

Musicians, Composers, Commissions, Advocacy, and More

A roundup of recent activity at the League of American Orchestras

Impact of New Tax on Orchestras Featured in Congressional Briefing

The League's Advocacy team works on multiple fronts to help orchestras serve their communities and connect orchestras with the larger nonprofit sector. On March 14, the Richmond Symphony was featured at a Capitol Hill briefing to describe the negative impact of a new tax on nonprofits. The Unrelated Business Income Tax (UBIT), which was included in the 2018 federal tax reform law, is a 21 percent tax on employee commuting and parking benefits at nonprofits. The tax is an unprecedented new levy on nonprofit expenses that is heaping significant additional costs on orchestras and other nonprofits. The Capitol Hill briefing was hosted by Independent Sector and the Council on Foundations to focus attention on how the new UBIT expense diverts nonprofit resources away from mission-centered activity. Momentum is building to repeal the 21 percent tax. At press time there were four bills that seek to repeal the tax on transportation fringe benefits for tax-exempt organizations. Senators James Lankford (R-OK) and Chris Coons (D-DE) have introduced the LIFT for Charities Act, with Rep. Mark Walker (R-NC) and Tom Suozzi (D-NY) as the leaders

for the companion bill in the House. Rep. Michael Conaway (R-TX) and Senators Ted Cruz (R-TX) and Jeanne Shaheen (D-NH) have introduced bills that would repeal the transportation fringe benefit tax as well as a provision that would require tax-exempt organizations to separately



Scott Dodson (at center), director of advancement and patron communications at Virginia's Richmond Symphony, speaks at a Capitol Hill briefing about the effects of the new tax on employee commuting and parking benefits at nonprofits.

calculate UBIT for each trade or business within the organization. Orchestra stakeholders can take action on this issue by visiting the League's dedicated Advocacy Center at <https://www.americanorchestras.org/advocacy-government/tax-and-501-c-3-policy/take-action.html>.

Supporting Women Composers

Now in its fifth year, the League's Women Composers Readings and Commissions program continues to be a vital pipeline for new orchestral music in the U.S. Composers Courtney Bryan, Cindy Cox, and Fang Man will each receive orchestral commissions of \$15,000 as part of the 2018 Women Composers Readings and Commissions program, which is an initiative



Arielle Plentjes

Courtney Bryan

of the League of American Orchestras in partnership with American Composers Orchestra and supported by the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation. Courtney Bryan's work will be premiered by the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra and Music Director Carlos Miguel Prieto in the 2019-20 season. Cindy Cox's work will be premiered by the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra in May 2020, and Fang Man's work will be given its premiere by the San Francisco Symphony (performance details for the Cox and Man works will be announced). Looking ahead, the Women Composers program has been renewed for 2019, with three additional composers to be awarded commissions next year.

"Over the past five years, our Women Composers program has significantly expanded the repertoire, resulting in important new works by women being performed by orchestras across the country," said Jesse Rosen, the League's president and CEO. "We are grateful for the

Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation's visionary thinking and years of support.”

The Women Composers Readings and Commissions program is embedded in EarShot, an initiative of American Composers Orchestra in collaboration with American Composers Forum, the League of American Orchestras, and New Music USA. Since its inception in 2014, the Women Composers Readings and Commissions program has shown impressive results: thirty-four women composers benefitted from career development via the EarShot Readings and thirteen composers have now received commissions, with five premieres (by Julia Adolphe, Melody Eötvös, Chen-Hui Jen, Andreia Pinto Correia, and Andrea Reinkemeyer) completed.



Cindy Cox



Fang Man

League Works to Keep Musical Instruments on the Agenda for Treaty Negotiations

Musical instruments in use by orchestras and musicians across the globe will be on the agenda for discussion when 182 countries gather to renegotiate the implementation of the Convention in International Trade in Endangered Species of Wild Fauna and Flora (CITES). As it has for several years, the League of American Orchestras will participate in CITES negotiations, seeking to improve implementation of the Musical Instrument Certificate that touring orchestras must obtain and weighing in on new policies related to rosewood, which is used in a wide array of instruments. Whether musicians are seeking to buy and sell instruments across borders, or simply to travel internationally for performances, CITES sets limitations on this activity and requires permits for

instruments that have historically been made with small bits of material from natural resources that have now come under protected status, such as monitor lizards, sea turtles, and elephant ivory. Though the CITES negotiations that were scheduled to take place in Sri Lanka this May have been postponed due to security concerns, the League remains an active voice in supporting the interests of orchestras and musicians. In April, the League submitted public comments to the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service that outline policy actions that can support conservation efforts while also preserving international cultural activity. Visit <https://americanorchestras.org/endorangeredspecies> for information.

