

Prelude

The images are heartbreaking. An orchestra of Ukrainian musicians performing outdoors in Kyiv's Maidan Square even as Russia bombed the city. The young musicians of the Afghanistan National Institute of Music fleeing their homes and abandoning their instruments as armed troops of the Taliban swept into Kabul. Classical musicians accompanying a vigil in Richmond, Virginia in memory of a Black musician who was killed while in police custody. A youth orchestra in New Jersey giving a concert to benefit the victims of hate crimes targeting Asian Americans.

Yet these images are also inspiring, because they show immediate musical responses to often unbearable situations. The classical music field is increasingly confronting urgent social issues and performing music as response, resistance, protest, memorial, meditation. As Leonard Bernstein said after the assassination of President John F. Kennedy, "This will be our reply to violence: to make music more intensely, more beautifully, more devotedly than ever before." Playing music does not fix any core crisis, but orchestras are stepping forward as seldom before.

This issue of *Symphony* charts some of these developments. London Philharmonic Artistic Director Elena Dubinets reports on the vibrant classical music scene in Ukraine. As orchestras strive to become more inclusive, League President and CEO Simon Woods asks whether the concept of a classical "canon"—frozen in time, etched in stone—should be reconsidered. We examine the real-world actions that orchestras are taking toward equity, diversity, and inclusion. And we report on how the new homes for youth orchestras represent not only literal stakes in the ground, but fresh commitments to music education, young musicians, and the future.

Robert Sandla



Classical Action
Performing Arts Against AIDS

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is a not-for-profit organization which draws upon the talents, resources and generosity of the performing arts community to raise funds for AIDS-related services across the United States. Funds are raised through special events, private house concerts, recording and merchandising projects, individual donations, and foundation and corporate support.

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ABOUT THE COVER

On March 12, the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra in New York presented a benefit concert to provide humanitarian aid to people in Ukraine. Led by Music Director Andreas Delfs, the concert featured music by Ukrainian composers. In photo: musicians of the Rochester Philharmonic attached ribbons in the colors of the Ukrainian flag to their instruments in a show of solidarity. Photo credit: Tyler Cervini. For more on how orchestras are responding to Russia's invasion of Ukraine, see page 4.