

# See / Hear

**What happens when an orchestral musician picks up a camera? Three classically trained players—an oboist, clarinetist, and bassist—are pursuing careers that overlap both fields, each with a different perspective.**

By Jennifer Melick



Photographer Paul Marotta, a conservatory-trained clarinetist, switched to a career as a freelance photographer. He does “200 to 300 photo shoots” a year, everything from retail store openings and pop stars Britney Spears and Justin Bieber to personal projects like an in-depth photo project with the Boston Philharmonic Youth Orchestra.

**T**he opening sentence of Matt Dine’s bio at the Orpheus Chamber Orchestra website says he started playing the oboe after seeing a picture of it in Webster’s Dictionary. “That kind of says it all, doesn’t it?” he jokes. For decades, Dine’s career has been as a professional oboist, playing with Orpheus and American Ballet Theater, both based in New York; he also serves as personnel manager for ABT and the American Symphony Orchestra. But since 2010, thanks to a neck injury that sidelined him for a year, he’s also been working as a professional photographer.

Matt Zory and Paul Marotta took different routes to photography careers. Zory, assistant principal bass of the Cincinnati

Symphony Orchestra, has pursued photography as a sideline for the past seven years but recently had a couple of big photo projects revolving around the renovation of Music Hall—the orchestra’s home venue—and Over-the-Rhine, the working-class neighborhood near the concert hall. A book based on Zory’s photos of the Music Hall renovation came out in December. Marotta, a classically trained clarinetist, made the switch to a full-time photography career in 2011 after running a Boston arts public relations firm that provided various services to emerging artists, including photography. The photography piece of the business took off. His freelance career—he does 200 to 300 photo

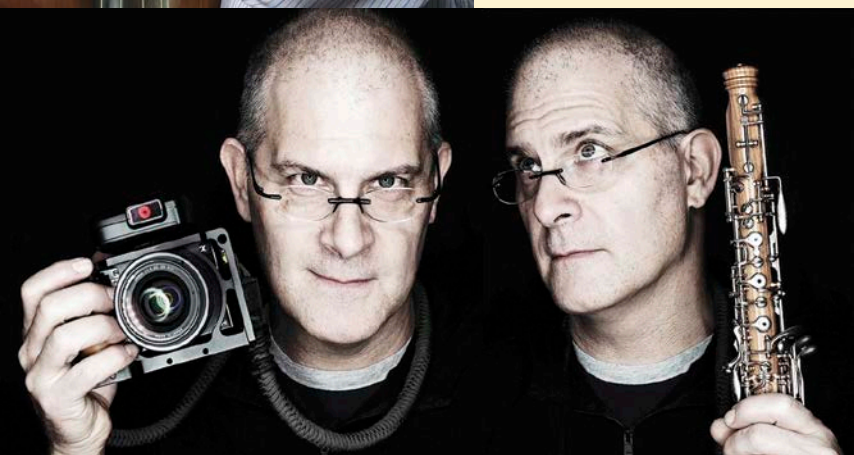
shoots a year—includes everything from theater companies to Britney Spears and Justin Bieber for the stock photo agency Getty Images. Recently, he spent a year photographing the Boston Philharmonic Youth Orchestra as a personal project.

For all three—Dine, Marotta, and Zory—music training and knowledge are intertwined with their photography, and keeps them in the orchestral world they already know well.

In Dine’s case, the 2010 neck injury meant that for an entire year, “I couldn’t play oboe, and I was told to get a hobby,” he says. “I always have taken pictures, though not seriously, and I never had a decent camera. But I thought, the only thing



Matt Zory is the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra's assistant principal bass. He has pursued photography as a sideline for several years, and recently undertook a major project about the sixteen-month renovation of Music Hall, the CSO's performance venue, which reopened in October 2017.



Matt Dine, a New York-based oboist with a long professional career, was sidelined after a neck injury in 2010. His hobby, photography, quickly became a second profession, with work for the *New York Times*, as well as lots of musician portraits—many of them people he knows from his work as a musician.

that makes sense is to try to take pictures of music, because I know what I'm looking at, I know what I'm hearing." Dine decided to make a serious try as a photographer, and one of the first things he did was call *New York Times* cultural reporter—now deputy editorial director of NYT Global—Dan Wakin, whom he knew from way back in summer camp. "He got me an interview at the *Times*, and they said, okay, bring a portfolio. I didn't have a portfolio. So I threw together some prints, and I met

with them. And they basically signed me up because they liked my access: the fact that I knew where I was going, I knew everybody at the concert and theater halls, I could get to the conductors, I could get to the publicists." Photographing for the *Times*, he says, gave him "sort of instant cred," and his career blossomed.

