an airplane hangar, all conducted under stringent safety protocols. Limited audiences, socially distanced musicians, masks, and other precautions became familiar. Online, virtual, livestreamed, and on-demand concerts became the new normal. The arrival of colder weather brought a spike of COVID-19 cases that caused further curtailing of concerts. Even so, orchestras took creative approaches to ensure that streamed events and seasonal music were available to all.

There is reason for cautious optimism in 2021, with vaccines beginning to be administered and a federal relief bill signed in December that includes support for orchestras, musicians, and others in the arts.

## Music to Vote By

This November, long lines were expected on Election Day around the country, and performing arts centers and concert halls embraced a new civic role by serving as polling places, and musicians provided inspiration by playing music to vote by. At the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts in Philadelphia, a quartet from the Philadelphia Orchestra performed for voters and poll workers. Seated at a safe distance in the balcony were violinist Elina Kalendarova and Miyo Curnow, Assistant Principal Viola Kerri Ryan, and cellist Kathryn Picht Read, who performed classics and patriotic music including *America the Beautiful* and *Lift Every Voice and Sing*. The Philadelphia Orchestra also posted a free online concert honoring poll workers and ballot counters, and other orchestras offered similar tributes. In Boston, cellist Mike Block launched Play for the Vote, a multi-state initiative enlisting musicians to perform outside polling stations on Election Day. Hundreds of musicians signed up, representing 32 states and the District of Columbia. The Brooklyn-based Experiential Orchestra commissioned five digital projects to promote voting, featuring video and music by Lembit Beecher, Joseph Bologne, Judd Greenstein, Patrick Castillo, Gordon Monahan, and James Blachly, Experiential's music director. On the West Coast, the Los Angeles Philharmonic turned the Hollywood Bowl, designed to accommodate thousands of concertgoers and their cars, into a voting center.



Philadelphia Orchestra Musicians perform for voters on Election Day at the Kimmel Center.



A ballot box at the Hollywood Bowl, which the Los Angeles Philharmonic turned into a voting center.

## MUSICAL CHAIRS

The Philadelphia Orchestra has appointed **MITCH BASSION** vice president of development. **DO-RIS PARENT** has been hired as vice president of inclusion, diversity, equity, and access strategies and strategic partnerships, a newly created position. **NATHALIE STUTZMANN** has been appointed principal guest conductor, effective with the 2021-22 season.

The Curtis Institute of Music has named pianist **MICHELLE CANN** as the inaugural Eleanor Sokoloff chair in piano studies, named after the longtime Curtis pedagogue, who died last summer at age 106. **VINCE FORD**, vice president of digital strategy and customer experience at the New York Philharmonic, will become Curtis's senior vice president of digital strategy and innovation, effective February 1.

The St. Louis Symphony Orchestra has named **STEPHANIE CHILDRESS** assistant conductor, starting with the 2021-22 season. **ROBERT DRIVER** has been hired as the orchestra's vice president and chief philanthropy officer.



The Baltimore Symphony Orchestra has appointed **JAMES CONLON** artistic advisor, effective September 2021.

**PRISCILLA GEESLIN** has been selected as the San Francisco Symphony's board president, succeeding Sakurako Fisher, who stepped down in December.

**NICOLAS GONZALEZ** has been appointed as the Stamford Symphony's manager of community engagement and education, a new position.

The Elkhart County Symphony in Indiana has named **SOO H. HAN** as conductor, succeeding Brian Groner. Han will continue as director of orchestral studies at Baldwin Wallace Conservatory of Music in Berea, Ohio.

**JERRY HOU** has been selected as associate conductor of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and music director of the Atlanta Symphony Youth Orchestra. **JACLYN RAINEY**, the orchestra's former third horn, has returned as principal horn.

The Richmond Symphony in Virginia has appointed **LACEY HUSZCZA** as executive director; Huszcza was previously the Las Vegas Philharmonic's executive director.



## League Works with Orchestras and Allies on Federal COVID-19 Relief Package

Following months of advocacy by orchestras and the League of American Orchestras, working with advocates across the arts and nonprofit sectors, on December 22 new and extended forms of federal COVID-19 relief were approved by Congress in a funding and coronavirus assistance package that includes support specifically for the live performing arts and its workforce. The full legislation amounts to nearly 5,600 pages, but the League has published a detailed overview on key provisions at <https://americanorchestras.org/advocacy-government/be-heard/latest-advocacy-alert.html>. Some highlights:

