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May 19, 2020

LEAGUE OF AMERICAN ORCHESTRAS

\*\* Communication Access

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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

1 recording of today's session along with  
2 other materials will be available in the  
3 session schedule by tomorrow. As a tip,  
4 if you navigate away from this broadcast  
5 in the browser window you will leave the  
6 session. But you can easily rejoin. Just  
7 click on the session. I will welcome a  
8 couple members of the press. We  
9 appreciate you attending. We would love  
10 to hear about your experience today.  
11 There's a link to a brief survey where you  
12 can share comments. The feedback is  
13 invaluable to the League. I hope you will  
14 take a minute to complete it.

15 Welcome, and welcome to today's  
16 session. Outside the Box: An  
17 Unconventional Orchestra Musician's  
18 Perspective. We have three musicians with  
19 highly successful careers. They regularly  
20 perform in orchestras, some of which they  
21 founded. Soulful Symphony, UPCO, and they  
22 have played in bands of leading popular  
23 artists. Their music making is heard on  
24 countless movie sound tracks. They have  
25 appeared on the Tonight Show, SNL, the

1 late show, Good Morning America, and many  
2 others. They founded thriving  
3 organizations such as diverse concert  
4 artists. Please read their bios, take in  
5 the full breadth of their accomplishments.  
6 Alex Laing, principal clarinetist of the  
7 Phoenix Symphony will be the moderator of  
8 the conversation today. Over to you,  
9 Alex.

10 >> Thank you. Welcome to everyone  
11 out there, to my wonderful panel. So  
12 excited to talk to you. This session is  
13 on the committing to equity, inclusion  
14 track. Advancing the values of EDI,  
15 critical to the future work of American  
16 orchestras. On the frame we take today,  
17 League orchestras are poorer and worse off  
18 right now, not in the future, right now,  
19 for not having these incredible musicians,  
20 in their ranks. We will take the time to  
21 understand better why they love  
22 orchestras, why they're choosing not to  
23 pursue full time employment in League  
24 orchestras, how their unconventional  
25 career paths and application of orchestral

1 training has unfolded and what their  
2 practices teach League orchestras. Please  
3 say a little bit about yourself, tell us  
4 how you find what your work is about.

5 >> Thank you. Glad to be here.

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

22 >> Fantastic. Tia?

23 >> Hi, I'm Tia Allen, a violist  
24 and I'm currently the violist for Jagged  
25 Little Pill on Broadway. In addition, I'm

1 the founder of diverse concert artists.  
2 The mission, founded to increase diversity  
3 been classical and cross over music. I'm  
4 also music educator, and a contractor. As  
5 an educator, I teach for Harlem school of  
6 the arts. I have contracts with some of  
7 the largest companies, from twitter to  
8 Google, for private functions, to Kennedy  
9 Center and also band.

10 >> Fantastic. Lady Jess?

11 >> Hi. I work in New York and Los  
12 Angeles primarily based in New York,  
13 though. I'm a violinist. My favorite job  
14 is performing with Beyonce. I also am  
15 co-artistic director of UPACO, in New York.  
16 In Los Angeles, I work with her, or  
17 another mainstream artists, or in the film  
18 industry, partly due to Stephanie, I was  
19 on the lion King sound track. And  
20 Stephanie put me on my first TV gig with  
21 SNL. I also contracted, the biggest was  
22 for SOLANGE. It's a pretty varied career.  
23 Most of the classical work is in New York.  
24 I also taught with the harmony program,  
25 alongside Tia, and I'm playing, I'm on the

1 board of harmony programs. I don't  
2 currently teach regularly, but most of my  
3 work in performance is -- of the stage and  
4 active representation at all levels.

5 >> Fantastic. We have had a  
6 number of interesting conversations  
7 leading up to this public session. We  
8 talked about opportunity and how you  
9 sought opportunity, created it, how it has  
10 been denied. We talked about networks,  
11 how some were closed to you, and how you  
12 built your own and what you believe about  
13 the power of networks. We talked about  
14 success, how the training we went through  
15 gave us a definition of success that you  
16 three found unfulfilling, maybe  
17 unsatisfying, so you developed your own  
18 definitions of success. We talked about  
19 resilience, learning by doing, how it  
20 related to your work and how you work now,  
21 especially during the pandemic. How your  
22 path really prepared you for this moment  
23 and how it can teach orchestra musicians.  
24 So, opportunity, networks, success,  
25 resiliency, can we use that to frame the

1 conversation we have been having for our  
2 audience? Take this first one,  
3 opportunity, Tia, you had wonderful things  
4 to say about that, the importance of  
5 opportunity and the floor is yours. Tia?  
6 >> When I think about opportunity,  
7 I think about that as a driving force that  
8 led me through the path of my career and  
9 when I speak about moved forward, in terms  
10 of cultivating our opportunity, seek it,  
11 create and give opportunity to others. I  
12 was, I'm conservatory trained. I have  
13 four college degrees in music. My entire  
14 path was in those schools. I was always  
15 taught with the mind set, you practice  
16 hard, stay in the practice room, four,  
17 eight hours a way, to clock in the hours,  
18 then magically apply for jobs that 200  
19 people have applied to. You will win an  
20 audition, and that will make you happy.  
21 As I was going through my last degree, I  
22 was at Manhattan School of Music, we had  
23 to seek out people in the field. I wanted  
24 to analyze what it was like to have a  
25 career that was in one of those spaces I

