

Vital Work

Outgoing League of American Orchestras Board Chair Patricia A. Richards reflects on the accomplishments of the League during her tenure—and the importance of supporting the work of orchestras.

Three years ago I became chair of the League of American Orchestras board. I approached this position with great humility, as the vital importance of the field and the key role of the League in supporting the work of orchestras seemed to me to require my best efforts. I am so grateful to have had an intelligent, engaged, and dedicated board to work with, along with skilled staff and the strong leadership of our president and CEO, Jesse Rosen. The partnership and support of these wonderful people have made these past years an incredibly rewarding experience.

As I turn the chairmanship over to my colleague, Doug Hagerman, it is an opportunity to reflect on what the League has accomplished over the past three years, and it is an impressive list! I am proud to have been even a small part of these achievements.

ADVOCACY

Early in my tenure Heather Noonan, the League's vice president for Advocacy, arranged for a meeting, along with other key partners, with the President's Council on Wildlife Trafficking. Much to my amaze-

ment, regulations that I fully supported to prevent the importation of elephant ivory and other protected materials had inadvertently created problems for musicians whose instruments contained small amounts of the banned materials. The implications were dire: confiscation of instruments while traveling and the inability to resell them were a hardship to both musicians and our orchestras' touring opportunities. The League has taken a leadership role in resolving this issue, and it serves as a great example of the important advocacy role the League fills that individual orchestras could not undertake alone. Currently, government funding for the arts and arts education, tax policy, visa issues, and many other topics vital to orchestras are areas where our extraordinary League staff is leading on behalf of all of us.

DIVERSITY AND INCLUSION

Under the strong leadership of board member Bob Wagner, principal bassoon at the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, the League has made great strides in developing understanding of the current environment with two rigorously researched publications: *Racial/Ethnic and Gender Diversity in the Orchestra Field* and *Forty Years of Fellowships: A Study of Orchestras' Efforts to Include African American and Latino Musicians*. We are building partnerships

with other organizations to find ways to help orchestras address these issues so they can increase their understanding of and involvement with their local communities. As the demographics of America evolve, orchestras must find ways to continue to be relevant to their communities and to be cultural leaders in making music meaningful to broader audiences. I am particularly proud of and excited about our contributions in this area.

GOVERNANCE

This continues to be an area of deep interest to me. In the course of my service on non-profit boards, I have noted that one of the most important determinants of success is a good board observing good governance practices. In recognition of the leadership work in this area pioneered by our past chair, Lowell Noteboom, in 2015 the League established the Noteboom Governance Center, which offers a comprehensive range of support, strategies, and programs designed to strengthen governance practice in orchestras. Today's orchestra boards face a changing landscape and require an even more focused attention on the practices that not only assure fiduciary oversight, but look forward to strategic and generative thought and leadership. The League's publications,



Nannette Beckway

League Board Chair Patricia A. Richards delivers an address at the League's 2015 Conference in Cleveland.



League Board Chair Patricia A. Richards joins fellow music advocates in preparation for an August 2014 meeting in the League's D.C. office with senior Obama Administration officials regarding preserving the use of existing musical instruments containing ivory. Pictured from left to right are League Vice President for Advocacy Heather Noonan; Pat Richards; Alfonso Pollard of the American Federation of Musicians; and Todd Dupler of the Recording Academy.

seminars, and convenings are essential input for board members who truly understand their role in the sustainability and success of their orchestras.

AND MUCH MORE...

There is not room here to itemize all the ways the League benefits the orchestra world. Research, data gathering, publications, conferences, and local visits serve to bring a professional and thoughtful approach to the challenges and opportuni-



Marc Estabrook

Patricia A. Richards and League of American Orchestras President and CEO Jesse Rosen at Capitol Reef National Park during the Utah Symphony's "Mighty 5" tour of the state's national parks, August 2014.

ties we all face as leaders, musicians, board members, and music lovers. I have been so honored to serve as chair of this vital organization and to have had the opportunity to associate with such a great group of people, all dedicated to the success of orchestras and the enjoyment of the orchestral experience. My thanks for this experience, and my best wishes to all of you, our member orchestras! **S**

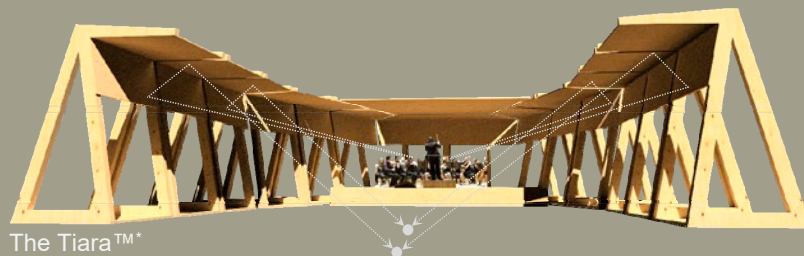
PATRICIA A. RICHARDS was elected chair of the League of American Orchestras' Board of Directors in June 2014, having served on the League Board since 2008. Richards was chair of the Utah Symphony | Utah Opera Board of Trustees from 2005 to fall of 2014, and she served as the organization's interim president and CEO in 2015-16. She received the National Opera Trustee Recognition Award from Opera America and the Governor's Leadership in the Arts Award from the State of Utah in 2013. She will continue to serve on the League's board after stepping down as chair in June 2017.



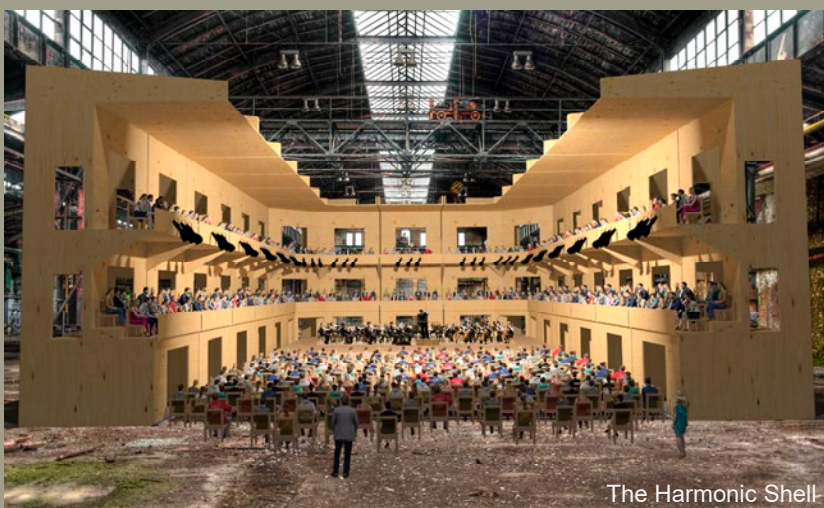
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