Most of Dine's business is portraits of musicians—"sort of a built-in clientele from playing for so long," he says. He gets hired to photograph individual musicians,

and he has photographed whole orchestras—Orpheus, of course, but also the Florida Orchestra, St. Paul Chamber Orchestra, and Orchestra of St. Luke's. "It's really hard to shoot an orchestra," he says. "A posed picture of an orchestra is so formal, and it's so big—you can't really see anything because there's 60, 70, maybe 80 people. Breaking it up into smaller groups is fun, looks better, and it's more personal." At this point, Dine says his career is "about 60/40 photography to music. I actually just retired from Orpheus as a player. And they hired me as a photographer. Which is great. And if I want to, I can still play oboe—they put me at the top of the sub list." After several years playing with pain, he says, "Switching over to photography is great."

Paul Marotta holds a master of music degree in clarinet performance from Boston's New England Conservatory of Music, but "within a day or two of graduating, I went to work for John Aaron at what was then Aaron and Gordon Concert Management," he says. "John also managed the Boston Early Music Festival, and the concert series with Franz Bruggen, and a lot of other great artists, and I totally fell in love with arts management at that point." In 2008, after public-relations stints at Boston University's School for the Arts, the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, and Minnesota Orchestra, he was working as executive director of public information at WHYY in Philadelphia, and lost his job in the economic downturn. He moved back to Boston and began his own public-relations business—"I had a lot of music contacts and got freelance work for places like the Luminato Festival and Royal Conservatory of Music in Toronto, Aston Magna Music Festival."

Photography ended up becoming a bigger and bigger part of Marotta's P.R. work, and one day, Marotta says, "I just picked up the phone and called Getty Images's New York office, and asked, do you need a photographer in Boston? I got a call the next day, and I was sent to Providence, Rhode Island to shoot a red-carpet event with Britney Spears for *X Factor*. That was the moment that I went from being a freelance personal-client photographer to really trial by fire—because in that world, in the press pool like at the Britney Spears shoot, it's really tough. But I liked it a lot. I discovered that it was a real rush to be able to shoot an

event, edit it, write the captions, file it, and see it in print. On the other hand, I recently shot Justin Bieber at the Boston Garden. And 16,000 screaming sixteen-year-old girls is not my idea of a good time.

"I'm a freelance photographer on all fronts," Marotta says. "I do a bunch of things for Getty. I'm assigned things that I want to cover with Getty on the news side. I'm also hired by Getty for specific events on the commercial side, for example a big shoot I did at MIT for TechCrunch, the tech-industry-news publisher. Projects range from that to things like retail store openings, or a thing I did for Nickelodeon/Getty on *SpongeBob SquarePants*." He also pursues personal photo projects, like an in-depth year spent photographing the young musicians of the Boston Philharmonic Youth Orchestra, and one coming up in April 2018 that "involves going to the Mississippi Delta and chasing some old blues musicians as part of the Juke Joint Festival in Clarksdale, Mississippi."

When not playing bass in the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra and Cincinnati Pops, Matthew Zory had always had an interest in photography, though "I didn't get a camera, or even a computer, until 2010," he says. The CSO already has a photographer, Mark Lyons, who captures a lot of the orchestra's concert performances. Zory, for his part, had been pursuing a sideline as a photographer in his spare time for several years when he was given permission and construction-zone access to capture the sixteen-month remaking of Cincinnati's historic Music Hall, which reopened in October 2017. In December, *Through the Lens: The Remaking of Cincinnati's Music Hall*, based on the photos he took, was released by Cincinnati Book Publishing, with essays by Zory's wife, Cincinnati-based journalist and writer Shelly Reese. "I got the idea for Music Hall project during a rehearsal," says Zory. "I was thinking, this might be interesting once they start tearing the place apart, there might be some interesting light, work lights, torches. About a week after the demolition began, I wandered into the basement, where the real action was starting, and they had exactly what I thought: lots of torches and grinders and sparks and crazy light. That sort of sealed the deal for me. I didn't find out until later that the local TV station and I were the only camera people allowed into

#### PHOTOS BY MATT DINE:

"I do a lot of musician portraits. It's sort of a built-in clientele from playing for so long. The fact that I know 80 percent of the people who hire me from a past musical life makes it that much easier. Since I know a lot of these people, the comfort factor is great. You pretty quickly get past the discomfort people have being photographed." Below: Shelagh Abate, principal horn of the Vermont Symphony Orchestra; bassist Peter Donovan; conductors Louis Langrée, Bernard Haitink, and Zubin Mehta; violist Maxine Roach.



the hall on a regular basis." Zory says Mark Lyons and Lyons's wife, also a photographer, "coached me early on."