1 was taught, an institution I was supposed  
2 to be part of. I talked to a friend in  
3 the opera, in the orchestra pit and a  
4 friend who had a thriving career  
5 freelancing. Looking at those, well, what  
6 is a straight tract, and one can lead down  
7 one path, and what system is in place for  
8 me, that path? What ways can I create  
9 opportunities for myself in that path  
10 besides sitting in a practice room. I  
11 looked down another path that had so many  
12 places for opportunity for me. That's  
13 kind of where my career started to take  
14 off. I decided to go down the freelance  
15 path, to be in a space where I could  
16 create opportunity, create, I didn't want  
17 to sit around waiting for someone to call  
18 me, whether to tell me I advanced to the  
19 next level, or that I won this job. I  
20 wanted to be where I could create, give  
21 that for myself and for other people. That  
22 led me to diverse concert artists. It was  
23 fulfilling, because I was in a space,  
24 creating opportunity for myself, and to  
25 give back for other people. I can't



1 stress how the importance of that, because  
2 really, people think about what can I do  
3 to change this field, the face of going to  
4 an orchestra concert, who I see on stage,  
5 what can you do? Every person can do  
6 that. Whether being on an orchestra  
7 board, or personnel manager, you can  
8 create opportunity for others. It's your  
9 choice, what you do, with that space.

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

17 >> Nothing to debate here.

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

25 >> I strongly believe that

1 network, our network influences everything  
2 around us. Our career path, even personal  
3 network, versus professional network.  
4 It's all networking. It's not just as it  
5 pertains to the orchestra field, but I  
6 found it interesting after having various  
7 conversations with my colleagues and  
8 people that I had gone to school with, and  
9 met at competitions, it's kind of like  
10 your pack. A lot of times I tell  
11 students, make sure you're getting the  
12 most out of your education, especially  
13 when in school because these are people  
14 you will see the rest of your career, in  
15 some capacity. Now, I find myself being  
16 friends with people who are on boards at  
17 the Kennedy Center, or starting their own  
18 organizations, music directors,  
19 conductors. Musicians in these top  
20 orchestras. Alex, principal clarinetist.  
21 So network is important. In that, I found  
22 it interesting that I had very different  
23 experiences from some of my colleagues.  
24 This is not just a racial bias thing.  
25 Your teacher and the people that are your

1 mentors, in this growth process, and  
2 learning experience, like while you're in  
3 school, influence how prepared you will be  
4 entering the field and what options will  
5 be available to you. I have a very good  
6 friend, Jennifer, who now works with the  
7 Richmond Symphony. She was the (sounds  
8 like) organ Symphony for many years. And  
9 we talked about this one day. She said  
10 her private teacher, at Cleveland, helped  
11 prepare her for orchestra auditions. She  
12 landed this job. I can say that being in  
13 an orchestra never really entered my realm  
14 of, what would be, I can't say I recall  
15 having any serious conversations with my  
16 private teachers about preparing for  
17 orchestra auditions. So my private  
18 teachers were not members of any  
19 orchestra. One was in a chamber group,  
20 many years, both were chamber musicians.  
21 One was a professional soloist. That has  
22 something to do with it. I didn't learn  
23 about musical chairs until I was in my  
24 thirties. These are resources that you  
25 need to really know about, to even be

1 competitive, to get the access point. So  
2 network has a lot to do with it. What can  
3 be a challenge is when we have  
4 opportunities in school, I used to work  
5 part time. I had friends that literally  
6 were winning auditions. One won her  
7 orchestra audition, for the Detroit  
8 Symphony and left school to work. I  
9 thought, wow, I didn't even know about an  
10 audition. So some of the difficulty is  
11 when you entrust the information to people  
12 who are then being selective about how to  
13 disseminate the information, that can be a  
14 challenge. You will leave people out.  
15 That's what I mean by network. Some  
16 people have the information and access.  
17 Partially, because there are people who  
18 are interested in seeing them get to those  
19 positions. Others are left on the  
20 outside. It ties in.

21 >> Can you define quickly what  
22 Musical Chairs is?

23 >> Yes, there's an online resource  
24 that lists all of the available positions  
25 within orchestras. So, that's

1 internationally, not just American  
2 orchestras.

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

9 >> I agree, that's exactly right.

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

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

1 for everything. The center of everything.  
2 Unless you had a connect through a certain  
3 way the institution set up, that's where  
4 you found out about auditions. But it was  
5 also where, many of my friends were not  
6 women of color. And they were all, like,  
7 because all of us wanted to join  
8 orchestras outside of the United States.  
9 I really wasn't looking the at orchestras  
10 at home because my assumption was, I don't  
11 have that pedigree. Let me skip that and  
12 I want to travel, anyway. We look the at  
13 overseas orchestras, and they became my  
14 filter. I will let them apply, see what  
15 happens. There was always a block on the  
16 analyst. It was, I have not been in a  
17 place to apply for any orchestra job in a  
18 while, I'm not current on what it's like  
19 now but back then, definitely, everything  
20 they said, that's it. So the real crazy  
21 thing is to be here at home having to  
22 experience those same emotional and  
23 artistic struggles. To deal with that at  
24 home it crazy, makes you question your  
25 previous twenty years of study.