- **Save Our Stages:** Orchestras and talent representatives are eligible for the Small Business Administration's new \$15 billion grant program dedicated to providing support for "shuttered venue operators." Orchestras do not need to own their performance space to apply.
- **Paycheck Protection Program:** More than \$280 billion in new PPP relief is available, including an opportunity to apply for forgivable loans for those not accessing Save Our Stages grants. Eligible expenses are expanded, and loan forgiveness terms are improved.
- **Employee Retention Tax Credits** will be extended and significantly expanded, and are compatible with PPP and SOS relief.
- **Charitable Giving Incentives:** The universal charitable deduction for non-itemizers that was created under the CARES Act has been extended throughout the 2021 tax year and raised to \$600 for joint filers. More generous deductions for those who itemize their returns and for corporate giving are also extended.
- **Relief for Nonprofits Self-Insuring Unemployment Benefits:** Orchestras that self-insure unemployment benefits will continue to have liability reduced by 50% through March 14, 2021.
- **Pandemic Unemployment Assistance** will be extended, and Federal Pandemic Unemployment Compensation benefits that expired in 2020 are reinstated at \$300 per week, through March 14, 2021. An extra \$100 per week will be available for certain workers who have a mix of W-2 and 1099 income.
- **The National Endowment for the Arts** received an appropriation of \$167.5 million for fiscal year 2021, with special permission for grants to be used for operating expenses.
- **Education Funding:** The bill provides an \$82 billion Education Stabilization Fund, and funding for the U.S. Department of Education's Arts in Education program has been increased to \$30.5 million.

Visit the League at <https://americanorchestras.org/advocacy-government/be-heard/latest-advocacy-alert.html> for more information, how to access the relief, and regular updates.

## MUSICAL CHAIRS

The Hong Kong Philharmonic has named **LIO KUO-KMAN** as resident conductor through 2022.

**EMILY LANZONE** has been named concertmaster of California's San Luis Obispo Symphony.

The Bemidji Symphony Orchestra in Minnesota has named **MAGGIE MCCALIP** executive director.

Boston's Berklee College of Music has chosen **ERICA MUHL** as president, effective July 2021. She succeeds Roger Brown, who steps down after a seventeen-year tenure.

Longtime Minnesota Public Radio host **BRIAN NEWHOUSE** has been named as the Minnesota Orchestra's associate vice president of individual giving.

**CLIVE PAGET** has been hired as features editor of the *Musical America International Directory of the Performing Arts*, succeeding longtime editor Sedgwick Clark, who has retired.

**RAFAEL PAYARE** has been appointed music director of the Montreal Symphony Orchestra. He retains his post as music director of San Diego Symphony.

The Pittsburgh Youth Symphony Orchestra has named **WILLIAM POWERS** as executive director.



Payare

The Las Vegas Philharmonic has appointed **TIM ROBINSON** interim executive director, following the departure of Lacey Huszcsa to become executive director of the Richmond Symphony.

The Santa Barbara Symphony Orchestra has named **REBECCA ROLING** to the new position of vice president of patron and community engagement.

**JESSE ROSEN** has been named interim president of the American Composers Orchestra, based in New York City. Rosen, who stepped down in September after more than a decade as the League of American Orchestras' president and CEO, will remain at ACO while Acting President and Director of Development Lyndsay Werking completes her maternity leave.

California's La Jolla Music Society has selected **TODD SCHULTZ** as president and CEO.

Boston's Handel and Haydn Society has named **ROBERT N. SHAPIRO** as board chairman.



Schultz

**R. DOUGLAS SHELDON**, former chairman of Columbia Artists Management Inc. (CAMI), has launched an artist management agency, Sheldon Artists, LLC.

**KAREN SIVERT**, vice board chair of the Tucson Symphony Orchestra, has been named interim president and CEO, after Steven Haines stepped down from the position this fall.

The Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra has named **MARY ANNE TALOTTA** senior vice president and chief development officer.

Kidznotes, the North Carolina-based music education program, has selected **SHANA TUCKER** as executive director.

The Florida Orchestra has appointed **SUSANA WEYMOUTH** as chief development officer.

**ROSS MONROE WINTER** has been named associate concertmaster of Florida's Venice Symphony.



## Six New Board Members at League of American Orchestras

The League of American Orchestras has announced that six individuals have joined its Board of Directors. Each will serve an initial three-year term. The new Board members are: Lorenzo Candelaria: dean, Blair School of Music, Vanderbilt University; Marisa Eisemann: member and immediate past chair, Board of Directors, Albany Symphony (NY); Howard Palefsky: board member and immediate past chair, Atlanta Symphony Orchestra; Mark Peacock: member and immediate past chair, Board of Directors, Nashville Symphony; Daniel Song: vice president, Philharmonic and Production, Los Angeles Philharmonic; Edward Yim: chief content officer and senior vice president, WQXR/New York Public Radio. Additionally, three new ex-officio members have joined the League's Board: Kathryn Boucher, Spartanburg Philharmonic (SC); Rosina Cannizzaro, Vermont Youth Orchestra Association; and Cynthia Kidwell, East Texas Symphony Orchestra Association.