Five Orchestra Musicians to Receive Ford Musician Awards for Excellence in Community Service

Five orchestra musicians will receive Ford Musician Awards for Excellence in Community Service from the League of American Orchestras on June 4 at the League's 2019 National Conference in Nashville. The awards, supported by Ford Motor Company Fund, celebrate professional orchestra musicians who provide exemplary and meaningful service in their communities and make a significant impact through education and community engagement. This year's awardees work in partnership with their orchestras on a variety of initiatives that include introducing young children to orchestral instruments; teaching hearing- and speech-impaired children new skills; providing music education and engagement to students from underserved communities; connecting with families in outlying communities; and facilitating the creation of new compositions by high school students.

The five award recipients and their orchestras and programs are:

- Victoria Griswold, violin, Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra: Teddy Bear Series, introducing young children to orchestral instruments through story, live music, and movement
- Jeff Handley, principal percussion and education/outreach program director, Chicago Sinfonietta: Audience

Matters and SEED, in-school residency programs for students from underserved communities

- Rebecca Patterson, principal cello, New Haven Symphony Orchestra: NHSO Harmony Fellowship Quartet/Recording Composition Class, for students from underrepresented communities
- Donna Parkes, principal trombone, Louisville Orchestra: Teaching children at the Heuser Hearing Institute with hearing and speech impairment such skills as singing, clapping with rhythm, and dancing
- Rebecca Young, associate principal viola, New York Philharmonic: Host of the New York Philharmonic's Very Young People's Concerts who has expanded the program's reach

Now in its fourth year, the League's Ford Musician Awards program, made possible by the generous support of Ford Motor Company Fund, honors professional orchestra musicians who employ music for the benefit of the great community. The musicians are selected by a panel of peer professionals through a competitive nomination process to receive the awards, which include a \$2,500 grant to each musician, as well as an additional \$2,500 grant to the musician's home orchestra to support professional development focused on community service and engagement for musicians.

The five musicians will discuss their work at the *Musicians Transforming Communities* session at the League Conference on June 4 at 9 a.m., and will receive their awards at the Conference Luncheon on June 4 at 12:45 p.m. Videos of the musicians and their programs will be posted at <https://americanorchestras.org/> after the Conference.

League's Volunteer Council Supports Orchestra Volunteers Across the U.S.

From coast to coast, associations of volunteers work tirelessly to raise money and offer other forms of support to their local orchestras. Whether they are called a league, a guild, "the friends of," or another name, these groups help advance orches-



The Volunteer Council gathered at the League of American Orchestras office in March of 2019. Front row, left to right: Tresa A. Radermacher, Northwest Indiana Symphony, IN; Terry Ann White, Amarillo Symphony, TX; Tiffany Ammerman, Marshall Symphony, TX; Becky Odland, Minnesota Orchestra, MN; Linda Stevens, Kansas City Symphony, MO. Back row, left to right: Derek Weagle, League of American Orchestras, NY; Beth Wise, Huntsville Symphony Orchestra, AL; Sheri Gill, Los Angeles Philharmonic, CA; Bruce Colquhoun, Spokane Symphony, WA; Sandy Feldman, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, MD; Camille Williams, Arkansas Symphony Orchestra, AR; Ginny Lundquist, Detroit Symphony Orchestra, MI; Laurie Skjerseth, Quad City Symphony, IA; Sharon Hatchett, Chicago Sinfonietta, IL; Janet Cabot, Madison Symphony, WI; Cindy Kidwell, East Tyler Symphony Orchestra, TX.

tral music in their communities. Made up of representative volunteer leaders from orchestras of all budget sizes, the Volunteer Council of the League of American Orchestras sustains and strengthens volunteer groups across the U.S. by offering national educational and networking opportunities. These include but are not limited to the *Volunteer Notes* newsletter; the Volunteer Project Database; and programming at the League's National Conference. The Volunteer Council is a vital resource for the League, providing critical knowledge and tools for cultivating modern and thriving volunteer support. Learn more about the Volunteer Council at <https://www.americanorchestras.org/volcouncil>.

The League Will Be Moving!

To strengthen its services to members, the League of American Orchestras is

A Kirkus Reviews Best Book of 2016!



"A magisterial work ... astonishingly thorough research ... a riveting dramatization of musical history."
—Kirkus Reviews (starred review)

"Boman Desai writes so compellingly that his characters appear as full-bloodedly as if they might have been his neighbors. BRAVO!"
Zubin Mehta

"Immense scholarship ... a story Tolstoy might have told ... a tour de force."
Vernon Howard (Harvard University)

"A remarkable feat ... charming and readable ... a massive achievement!"
Bapsi Sidhwa

"I loved and admired this book!"
Diana Athill

"I read TRIO through at a gallop, the characters appeared on the page in the flesh, and I could hear their music. Congratulations!"
Sooni Taraporevala

Firmly grounded in fact, the book unfolds like a novel, a narrative of Love, Insanity, Suicide, Revolution, Politics, War - and Music.