1 >> Let's turn to the question of  
2 success. You're all three enjoying, in  
3 great measure. And let's talk about how  
4 our training defines success. How that  
5 did or did not create friction within you.  
6 How you define success now, and find money  
7 now. And how it, and Lady Jess, I love  
8 starting with you on this because you tell  
9 a story that has orchestras front and  
10 center in your origin story, your love for  
11 music, making music for other people  
12 started. Maybe share about how you first  
13 fell in love with orchestras.

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

1 to audition for the youth orchestra. I  
2 did that, not knowing it was a full  
3 Symphony orchestra. So at the first  
4 rehearsal, I thought I was walking into a  
5 more advanced string situation. It was  
6 completely symphonic. I was at the back  
7 of the second violin section, the minute,  
8 it was Nutcracker, and it was terrible.  
9 We were like I was shell shocked at the  
10 appearance of these other instruments. It  
11 was a wall of sound. Once I learned to  
12 love listening to classical music, and  
13 understanding that it was interlaced into  
14 many things I enjoyed, it was the jump off  
15 point. So the motivation was always  
16 orchestral. When I went to North Carolina  
17 school of the arts, University of North  
18 Carolina now, my private teacher was  
19 invested in me, but was not into the idea  
20 of orchestra as a career. He wasn't in to  
21 that idea for me. I maintained a stubborn  
22 hold on the idea of orchestra as a  
23 profession, not knowing he could see  
24 beyond me to what I was capable of. His  
25 name was Kevin Lawrence. I owe him a lot.



1 I clung to the orchestra track. After  
2 school, I took two years off and started  
3 playing with the Charlotte Symphony. At  
4 that time, I was interning under the  
5 mentorship of Jonathan Martin, then  
6 executive director. He's in Dallas now.  
7 I was not being paid, college credit, but  
8 was playing in the orchestra, subbing for  
9 Broadway shows that used local players,  
10 making connections with New York people at  
11 the same time, by promising myself I'd  
12 play, that sounds, I had no track for this  
13 stuff and it was the only way I knew, was  
14 to show up 200%. So I made connections  
15 there and tried to learn the  
16 administrative business from Jonathan. He  
17 was an incredible teacher but wanted me  
18 to, because he knew that part of my  
19 concerns were fiscal. I wanted job  
20 security, benefits, I had never felt a  
21 sense of that kind of security before. We  
22 were not exposed to -- growing up. All I  
23 knew was that I needed to do something  
24 that integrated music in a way that would  
25 make me feel secure. That was the reason

1 for pursuing the administrative track.  
2 The skills I used there, I use in  
3 contracting now. That's how those things  
4 helped me. But I never broke in. At the  
5 time I was an administrative intern, I  
6 applied to 200 jobs and got preliminary --  
7 to two of them. Playing and moving to New  
8 York through performance ended up how I  
9 got into NY U, and there, I got to New  
10 York. So it's always been just, when  
11 you're in it, you don't think about it in  
12 terms of success because so much of the  
13 drive is being successful despite not  
14 being able to break into this standard  
15 that I don't know about because I haven't  
16 had the same pedigree as others. But at  
17 the same time, because I approached things  
18 from a money perspective, I've been a  
19 Spoleto fellow, and I only, even applied  
20 because it was the only summer festival I  
21 saw that was paid. In that way, I was  
22 exposed to upper levels of playing and I'm  
23 right there with them. They all assume I  
24 took the traditional track. I have not.  
25 That has followed me throughout the

1 process. The question is posed around  
2 success, but when you're in it, it feels  
3 like you're just proving people wrong.

4 That was my motivation, to be honest.

5 >> Stephanie, Tia, anything to  
6 add?

7 >> All of us have experienced some  
8 level of that. In particular, I wanted to  
9 talk about these opportunities that  
10 seemingly are closed door to a lot of us.

11 The pedigree thing is a bit of an  
12 obstacle. A lot of people really like to  
13 get hung up on the brand name of the  
14 school. Not necessarily the holistic  
15 value of a person, a talent, an artist.

16 What's interesting is any of us who have  
17 taught at any level or degree, especially  
18 young people who are playing at a level  
19 where they can viably consider going into  
20 music professionally, were like, go for  
21 the teacher. Don't choose the school for  
22 the name. Go for the teacher. When they  
23 get out, they're like, oh, but what school  
24 did you go to? So there's this  
25 conflicting information. We really have

1 to be honest about that. Organizations  
2 get tripped up on it and there's a big  
3 pool of talent that's on the outskirts of  
4 your sphere of influence. They're not  
5 being reached, or tapped into, at all.

6 >> Tia, anything to say?

7 >> When I was in school, and  
8 people would apply to Juilliard to study  
9 with my teacher in his viola studio. He  
10 only accepted two or three there, but had  
11 a studio of 30-40 plus at Cincinnati. Why  
12 didn't you apply there? But people wanted  
13 that name. And for me, it was, I always  
14 did my research. It was the teacher, but  
15 also what city am I living in? In Oxford,  
16 Ohio. That was definitely a part of it.  
17 I just did not feel I was in a space where  
18 I felt comfortable. Move to Cincinnati  
19 was more of a diverse space in general and  
20 New York, a space I felt comfortable, to  
21 create and seek opportunities. Then, in  
22 terms of redefining what success means, it  
23 was literally me have to turn off what I  
24 was, orchestra job, get this job, that's  
25 success. I had to redefine, when I had

1 done college essays about what my career  
2 looked like when I got out of school, I  
3 said, playing chamber music, playing in  
4 orchestras, and I was actually doing all  
5 those things. So what was the problem?  
6 Just because it didn't have a box that  
7 said New York Phil, but I was playing in  
8 orchestras, traveling, so then, what was  
9 it that was not making me happy? When I  
10 could finally create opportunities for  
11 myself in this space and feel I was in  
12 safe. Redefining what success meant, just  
13 was a different thing.