## Music for—and by—Frontline Workers

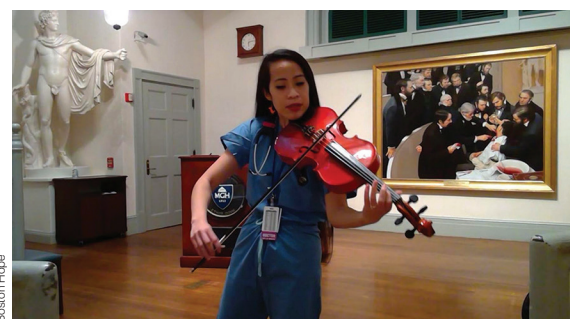
Music and healthcare are intersecting in direct, hands-on ways to provide relief and inspiration during the pandemic. The National Virtual Medical Orchestra, consisting of medical professionals around the country and founded in response to the pandemic, began rehearsing and performing remotely in May 2020, and wrapped up the year with an online concert presented in association with Carnegie Hall entitled “Live With Carnegie Hall: Music is Medicine.”

The orchestra—its musicians are all medical professionals with musical training—was formed in the spring by John Masko, music director of the Providence Medical Orchestra and assistant conductor of the Wellesley Symphony Orchestra. In Boston, the New England Conservatory of Music and Massachusetts General Hospital partnered this fall on the Boston Hope Teaching Project to provide private music lessons for healthcare workers. The project connects teaching fellows from NEC with healthcare workers for weekly private music lessons—and offers respite from the daily stresses of working on the front lines of the pandemic.

Dr. Kathy May Tran practices her instrument while on break at Massachusetts General Hospital as part of the Boston Hope Teaching Project, through which healthcare workers receive private music lessons from NEC fellows.



French Horn player Bettina Cheung and clarinetist Michael Wang—medical students who co-founded Northwestern Medical Orchestra—have been playing with the National Virtual Medical Orchestra this year.



## Bandshells and Parking Decks

In October, the New York City-based Orpheus Chamber Orchestra headed to a bandshell in Hillsdale, New Jersey to perform the streamed world premiere of a new English translation of Franz Grillparzer's narrative text for Beethoven's Incidental Music from



Orpheus Chamber Orchestra and soprano Karen Slack during a Beethoven performance filmed in a bandshell in Hillsdale, New Jersey.

*Egmont*. The outdoor, socially distanced performance, featuring soprano Karen Slack and actor Liev Schreiber as narrator, was the first time the orchestra performed together since January 2020. Beethoven's work is based on Goethe's historical drama about a hero defying foreign occupiers; Orpheus commissioned the new translation of Grillparzer's text from playwright Philip Boehm to address today's social and political issues. In addition, smaller groups of Orpheus musicians traveled to Bronxville, New York and Morristown, New Jersey to perform in a parking lot at the Morris Museum overlooking fall foliage, as part of the museum's “Lot of Strings Music Festival.” Audiences sat on lawn chairs in assigned parking spaces marked by chalk, with many bringing picnic spreads and blankets. Repertoire included Jessie Montgomery's *Strum*, Franz Hasenöcherl's deconstruction of Strauss's *Till Eulenspiegel*, and works by Brahms, Beethoven, Strauss, and Tchaikovsky.

## Keep on Trucking

Mobile music trucks were everywhere this fall. In September, the **Kansas City Symphony** rolled out its Mobile Music Box, with the goal of playing music in all the city's zip codes. In the first month of the free outdoor concerts, orchestra musicians gave more than 50 performances in the custom-designed trailer—in parking lots, farmers' markets, parks, suburbs, and on both sides of the Kansas/Missouri state line. The **Dallas Symphony Orchestra** gave pop-up performances around the city from a Concert Truck at venues including hospitals, parks, and the Booker T. Washington High School for the Performing and Visual Arts. The 45-to-60-minute concerts in November and December featured DSO musicians and pianists Susan Zhang and Nick Luby, who created The Concert Truck in 2016.

In Shenzhen, China, the **Lang Lang Music Bus**, a red double-decker bus and music stage, debuted this fall; the vehicle is equipped with the same seats as those in Beijing's National Centre for the Performing Arts, a digital piano, a Bose amplification system, and an audio mixer.