A novel for people who hate novels (who read about only "real" things) and a biography for people who hate biographies (for the footnotes and other intrusions).

Available from Amazon.com and on order from any bookstore.



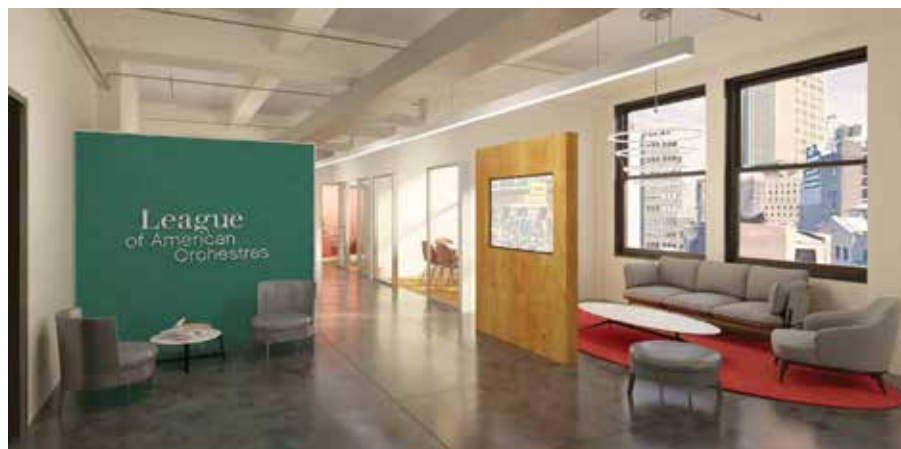
Copeland Productions

The Tallahassee Symphony Orchestra's March 2019 performances of composer Joel Thompson's *Seven Last Words of the Unarmed*, a meditation on the lives of black men who were shot by police, drew wide media attention. In March, League of American Orchestras President and CEO Jesse Rosen attended a performance and met with the creative team. From left: Tallahassee Symphony Music Director Darko Butorac, composer Joel Thompson, Rosen, and Tallahassee Symphony CEO Amanda Stringer. See story on page 34 for more on *Seven Last Words of the Unarmed*.

moving its office this fall to 520 Eighth Avenue, between 36th and 37th streets in New York's Garment District. The move will allow the League to benefit from a contemporary workspace that promotes collaboration among staff and improved outreach to members through up-to-date videoconferencing and digital learning capabilities. Additionally, with rents steadily increasing at the League's current location at 33 West 60th Street in the Columbus Circle neighborhood, the move will substantially reduce occupancy costs. "We can better serve orchestras by lowering our

overhead costs and greatly enhancing our communications with members and offering digital learning opportunities," says League President and CEO Jesse Rosen. "We are very excited by the possibilities offered with this change of address."

The establishment of a new national headquarters is the cornerstone of a major \$1.8 million investment in member service including a new website, digital learning capacity, and an information technology ecosystem. A major fundraising campaign is underway with \$1 million committed to date. The campaign was



Designer's rendering of planned interior of new League of American Orchestras offices.

launched with a lead gift of \$400,000 from League Emeritus Director Bruce Clinton of The Clinton Family Fund.

The League has a staff of 29, with two government relations personnel in Washington, D.C. It has been at its current location since 1999.

As the date of the move draws closer, the League will disseminate change-of-address notices. The phone number for the League, 212 262-5161, and email addresses will remain the same, including member@americanorchestras.org.

League Webinar Explores Wallace's Audience-Building Resources

More than 100 professionals from orchestras, opera companies, chamber ensembles, presenters, theaters, and dance troupes tuned in to the League's April 23 webinar, *Where to Start in Building Audiences: Unpacking the Many Resources from The Wallace Foundation*. The live webinar explored the studies, articles, videos, and other resources that are available free of charge from the Wallace Foundation's *Building Audiences for Sustainability* program, which develops insights into how arts groups in multiple genres can achieve and sustain audience gains. Webinar participants discovered which Wallace materials may be best suited for discussion in their own organizations and gained an overview of the audience-building work arts groups have done—and the lessons they've learned. The webinar was hosted by John-Morgan Bush, director of Learning and Leadership Programs at the League, and Robert Sandla, editor in chief of *Symphony* magazine at the League. Featured speakers were Krista Bradley, director of programs and resources, Association of Performing Arts Professionals; Nichole L. Knight, director of Operations, Chamber Music America; and Johanna Tschebull, communications specialist, Dance USA.

Visit the Building Arts Audiences section at americanorchestras.org to watch the webinar for free and to take advantage of audience-building resources from the Wallace Foundation. **S**