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

24 >> I agree. The investment is  
25 huge. When you think about the countless

1 number of private lessons, you take to get  
2 yourself to the point you're competitive  
3 enough to even consider getting into a  
4 music school program. The summer  
5 festivals. The instrument, instrument  
6 maintenance. There are costs to these  
7 things. They're not free. Once you come  
8 out on the other side, your hope is that  
9 you can sustain yourself and not be living  
10 in debt for the rest of your natural life.  
11 The auditions, at least for me, I had  
12 toyed with the idea of auditioning for  
13 orchestras at a time, I had when I was in  
14 high school, I was in the NSO, youth  
15 fellowship program. I was in the D.C.  
16 youth orchestra program. I had considered  
17 it. I didn't have any real information  
18 about how it would happen. But man, it's  
19 cool, my first time getting bit by the  
20 travel bug. I traveled for the first time  
21 with the youth orchestra. When you  
22 consider the cost, coming back to  
23 investment, it takes money. I'm still  
24 paying back Sallie Mae, who handed me over  
25 to -- the reality is, you have to play for

1 pay. You're flying everywhere. You have  
2 to put yourself up, hopefully you have  
3 family or friends, but if not, hope you  
4 make it through the round and just to say,  
5 well, you know, maybe next time. Then you  
6 start all over. It costs money. So God  
7 bless the people that have the resources  
8 to do that. But for me, my parents don't  
9 have that kind of money. I don't. So I  
10 had to really look at what my options  
11 were and it didn't seem realistic. At the  
12 end of the day, I want to make a living,  
13 like anything else. I love music. I've  
14 invested my entire life doing what I do.  
15 I started playing at three. Formal  
16 private lessons at four. It's not like I  
17 just, decide on a whim, maybe I will try  
18 this thing out. I had to really look at  
19 what could, this kind of redefining  
20 success. And I definitely had teachers,  
21 colleagues, who were, like, either you're  
22 not a professionally managed soloist or  
23 chamber group, if you don't win an  
24 orchestra spot, you just didn't cut it, so  
25 the buck stopped there. so I had to really

1 hit a mental reset.

2 >> I'd like to exercise a little

3 personal privilege and make the point to

4 the audience that it goes unremarked upon

5 the degree to which musicians who more

6 often than not, do not currently hold full

7 time positions inside the mainstream

8 structure, fund and subsidize the job

9 search for every orchestral position. And

10 contrast that with how the orchestras

11 approach a director of development. I'm

12 not saying that's an inequity. I just

13 want acknowledgment that the field of

14 underemployed musicians are the ones would

15 subsidize these options that appear at

16 every job opening, they write section

17 violinist, XYX orchestra, sometimes it's

18 hundreds of thousand of dollars,

19 especially if you value people's time.

20 Forget about the airline costs, cartage,

21 and hotel, food, but also the hours of

22 those 80 people, hundreds of hours of

23 practice. The total value going into one

24 audition is significant and borne by the

25 field of underemployed musicians.



1 >> We're all investing in an  
2 industry where the contributions of the  
3 people that came before us do not have  
4 equity, be it in educational standards, in  
5 audition rep, sometimes for organizations  
6 that exist for us, we don't have  
7 representation. So I should say, when you  
8 are fighting to be recognized, as someone  
9 who's equal, when you come from a  
10 different socioeconomic background than  
11 the people around you, who are not racist,  
12 but just literally live a different life  
13 experience. If you're already feeling  
14 left out and asked to devote so much of  
15 yourself to music that doesn't include  
16 contributions from people that look like  
17 you and have shared more importantly your  
18 experience within the classical corner of  
19 the field, it's twice the labor. Twice  
20 the emotional labor. You have to think,  
21 you're okay, you're the only one who looks  
22 like this on the stage or booth. All that  
23 is mental work. People talk about  
24 emotional labor within terms of romantic  
25 relationships, but that crosses those

1 boundaries. It exists in music. We're  
2 artists. All that soul, commitment,  
3 passion, is compounded by the struggle to  
4 even just feel like, why, I don't know, I  
5 don't know. I don't know if I belong  
6 here. I guess. I love it. So I guess.  
7 I will convince myself. But if you're not  
8 surrounded by support, or not coming from  
9 a place where it's standard that you will  
10 go to college, just do it, then that can be  
11 a really alienating situation. That's  
12 just more labor.

13 >> I like that idea of emotional  
14 labor within a relationship as it relates  
15 to our relationship to the art form. I'd  
16 like to talk about the current moment and  
17 return to the original framing. This is  
18 not about making some better future for  
19 orchestras, but how they are poorer right  
20 now. For not having musicians like you,  
21 having missed the boat on you three. How  
22 has your path prepared you for the moment,  
23 how, what do you think has to teach  
24 audiences from League of American  
25 Orchestras? And Tia, starting with you?