Kansas City Symphony musicians perform in the orchestra's new Mobile Music Box.

## Downtown Lights: Amherst Symphony at 75

The Amherst Symphony Orchestra in New York State was planning to pull out all the stops to celebrate its 75th anniversary this season, but the pandemic meant that the orchestra, like so many others, had to cancel performances. The orchestra and its volunteer musicians normally present four concerts a year at Amherst Middle School as well as an outdoor summertime concert—all free of charge. How to mark the big anniversary and keep the orchestra front-of-mind while in-person performances were on hiatus? Working with local authorities, the orchestra installed 38 commemorative banners on lampposts along Main Street in nearby Williamsville, and collaborated with an artist on a colorful painted traffic signal box in the Town of Amherst. The orchestra was the focus of a lengthy feature article in the summer issue of *Western New York Heritage* magazine, which featured text and images of its history. What's ahead for the Amherst Symphony? Plans are afoot, so stay tuned.



New York's Amherst Symphony kept its 75th anniversary center stage with artwork on a traffic signal box and 38 banners on lampposts.

## Pittsburgh and Beyond

This fall, the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra launched *Front Row: The PSO Virtual Experience*, a digital series of music recorded at locations throughout the region and offered free for six months following the launch. One two-part episode featured PSO musicians performing works by Beethoven and contemporary American composers at Heinz Hall (the orchestra's home venue), Pittsburgh's Andy Warhol Museum, and Fallingwater, the Frank Lloyd Wright-designed house in southwestern Pennsylvania.

Other episodes included a sensory-friendly holiday concert led by Principal Pops Conductor Byron Stripling, and "Finding Your Song," a program of music by Gabriela Lena Frank, Hannah Ishizaki, and Jorge Montilla, also conducted by Stripling. Andres Franco conducted a program of music by five women composers—Jennifer Higdon, Libby Larsen, Jessie Montgomery, Florence Price, and Joan Tower—recorded at Heinz Hall and at Washington Penn Plastics Hangar.



Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra flutist Jennifer Steele performs at Fallingwater in October 2020 as part of the orchestra's *Front Row: The PSO Virtual Experience*.



## Space Out, Tune In

After months of preparation by Executive Director Eric Larson and Artistic Director Matthew Sheppard, the Elgin Youth Symphony Orchestra's 300-plus students returned to in-person rehearsals this fall. Up until then, musicians in the Illinois-based organization had been rehearsing on Zoom and creating virtual performances from home since the pandemic shutdowns in March. When EYSO musicians returned to their regular rehearsal and performance space, they split into spread-out groups instead of playing as a full ensemble. String and percussion musicians wore masks, wind and brass players used bell covers to limit the spread of aerosols, and parent volunteers sewed masks fitted for the instruments. Other volunteers took the students' temperatures before rehearsals. The young musicians live-streamed a day



Brass musicians from the Elgin Youth Symphony Orchestra perform a live-streamed concert at Elgin Community College, November 2020.

of music on November 15—two concerts in the afternoon and one in the evening—from Elgin Community College's Blizzard Theater. Four orchestras, three percussion ensembles, brass choir, and chamber ensembles performed. Larson told the *Elgin Courier-News*, "These students love performing music and being able to do that in a time like this is a fantastic benefit to them."

## Down the Shore

The New Jersey Symphony Orchestra normally performs at the New Jersey Performing Arts Center in Newark and at five other concert halls throughout in the state, but during the pandemic it has added

several virtual series. In the new *NJSO Everywhere* series, NJSO musicians give outdoor solo and chamber performances in iconic New Jersey locations, often in repertoire by New Jersey-based composers. Assistant Concertmaster David Southorn opened the series in December with a performance of Jessie Montgomery's *Rhapsody No. 1* for Solo Violin on the roof of Newark's One Theater Square. Other performances from January to March include a chamber concert featuring Beethoven's Septet at Van Vleck House and Gardens in Montclair; the NJSO brass at the Jersey Shore; and an NJSO quartet—violinists Bryan Hernandez-Luch and Ming Yang, violist Brett Deubner, and cellist Laura Andrade, the NJSO Colton Fellow—performing George Walker's *Lyric for Strings* at Hoboken's Pier C Park. *NJSO Everywhere* airs on the orchestra's YouTube and social media channels.



Brass musicians from the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra are filmed at a beach as part of the orchestra's virtual *NJSO Everywhere* series.