"I spent the year and a half in the hall during the reconstruction with the construction men and women, and they knew my name, and I knew a lot of the faces.

When we as an orchestra got back into the hall, it was a collision of my two worlds," Zory laughs. "It was like, 'what are all you people doing here? This is *my* space!'" [S](#)

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PHOTOS BY PAUL MAROTTA:

“Since August 2016, I’ve been working on my own documentary project, taking photos of the Boston Philharmonic Youth Orchestra. It ended when I went with them on their tour to Peru, Argentina, and Uruguay in June 2017. The trip was just amazing. Those kids were doing four, five, six events a day—grueling. On the other hand, to be so immersed in an art that you love is a total gift. I have 40,000 frames that I’m whittling down to 1,800 edited frames. The final images will go into a book—the tentative title is *Dream Keepers*—and gallery shows in 2018.”

1: A side-by-side rehearsal in Lima, Peru with the Boston Philharmonic Youth Orchestra and a local Peruvian youth orchestra, June 2017.

2: “Soloist In Mo Yang performed with the Boston Philharmonic Youth Orchestra on tour in June. In the photo he’s playing a Paganini caprice as an encore at a morning concert for schoolkids—he also played with the orchestra at a second concert later the same day,” led by Benjamin Zander, BPYO’s founder and conductor.

3: “That’s Derek Beckvold, the Boston Philharmonic Youth Orchestra’s education director, on tour in June. This was such a beautiful moment of him at this El Sistema side-by-side in Peru, with members of the orchestra participating and teaching these kids from the poorest sections. There’s an El Sistema program there that brings them in, gives them food and musical training, positive encouragement about things in life. The Boston Youth musicians connected with them in such a strong way.”

4: “Part of the Boston Philharmonic Youth Orchestra book project is a whole series of portraits of the kids. This is a cellist in the orchestra, taken at ancient Peruvian ruins called Pachacamac.”



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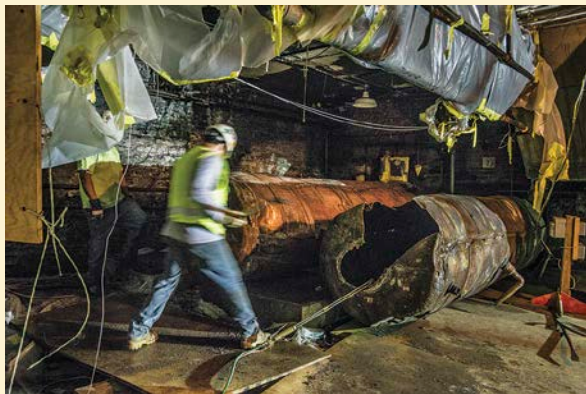
Right: “This is the Boston Symphony Orchestra’s opening weekend at Tanglewood in 2013, with Andris Nelsons. That photo was used in the *New York Times* and the *Boston Globe* in their coverage that weekend.”



PHOTOS BY MATT ZORY:

“These photos are from the Cincinnati Music Hall construction and demolition. Most of it—about 90 percent—is digital, just using a medium-level Nikon camera. The square format is from a 1957 Rolleiflex camera I also use. I probably shot a half a dozen or more rolls with that.”

“The book, *Through the Lens: The Remaking of Cincinnati’s Music Hall*, just ate my lunch, time-wise and focus-wise! My wife, Shelly Reese, is a writer. She wrote the essays in the book, and she was the project manager. I’m not organized, so at the beginning every week I would get a piece of paper with my week’s to-do list, what I needed to get to the publisher, and work to do with marketing it. Actually I did fundraising for this project. I made phone calls to the contractors, and then friends of the contractors, and then to ‘people’ and ‘friends of the people.’ Locally, I’ve got appearances and book signings at libraries and the local bookstores, also at a gallery.”



“Music Hall is very much an island, surrounded by a neighborhood, Over-the-Rhine (right and below), that was down at the heels for decades. For three years I explored the immediate neighborhood, contrasting it to this place where I go, dressed in tails, people pay my salary, they give millions of dollars. I called the project ‘The Other Side of Music Hall.’ You walk outside Music Hall, and people don’t have houses, or they’re on Section 8 [housing]. When they closed down the local bar, I knew the series was over—gentrification had finally come. That ended probably two years ago. The architecture was all maintained and places were made habitable, storefronts started appearing, and people are moving downtown. I’ve become a part of the community. I’m now welcomed with a ‘Hey, Picture Man!’ I’ve sent prints of some of my subjects to their mothers and taken their pictures with their friends and loved ones. Some of the people I’ve photographed have died. I’m still processing what all of this means for me.”