1 >> In terms of this moment, even  
2 when I was, got the call and told I was in  
3 Jagged Little Pill for Broadway. Most  
4 people go, boom, I got a full time job,  
5 I'm good. Benefits, let's go! But it  
6 wasn't the case. It was, I think those  
7 people have have been there a while,  
8 freelanced, knows what's it's like when I  
9 show opens and closes a month later. It  
10 can close in six years, what do I do now?  
11 It's the same mind set of someone who  
12 toured with an artist, you're making  
13 point, get back, and okay, where's my  
14 network now? Who is or what's next? At  
15 the same time, I'd, I never lost my other  
16 goals. I never said, well I have jagged  
17 pill now, now, I have have a bigger  
18 platform, now this is something, that  
19 only, the founder of diverse concert  
20 artists, has background but now I also  
21 play full time on Broadway. What else can  
22 I do to broaden my other platforms, create  
23 other opportunities. That's what's  
24 happening now. I'm trying to use the time  
25 right now that all the times I needed a

1 breath, woke up at 7:00, to practice, run  
2 to a rehearsal, and another. Then a  
3 plane, then I think, I don't have a day  
4 off for three weeks, so I'm going. Using  
5 this time now to take that breath I really  
6 needed. And let the air clear, then  
7 redefine how I can come back into the  
8 space even better, stronger. And still  
9 not with the mind set of a go getter, but  
10 a go giver.

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

18 >> It's an interesting shift to  
19 witness. Everything I've encountered on  
20 my career path and in my journey as an  
21 artist has prepared me for a moment like  
22 this. That's simply being proactive,  
23 instead of reactive. With regard to  
24 creating my own opportunities. I never  
25 really felt like I felt like I could lean

1 on any source of income with certainty. I  
2 was constantly, it's like chess. I don't  
3 have parents that can provide that  
4 financial blanket. That can catch me if  
5 everything falls apart. They helped me  
6 get to this point. As a kid, private  
7 lesson is, but I had to think  
8 strategically. That's when  
9 entrepreneurship comes in. I find that  
10 the artists that are business minded,  
11 organizations that have strong  
12 entrepreneurship at the front, are the  
13 ones that are going to weather this thing  
14 and emerge stronger and more resilient.  
15 Starting the recollective orchestra, with  
16 Matt Jones, shout out to him, and also  
17 String Candy. I started these entities  
18 out of necessity. Not because I went to  
19 business school. That's not why I felt  
20 equipped. I can't say that I felt  
21 equipped. It was necessary. When I  
22 decided to start my company, and I was  
23 sure Tia can share this, I'm frankly not  
24 at a point where I can wait around and  
25 hope you think I'm great and hire me. I

1 have bill to pay. They won't wait until  
2 you decide you want to bring me onboard.  
3 I had to search within my immediate  
4 network, that's important for any artist,  
5 to consider. Look within your immediate  
6 network, and cultivate that. That's what  
7 enabled me to start my company and for me  
8 to book the kinds of gigs I book, to have  
9 a network of musicians and artists that I  
10 can reach out to that I can hire that, I  
11 can refer for various opportunities.  
12 Creating opportunities is great. In the  
13 course of that, starting a business, with  
14 no business, formal background, but just  
15 the sheer desire to work, create  
16 opportunity, and to not be tied down and  
17 burdened by anyone else's, or entity's  
18 perception of what I should do. That  
19 prepared me for this. None of us with  
20 fully prepared, but to be able to brace  
21 for it, I was never dependent on a salary,  
22 on one particular source. It's always  
23 thinking three, four, five steps ahead.  
24 Broadening the platform. There was never  
25 a point where I was, okay, this is it. I

1 never had that moment. So I'm not saying  
2 there's anything wrong with being in a  
3 salaried position. That's great. Who  
4 doesn't want and need benefits? To be  
5 able to know how much you will make month  
6 to month. Now, because I was kind of  
7 working on my own terms, people come to me  
8 so a lot of what I'm doing is what I've  
9 been doing many years. I've been remote  
10 recording for years. A friend is a  
11 cellist in L.A. She's done so many remote  
12 recordings, for years. Now, all those  
13 years of self investment, she's working on  
14 her own terms. She's scoring films every  
15 day from home. So I think this is a great  
16 opportunity speaking to the current  
17 audience, where entrepreneurship needs to  
18 kick in. This is an unprecedented time  
19 with unprecedented opportunity to access  
20 an entirely new audience to, broaden your  
21 platform, if you allow yourselves to do  
22 so.

23 >> That sums up the frame for  
24 this. On the other side of this call,  
25 there are people who work within

1 orchestras, at various levels, who wish  
2 that they had access to you as a might be  
3 of their group, all three of you, your  
4 networks, way you crafted your practice  
5 and project out music right now. We have  
6 a great question, nicely transitions to an  
7 activity we did. I asked Lady Jess and  
8 Stephanie and Tia to engage in a little  
9 imaginary exercise, to craft a job  
10 description for a job in an orchestra that  
11 would attract them away from the career  
12 and lives they made right now. To put it  
13 in a real context, we talked about  
14 orchestras are poorer for not having these  
15 amazing musicians, having missed out on.  
16 We will end with another exercise, to  
17 finish the sentence, I knew I was in the  
18 right place, when. I want to take a great  
19 question from the audience. The question  
20 is, how can a local orchestra be on the  
21 forefront to help tear down racial  
22 inequities and foster inclusion by  
23 encouraging all students to pursue a  
24 career in music. How do we get around the  
25 issue of access. If you're okay, I will



1 read a couple more. Curious about the  
2 panelists' thoughts about what the union's  
3 responsibility is to close the information  
4 gap. Musical chairs is a platform the  
5 union doesn't want to be. Someone wants  
6 to show what's on your wall hang.