Victoria McCabe/NJSO

## Music at High Altitude

Normally, the Boulder Philharmonic's concerts are presented at Macky Auditorium on the University of Colorado campus, but this season, to keep musicians and patrons safe during COVID-19, all concerts were pre-recorded in the vast Brungard Aviation hangar at Boulder Municipal Airport with safety measures in place. Filming began on September 15 for the first of eight digital concerts—streamed live via Vimeo and later available on-demand—curated by Music Director Michael Buttermann and artistic partners cellist Zuill Bailey and pianist Simone Dinnerstein. The airport relocated planes to make room for musicians and their instruments, including a nine-foot Steinway grand. A January 23 concert spotlights Bailey performing the world premiere of the chamber version of Ellen Taaffe Zwilich's new concerto, written for Bailey; an April program including an arrangement of Beethoven's Symphony No. 6 for string sextet will also feature Frequent Flyers Aerial Dance troupe performing Korine Fujiwara's ballet score for *Claudel*.

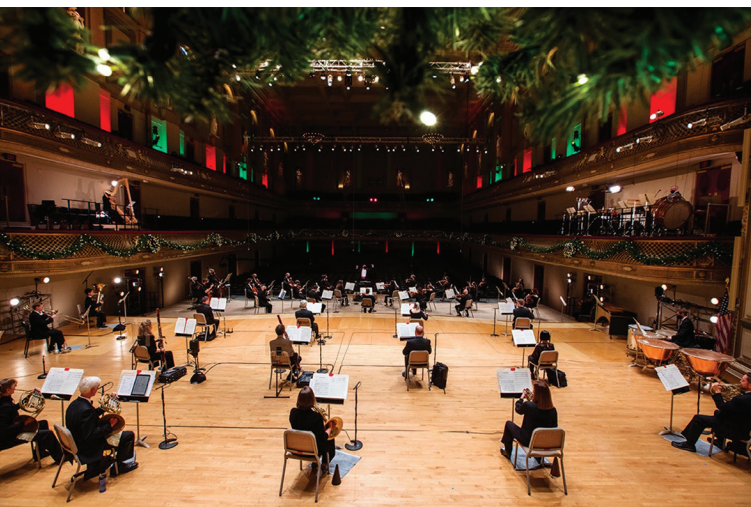
Cellist Zuill Bailey (center) and (left to right) Boulder Philharmonic musicians Charles Wetherbee, Michael Brook, Jennifer Hayghe, Charles Lee, and David Crowe in a virtual Boulder Philharmonic concert at Boulder Municipal Airport.





# Home for the Holidays

Holiday concerts are a time-honored tradition for orchestras, but with most audiences literally confined to home for the holidays this year, creative options abounded. Music Director Kirk Muspratt and the **New Philharmonic**, based in Illinois, recorded a “Holiday Sing-Along with the Symphony” program outdoors at Glen Ellyn’s Lakeside Pavilion in October under strict guidelines. The concert, streamed in December and January, featured sing-along versions of seasonal music including “Joy to the World,” the



The Boston Pops records its “2020 Holiday Celebration” at Symphony Hall, led by conductor Keith Lockhart.

Hallelujah Chorus from Handel’s *Messiah*, Lucas Richmond’s Hanukkah festival overture, and works by John Williams, LeRoy Anderson, and Tchaikovsky. The **Boston Pops** and conductor Keith Lockhart recorded a “2020 Holiday Celebration” at Symphony Hall for later streaming, with an extended stage to keep musicians safely distanced. Included were “Sleigh Ride” and “Twelve Days of Christmas,” plus a virtual performance with the Tanglewood Festival

Chorus. Portions of the program were also filmed at Fenway Park. The orchestra also rolled out a new element with the online concert: captioning and audio descriptions

that allow audience members from the deaf and blind/low vision communities to participate more fully. Musicians from the **New York Philharmonic** performed their 25th annual holiday brass and percussion concert, but it necessitated a trip to New Jersey, where musicians recorded music at an outdoor amphitheater at Montclair State University. Former



The New Philharmonic and Music Director Kirk Muspratt record a “Holiday Sing-Along with the Symphony” program at the Lakeside Pavilion.

Principal Trumpet Philip Smith rejoined his Philharmonic colleagues as conductor/host/ trumpet, and the program was streamed free in December and January.



## Why is this idiot smiling?

1. Because a tough year has ended.
2. Because he wants to wish all his symphony friends health, high spirits and big smiles in 2021.