7 >> What's going to draw someone  
8 in, when I was looking at orchestras, I  
9 wasn't just looking at, I see a listing  
10 that says viola position. I said, let me  
11 do more research. I want to know about  
12 the city I'd possibly be moving to,  
13 research what they're doing in terms of  
14 bringing in an audience, audience  
15 engagement, about what they're doing for  
16 outreach. Who was on their list in terms  
17 of the solo of thes brought in that year  
18 who, was on their program, and my biggest  
19 thing as a barrier was, I'd go to lists  
20 that were posted, public platforms, you  
21 can see who every musician is. And I go  
22 through the entire list, if I don't see  
23 one person that looks like me, or like in  
24 some way, that you're trying to bring in a  
25 diverse audience, that wants to see

1 themselves on stage, hear diverse  
2 repertoire, reflective of your audience  
3 and community, this is not for me. I want  
4 to be in a space I feel safe, as well.  
5 I'm not talking about the safety of having  
6 insurance. A safe space to be my most  
7 authentic, creative artistic self.

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

21 >> Regardless of the size of the  
22 orchestra, the current, with the internet,  
23 social media, doesn't matter. If you take  
24 marketing seriously, optics, seriously,  
25 then it won't matter how big or small the

1 orchestra is. UPCO is a small group,  
2 relatively new but the kind of programming  
3 has been revolutionary, more than all my  
4 orchestral experiencing in terms of  
5 educational programming, we partnered with  
6 opportunity music project, a nonprofit in  
7 New York, and gave children from  
8 underserved communities, I hate that term,  
9 the opportunity to study chamber music  
10 seriously over a consistent amount of time  
11 and perform that with their coaches at a  
12 high level. Not just baby sitting, it was  
13 an involved program and we got to know the  
14 groups and formed a bond with them. Those  
15 kinds of things that are happening in an  
16 orchestra that's a chamber orchestra and  
17 knew, are things that should be a piece of  
18 cake for any orchestra to get into their  
19 program. It doesn't matter how big or  
20 small. A marketing department who knows  
21 what's going on, and is in touch with  
22 mainstream culture, and a development  
23 department working in harmony with them.  
24 And understand how to talk to new people  
25 who can provide fiscal support and also

1 relate to the community.

2 >> I agree. We were talking

3 about, this is a business. Organizations

4 are make decisions based on dollars. So

5 that's spot on. You definitely want to

6 have a marketing team that knows how to

7 talk to different types of people. If you

8 don't, you're probably not going to get a

9 varied audience. That's it, it's

10 important, especially local organizations,

11 to get into their community. For

12 instance, I can't have an event and think

13 I can lazily send out Facebook invites,

14 then be mad that no one shows up. Lazy

15 operating, there's no more room or time

16 for it. If you have time, be comfortable

17 with where you are. Going back to young

18 people, they represent the future of

19 wherever you're headed. There are middle

20 schools, high schools, even elementary

21 schools. I don't know how many

22 organizations, some are great, some are

23 terrible at this, but it can be great to

24 go into schools, have phase time with the

25 kids, give them, talk to them about the

1 reality of being in an orchestra. The  
2 grassroots effort, we need to get back to,  
3 where you are really connecting with  
4 people. Children are people, too. They  
5 will decide to go into music schools,  
6 especially those with orchestra programs,  
7 or youth, like D.C. youth orchestra  
8 program. I don't recall talking with  
9 someone who worked at an orchestra. There  
10 are some organizations that are doing  
11 that, but too few.

12 >> I will read a little bit about  
13 what you wrote about descriptions of  
14 orchestras. Maybe we can make this  
15 available to people afterwards. Shout out  
16 to -- talked about the inadequacy of  
17 orchestra position job descriptions, how  
18 we miss an opportunity to sell our story.  
19 How is it that two positions with a  
20 hundred thousand dollars difference in  
21 similarly, salary, in wild the different  
22 parts of the country, will describe their  
23 position the same way. Two words. The  
24 instrument, and the title. Section viola.  
25 How is it, from the met, to a smaller

1 institutional, those are the same. And  
2 Wes and -- talk about by being creative  
3 about the descriptions, you can use the  
4 hire as a ministrategic planning session.  
5 Jess described the organization, why we  
6 care and how we operate. This is her  
7 orchestra. Core values include a  
8 commitment to active, diverse current  
9 programming, openness to creative  
10 evolution and growth. Musicians are  
11 respected for who they are, commitment to  
12 the community in which we exist. We  
13 believe an active community and board  
14 engagement and ask this of each musician  
15 on stage. We see the orchestra as a  
16 company and a service. You would show a  
17 commitment to artistic excellence and  
18 openness to adjust and effective action,  
19 community engagement. You have a say in  
20 program choices. Have the option to  
21 engage in mentor relationships with a  
22 diverse group of students. From Stephanie,  
23 we got, Los Angeles based orchestra seeks  
24 classically trained musicians from various  
25 backgrounds, ethnic and cultural, LGBT

1 plus musicians encouraged to apply.  
2 Individuals with strong connections to the  
3 Latino and African American community,  
4 actively working to empowering those  
5 communities are strongly encouraged to  
6 apply. There are similar themes there.

7 Anything you want to say?

8 >> I specified Los Angeles based  
9 is because we were talking about where we  
10 would want to be. That was my  
11 specification. I also included  
12 individuals with connections to the Latino  
13 and African American community because Los  
14 Angeles is in southern California.  
15 Whatever that community looks like, that's  
16 why it was included. The out reach  
17 component is hugely important. This is a  
18 conversation that has crept up in so many  
19 conversations with my friends. It's so  
20 offensive to be invited to be part of an  
21 educational, or any out reach engagement  
22 capacity, and not be good enough to be in  
23 the orchestra. That's tokenism at its the  
24 finest. Incredibly offensive. If your  
25 outreach hires don't represent what your

1 orchestra looks like, that's something to  
2 consider.

3 >> Tia?

4

5 >> I don't know if we have time  
6 to read the testimonial I wrote because  
7 that's the answer to the later question.

8 That gives context to why I wrote my job  
9 description. I started at the  
10 testimonial. It's easier for me to think  
11 in terms of, like what I didn't get and  
12 what I wish would be in place.

13 >> Absolutely.

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

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

20 >> I was offered the option to  
21 make a higher salary based on community  
22 and academic engagement. In my pretrial  
23 plus audition, in person interview, the  
24 orchestra laid out clear plans to engage  
25 the community and continuously seek



1 musicians that could relate to its  
2 audience in a socioeconomic way, including  
3 a system of accountability between members  
4 of the board and musicians themselves for  
5 artist care and community engagement. I  
6 read about this in the job description,  
7 but didn't believe it was true until I  
8 took the trial. I felt my perspective and  
9 value as a member of the organization  
10 versus the normal feeling of being one in  
11 a sea of all others, all subject to a  
12 traditional hierarchy that out weighed the  
13 priorities of its members on and off  
14 stage. Benefits were outlined, it was  
15 made clear -- followed by a discussion  
16 about previous orchestral experience, I  
17 didn't feel pressure, feel some experience  
18 isolated to paper. My interviewee and  
19 orchestra committee had a human interest  
20 in how I found myself applying for a spot.  
21 The interview was conversational, without  
22 losing the formality of process. I was  
23 given the choice to know who would be on  
24 the audition panel. It was later that  
25 afternoon, but it helped sooth my anxiety

1 to feel I had a plan. That was a  
2 preexisting -- internship program that  
3 paired administrative and educational  
4 interns with symphony musicians outside of  
5 the office, also had a calming effect. It  
6 was have more appealing after learning the  
7 orchestra offered internships for pay and  
8 for school credits. I was compensated for  
9 travel expenses and told I, if I passed  
10 the screen audition round, further travel  
11 would be covered by the orchestra.

12 Throughout my application and audition  
13 process I felt respected. My experience  
14 was factored into the process, and this  
15 was unprecedented for an orchestra.

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

18 >> That's incredible. I'd love to  
19 have walked away from an experience like  
20 that. Overwhelmingly positive.

21 Supportive. That requires an organization  
22 putting its money where its mouth is. I  
23 knew I was in the right place, I'm not  
24 like a full time member of a traditional  
25 orchestra. I work within -- orchestra,

1 sitting along side people who are members  
2 of L.A. Phil, opera, chamber orchestra.  
3 When I truly felt visible, appreciated and  
4 value the. After years of school, in the  
5 work place, in the traditional classical  
6 work place, I felt devalued and sometimes  
7 invisible. I knew I had found my place  
8 when I stopped being anxious about what  
9 people thought about me and my playing.  
10 Committed to the creative space without  
11 the weight of bias and prejudice. I  
12 worked for the sphinx orchestra, a number  
13 of years. They touched many of us in a  
14 positive way. I truly support their  
15 mission and vision and what they continue  
16 to do. Outside of that, there was no full  
17 time creative position, there's not an  
18 orchestra that I can be hired for and  
19 salaried by through that entity. So I  
20 started the company in 2012, after I left  
21 school. Honestly, I want work on my own  
22 terms. I felt I was tired of the  
23 emotional roller coaster. The emotional  
24 labor. I felt so anxious, every time I  
25 entered the space. And I started kind of

1 having little spot placements here and  
2 there, while I was teaching, doing other  
3 things, including my time in Trinidad. I  
4 thought I could start my own company, try  
5 my hand. It hit a fever pitch in terms of  
6 my level of frustration. And fast forward  
7 to today. I can't tell you how many mind  
8 blowing moments I have. Every experience  
9 is unique. I'm grateful to all the  
10 artists, including Tia, Jess, you, and all  
11 of my artistic colleagues I met along the  
12 way that I connect to, have dialogue with.  
13 But it does incredible to be and connect  
14 and have direct communication, or meeting,  
15 with people like Hans Zimmer, and various  
16 artists, music directors who value my  
17 talent, my creative input. That's when I  
18 knew I was in the right place.

19 >> Tia, how did you finish that  
20 sentence?

21 >> I took this as literally  
22 situational. It was a two part answer. I  
23 knew I was in the right place in my career  
24 where I was in a place I could create  
25 opportunity and give back. Currently,

1 being in Jagged Little Pill, when I first  
2 walked in the first rehearsal, for a  
3 recording, it was all the producers, a lot  
4 of people involved, I looked around and  
5 saw how diverse it was. And all these  
6 creatives in the room, and the first thing  
7 we did, we said who we were, our pronouns.  
8 I knew, I was in the right place. I knew  
9 this space was here to create a space for  
10 me that I would feel space in. I will  
11 never forget that feeling. It was  
12 literally the first I would be in a work  
13 space, where they said we will introduce  
14 ourselves, what you do and what's your  
15 pronoun. When you see the show, you will  
16 see the pronouns printed in the program.  
17 Very important.