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# Global Beethoven

With so many concerts sidelined by the pandemic, 2020 was a tough year to celebrate what had been expected to be one of classical music's biggest moments: the 250th anniversary of the birth of Ludwig van Beethoven. Many events moved online, and virtual celebrations included the #GlobalOdeToJoy project, a digital iteration of conductor Marin Alsop's Global Ode to Joy initiative, which included Carnegie Hall, the Boston Symphony Orchestra, Cleveland Orchestra, San Francisco Symphony, Baltimore Symphony, and Philadelphia Orchestra. Alsop had been set to lead the Ninth Symphony with those orchestras and others on five continents—alongside new music by artists from each region and with the “Ode to Joy” text translated into the local language. To keep the spirit of the original project going, virtual #GlobalOdeToJoy invited orchestras and individuals to share their most joyful content—and Beethoven music—by adding the hashtag #globalodetojoy to their YouTube videos. A compilation of the #GlobalOde-toJoy videos was posted on YouTube on Beethoven's birthday, December 17. Elsewhere, Gustavo Dudamel streamed a daylong event featuring performances of all nine Beethoven symphonies by Venezuela's Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra, for free on his YouTube channel. Seventeen Seattle arts groups created a four-day “This is Beethoven” streamed festival in December, curated by Kristin Lee and Andrew Goldstein, co-founders of the Emerald City Music chamber series. Several new Beethoven books have been published, including American musicologist Lewis Lockwood's *Beethoven's Lives*—a bit of meta-Beethoveniana that surveys 200 years of Beethoven biographies.



## Water Music

In October, the New Haven Symphony Orchestra and Music Director Alasdair Neale performed at the Canal Dock Boathouse on Long Wharf Drive in New Haven, Connecticut. On a patio facing the water, the first concert featured a percussion duo and string trio, and the second spotlighted the symphony's brass quintet. The concerts came about after NHSO Operations Director

John Leibensperger attended presentations by the Yale School of Public Health and Shoreline Arts Alliance about safely re-opening arts venues. When symphony CEO Elaine Carroll and Patron Services Ambassador Cheri Brooks visited the wharf, it was determined the concerts could proceed while complying with health regulations, and the city donated

the space for the concerts. In addition to music by Bach and Handel, selections included Scott Joplin's “Solace” and “Bethena,” Fats Waller's “Ain't Misbehavin’,” and an arrangement of Michael Jackson's “Smooth Criminal” with marimba player Aya Kamina-guchi and percussionist Michael Singer.



The audience at a concert by musicians from the New Haven Symphony Orchestra at Canal Dock Boathouse in Connecticut.

Ben White

## Downtown Sounds

In October, the Princeton Symphony Orchestra headed to Princeton's Palmer Square to shoot a film of Copland's *Fanfare for the Common Man* featuring its brass and percussion musicians, led by Music Director Rossen Milanov. Filming entailed the use of multiple cameras, including a drone camera, and at the end of the day musicians performed the fanfare for shoppers, families, and everyone nearby. The project was the idea of PSO Executive Director Marc Uys, who noted that for many musicians the project represented “their first and only work in six months. They are extremely grateful, and excited to be playing with colleagues again. The final product will be a high-quality piece, shining a light on Princeton Symphony Orchestra and Princeton's vibrant downtown.”



Michael Mancuso

Princeton Symphony Orchestra Principal Percussion Jeremy Levine was among the musicians in the orchestra's film of Copland's *Fanfare for the Common Man*, shot in downtown Princeton, New Jersey.

## Musical Scavenger Hunt

During the pandemic, as everyone sought ways to spend time outdoors, the ROCO ensemble in Houston, Texas came up with a musical scavenger hunt. The Buffalo Bayou flows along the Houston waterfront, with a trail system running alongside. From September to December, ROCO collaborated with the nonprofit Buffalo Bayou Partnership to create a soundtrack: 40 different site-specific audio streams, accessed via QR codes along the waterfront. The music came from ROCO recordings, and highlighted the bayou's landmarks and public art. Musical works included *Flying Sirto* by Erberk Eryilmaz at the Waugh Bat Bridge, Brad Sayles's *Buffalo Bayou Suite* near John Runnels's steel canoe sculptures, and the second movement of Alexander Miller's *ROCOMoji* (a Concerto Grosso for Double Reeds), titled "OMG," at the Lee and Joe Jamail Skatepark. Music by Shostakovich was selected for the Sesquicentennial Park Monument honoring James A. Baker III, who helped oversee foreign policy at the end of the Cold War. ROCO was founded in 2005 as the River Oaks Chamber Orchestra.



Visitors to the Buffalo Bayou trails in Houston, Texas could hear site-specific musical streams by the ROCO ensemble, themed to 40 locations and accessed via QR codes.