18 >> That's unique. It doesn't  
19 happen in classical music in the ways  
20 you'd think. I've seen it in the  
21 classical work in New York, when UPCO, we  
22 use nongender specific dress codes. I use  
23 them, it's part of the reason I use -- in  
24 my contract. You don't see that in the  
25 places where the salaries are. It

1 shouldn't be revolutionary. I feel that  
2 on a deep level. That extends to the  
3 festival space, spaces that exist for  
4 black people. I don't know that there's a  
5 (indiscernible) at some of the festivals.  
6 The question is never asked. There are  
7 things that expand beyond just this  
8 narrative, that we don't see in classical  
9 music as a whole. That's limiting the  
10 amount of fiscal progress these orchestras  
11 can actually make right now. It requires  
12 almost nothing. You don't have to  
13 download software. Just get current.  
14 That's the only thing.

15 >> We have a little bit of time.  
16 I will do a, first, thank you. I'm  
17 grateful to you and your time and story  
18 and willingness to share. I'm sure the  
19 audience feels they only have this moment  
20 with you. To honor everyone's  
21 participation, there's one question  
22 regarding, Lady Jess, your job  
23 description. I want to clarify, that's  
24 not a job or process that Jess experienced  
25 in the real world, but were she to

1 experience it, she would know she's in the  
2 right place. Orchestras won't be better  
3 in the future, when they have more  
4 diversity. They're poorer right now for  
5 their lack of that. Also questions about  
6 could, would you be willing to share those  
7 statements? The answer largely is yes.  
8 There's also a question from our friend,  
9 Jen Arnold, who wants to know, let's  
10 pretend America orchestras have an  
11 inclusive work culture, and fair  
12 auditions. If in that context, an  
13 orchestra personally reached out to you,  
14 to have the audition, would you be more  
15 likely to attend the audition? Answer for  
16 yourself, but also as a broad thing.  
17 Would that be helpful for orchestras to  
18 engage in that?  
19 >> Possibly. I can't say for  
20 sure, yes, because there have to be a  
21 range of thing that's I'd say, in this  
22 mythical organizations that would lead me  
23 to believe they're truly interested in it.  
24 We're not living in the Beethoven era  
25 where it's mainstream, the way it can and

1 should be. So I'd have to see that. And  
2 then --

3 >> So you're saying you would  
4 probe for yourself whether or not they  
5 truly had inclusive work culture. Before  
6 they favor you a call, you would have  
7 questions for them and want to know is it  
8 real or are you just following a script to  
9 get you to come to the audition.

10 >> Yes, often, organizations say  
11 things and build in wonderful catch  
12 phrases that land them great grants. But  
13 the actuality of putting their money where  
14 they mouth is, and having receipts for the  
15 work they're actually currently doing, to  
16 support said statements, I have to see  
17 that.

18 >> Tia, the question is, how can  
19 artistic administrators promote diverse  
20 artists and provide a platform for  
21 opportunity whiling avoiding tokenism?

22 >> It's trying to say that, it's a  
23 baited question. It's trying to say that  
24 having diversity in the space, and  
25 creating opportunity is like a commodity,



1 which it's not. It's representative of  
2 culture, of where we are right now, it's  
3 not, not a trend. Diversifying your space  
4 is not a token. It should have been going  
5 on for years. It led to so much  
6 frustration, I had to finally do something  
7 this. I can't sit around and wait. If  
8 you want to see what my orchestra is  
9 doing, get on board, okay.

10 >> Thank you to my friends and  
11 colleagues, it's been a pleasure working  
12 would you, let me extend my thanks to the  
13 Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, who provided  
14 funding for this and important to note,  
15 that foundation and the new world is  
16 allied with the national alliance, trying  
17 to close the gaps we talked about, relate  
18 to getting to auditions, knowing about  
19 them, broadening networks. I invite  
20 orchestras that have not heard about this  
21 to investigate through, reach out to all  
22 three of those organizations, New World,  
23 the League, Sphinx, and Mellon, to find  
24 out how you can support and engage. Just,  
25 I'm grateful, it's been such a pleasure.

1 Out there in the world, everyone is  
2 joining me in giving you a huge hand.  
3 James, if you're with us, I toss this to  
4 you. It's been hugely inspirational.

5 >> Thank you so much, Jess,  
6 Stephanie, Tia. And Alex, for leading  
7 this really important honest inspirational  
8 conversation. It's been fantastic today.  
9 That wraps up today's session. So thank  
10 you to you and the audience for joining.  
11 A few reminders. Please take a minute to  
12 do the survey, the link is in the settings  
13 below. If you can make a donation to our  
14 stronger together campaign, we will be so  
15 grateful. Click the stronger together  
16 button. In the feed loop. I understand  
17 that's down right now so please visit our  
18 website. Thank you, Alex, for mentioning  
19 the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. Thank  
20 you for sponsoring this session. For  
21 those of you in the audience, please check  
22 out your constituency meetings in the  
23 schedule as we are regularly adding new  
24 sessions. Also, drop by our exhibit hall,  
25 and we look forward to seeing some of you

1 again tomorrow at 1:00, eastern, for our  
2 next session, building scenarios for an  
3 uncertain future. Thank you again to you,  
4 Jess, Stephanie, Tia, Alex. Have a great  
5 day, everybody. Thank you.

6 >> Thank you.

7 >> Bye, thank you.

8 >> Thank you.

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