## Driveway Pop-Up Concerts

Normally, the Stockton Symphony performs at the 1,400-seat Atherton Auditorium in Stockton, California. During the pandemic, the orchestra has hosted pop-up events including a saxophone quartet performance in October for board members, donors, patrons, and guests at the Spenger family's winery and creamery. The quartet also serenaded a symphony patron just outside his home. In addition, the orchestra has pivoted to digital events, hosting monthly virtual Town Halls, including one in September to mark Peter Jaffe's 25th year as music director and another in January entitled "Pizza and String Quartet." The latter



Four Stockton Symphony musicians perform as a saxophone quartet at a patron's home in October. Stockton Symphony musicians also have performed pop-up concerts at locations including a winery in Lodi, California.

event featured the orchestra's string quartet in a YouTube performance of the Mendelssohn String Quartet in A major, with add-ons including delivery of "Stockton Symphony plates": pizza, salad, and wine from local businesses.

## Concert and a Movie

The Louisville Orchestra's opening-night concert in October made it to the silver screen—the gigantic outdoor screen at the Sauerbeck Family Drive-In in La Grange, Kentucky. There were 200 parking spots for the pre-recorded concert, which featured Music Director Teddy Abrams and the orchestra in "Beethoven's Third—A Concert for Healing," and the event included a post-concert showing of the 1994 movie *The Shawshank Redemption*. The program featured the first movement of Beethoven's "Eroica" Symphony, Jessie Montgomery's *Staburst*, and two works with bass-baritone Davóné Tines: Samuel Barber's *Dover Beach* and two movements of Caroline Shaw's *By and By* for voice and orchestra. A highlight was the orchestral premiere of Tines's composition *VIGIL*, which paid tribute to Louisville native Breonna Taylor, who was fatally shot in her Louisville, Kentucky apartment on March 13, 2020 by plainclothes police officers. Collaborators for *VIGIL* included producer Igee Dieudonné and Matthew Aucoin, who arranged the score. For those who couldn't make it to the drive-in, the music was streamed as part of the orchestra's *LO Virtual Edition* on-demand series.



The Louisville Orchestra's opening-night concert was shown at the Sauerbeck Family Drive-In in La Grange, Kentucky, for an audience of 200 cars and their occupants.



## Santa Barbara Streaming

After months of safety preparations, in October California's Santa Barbara Symphony opened a seven-concert virtual 2020-21 season at the Granada Theatre with 22 musicians performing music from the Great American Songbook, led by Music Director Nir Kabaretti (right and below). For the cabaret-style event, musicians were filmed onstage of the 1924 Granada Theatre, socially distanced, without an audience and with plexiglass shields in place; breaks every 30 minutes allowed the theater's filters to recirculate fresh air. The show—hosted by actor Leslie Zemeckis and with Broadway vocalist Lisa Vroman—



included backstage interviews with musicians and a pre-show cocktail

demonstration from a local catering company. The orchestra reported that one-quarter of the nearly 1,000 households that tuned in for the opening-night concert and rebroadcast came from outside Santa Barbara; the stream was later offered on-demand. Interim CEO Kathryn Martin described the event, the orchestra's first onstage performance since March, as "one that will be remembered forever."



## Focus on Women in Dallas

In November, the Dallas Symphony Orchestra hosted its second Women in Classical Music Symposium, designed to advance career paths for women in the field. Unlike the inaugural event in Dallas in 2019, this year's four-day event was a hybrid of in-person and virtual options. Panel discussions focused on women composers, performers, and administrators, with sessions including "Breaking Barriers—Women in Classical Music," "Motherhood and Music—Women as Caregivers," and "Music and Wellness." A speed-dating-style event offered networking and mentorship—this time with masks. Violinist Hilary Hahn received an Award of Excellence, composer Katherine Balch was given a Career Advancement Award, and Deborah Borda, president and CEO of the New York Philharmonic, was recognized with a Lifetime Achievement Award. Among performances was a DSO program led by Marin Alsop and featuring Hilary Hahn, with works including Magnus Lindberg's *Absence* (*Abwesenheit*—*L'Absence*), Mozart's Violin Concerto No. 5, Jessie Montgomery's *Strum*, and Prokofiev's Symphony No. 1 ("Classical").

At the Dallas Symphony Orchestra's "Women in Classical Music Symposium" in November, attendees networked at a mentorship speed-dating-style session (right), and Marin Alsop led the DSO and violinist Hilary Hahn in a streamed concert at Meyerson Symphony Center (above right).



Sylvia Elzaton



Sylvia Elzaton

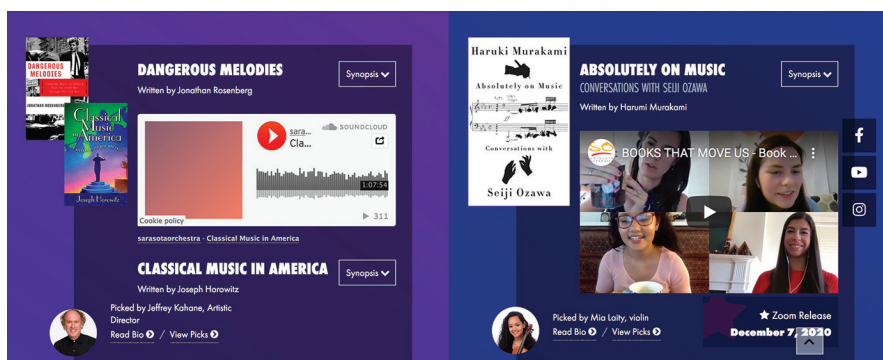
# Orchestral Voices



Fred Viebahn

Former U.S. Poet Laureate Rita Dove, whose *Sonata Mulattica* is the subject of several episodes of the Akron Symphony's new *Unorchestrated* podcast.

Orchestras are creating online content that ventures far beyond concerts. Following a series of “Conductor’s Corner” posts in which he wrote about repertoire and how music can intersect with today’s most pressing issues, Durham Symphony Orchestra Music Director William Henry Curry recently posted his first video blog, speaking directly to viewers while sharing his artistic insights and personal perspectives. In the Akron Symphony Orchestra’s *Unorchestrated* podcast, Music Director Christopher Wilkins and Director of Marketing Thomas Moore speak with ASO musicians, guest artists, and music-industry newsmakers. *Unorchestrated* launched with a multi-part discussion featuring Akron-born poet Rita Dove, with episodes about Dove’s poetry collection *Sonata Mulattica: A Life in Five Movements and a Short Play*, which explores the relationship between Beethoven and the Black violinist George Bridgwater—for whom Beethoven composed his “Kreutzer” Sonata. Florida’s Sarasota Orchestra launched its online “Books of Note” program, a conversation-and-readings series that explores two collections of literature, one curated by Artistic Advisor Jeffrey Kahane and the other selected by Sarasota Orchestra musicians. In “Classical Music in America,” Kahane discusses books ranging from Jonathan Rosenberg’s *Dangerous Melodies* to Anita Lasker-Wallfisch’s *Inherit the Truth*. The Sarasota Orchestra musicians’ series centers on books that have transformed their lives; the first event featured Sarasota Orchestra violinist Mia Laity in a discussion of Haruki Murakami’s *Absolutely on Music: Conversations with Seiji Ozawa*.



Two new digital series from the Sarasota Orchestra feature musicians and Artistic Advisor Jeffrey Kahane discussing music and music-themed books.

## In Memoriam: Richard Cisek, Minnesota Orchestra Executive and League Board Member

Richard Cisek, who spent more than three decades in multiple administrative positions at the Minnesota Orchestra, including thirteen years as president, died on November 18, 2020 at his home in North Oaks, Minnesota. He was 92. Cisek was an active participant in the activities of the League of American Orchestras for many years, and served on the League’s Board of Directors from 2002 to 2017. Following his time on the regular board, he became a member of the League’s Emeritus Board.

Cisek was born on November 11, 1928 in Buffalo, New York, to Helen and Bruno Cieslinski. He graduated from Canisius College in Buffalo, served in the armed forces in Korea, and received an MBA from the Wharton School. A tribute on the Minnesota Orchestra website states that Cisek “began his career in orchestra management at the Buffalo Philharmonic, then joined the Minnesota Orchestra’s administrative staff in 1958 as public relations director. He quickly rose through the organization’s ranks, as assistant managing director, manager and ultimately president.... In 1983, the League of American Orchestras ... awarded him the Louis Sudler Award for ‘outstanding contributions to the profession of symphony orchestra management.’ During Cisek’s tenure with the Minnesota Orchestra, he contributed to numerous achievements and programs, including the construction and opening of Orchestra Hall; the expansion of the Orchestra’s season to year-round, including the creation of Sommerfest; contract negotiations with recording companies; the hiring of Leonard Slatkin, Klaus Tennstedt and Charles Dutoit as principal guest conductors; and numerous major fundraising campaigns ... His tenure overlapped with ... music directors Antal Dorati, Stanislaw Skrowaczewski, Sir Neville Marriner and Edo de Waart.” Following retirement, he began a consulting career advising orchestras. Cisek is survived by his wife, Kay Fredericks, three children, and several grandchildren.



John Craft, Star Tribune

Richard Cisek in 1990 in Orchestra Hall, which he helped build as a home for the Minnesota Orchestra during his three decades with the organization.