Chicago Symphony Strike Ends with New Musicians Contract Through 2023

On April 27, the Chicago Symphony Orchestra Association and the musicians of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra reached agreement on a new five-year collective bargaining agreement, ending a musicians strike that had begun on March 10. At issue were salary and pensions, and agreement was reached when, following lengthy negotiations, Chicago Mayor Rahm Emanuel stepped in to convene a daylong series of mediated meetings in late April. The new agreement, effective retroactively from September 2018 through September 2023, includes salary increases of 2 percent in the first two years of the contract, 2.5 percent the third year, 3.25 percent the fourth year, and 3.5 percent the fifth year. The musicians’ pension plan will undergo a phased transition from a defined benefit plan to a defined contribution plan beginning July 1, 2020. All new hires as of July 1, 2020 will go directly into the defined contribution plan. The orchestra’s first performance back at Chicago’s Symphony Center on May 2 started with the “Star Spangled Banner” and featured Bizet’s rarely performed Roma, Berlioz’s The Death of Cleopatra with mezzo-soprano Joyce DiDonato, and Respighi’s Pines of Rome, led by Music Director Riccardo Muti.

Nashville, Outdoors

Every June since 1974, the Nashville Symphony has performed free community concerts at public parks and green spaces throughout Middle Tennessee. This year is no different, with the first of the Nashville Symphony’s seven outdoor concerts set to take place on June 6 at Nashville’s Centennial Park, during the park’s Musicians Corner series of free events featuring local Nashville performers. The peripatetic orchestra will also perform at Cumberland University (Lebanon, Tenn.), Smith Springs Community Center (Antioch), Two Rivers Mansion (Donelson), Historic Rock Castle (Hendersonville), and Key Park (Lafayette), before concluding on June 26 at the Estate at Cherokee Dock in Lebanon. Assistant Conductor Enrico Lopez-Yañez, shown in photo leading the Nashville Symphony’s 2018 concert in Centennial Park, will conduct all the 2019 community concerts.
OrchKids on the Move

Baltimore Symphony Orchestra OrchKids students in Washington, D.C. during a spring visit to the Library of Congress.

This winter and spring, students from Baltimore Symphony Orchestra’s OrchKids program delved into the lives and music of Scott Joplin and Jelly Roll Morton during visits to the Library of Congress in Washington, D.C. In January, OrchKids students and teachers visited the Library’s Music Division Reading Room, where they explored musical scores, letters, and other resources. Students used the materials as inspiration to create an original composition. On April 13, students returned to the Library for performances with BSO Music Director Marin Alsop. The OrchKids Jazz Band paid tribute to Jelly Roll Morton, and the OrchKids String Ensemble performed an original composition inspired by Scott Joplin’s opera Treemonisha. The OrchKids Bucket Band and OrchKids Brass Band performed pop-up concerts in the Great Hall of the Thomas Jefferson Building. This was OrchKids’ second collaboration with the Library of Congress; last year’s project focused on Leonard Bernstein. OrchKids, founded by Alsop in 2008, is a year-round music program for Baltimore City students; it provides free music education, instruments, academic instruction, and meals, as well as performance and mentorship opportunities.

Career High

Avery Fisher Career Grants of $25,000 each were awarded this spring to four recipients: pianist Henry Kramer, violinist Angelo Xiang Yu, piano duo Christina and Michelle Naughton, and the JACK Quartet. This year marks the first time a piano duo has been awarded a Fisher career grant. At a ceremony on March 14 at the Jerome L. Greene Performance Space at New York City’s WQXR classical radio station, the recipients were given their awards and performed; the performance was recorded for a radio broadcast and webstream on WQXR in April. Since 1976, 153 career grants have been awarded through the program. Former recipients include pianists Kirill Gerstein and Yuja Wang; violinists Augustin Hadelich and Hilary Hahn; clarinetist Anthony McGill; and the Dover Quartet. The Avery Fisher Artist Program also awards the annual Avery Fisher Award of $100,000, which went most recently to violinist Leila Josefowicz.

MUSICAL CHAIRS

The Kansas City Symphony has selected DANIEL BECKLEY as executive director, effective on July 29. Beckley succeeds Frank Byrne, who has retired.

The New Jersey Symphony Orchestra has named ANN BOROWIEC and NORMAN SLONAKER co-chairs of the board of trustees.

The Baltimore Symphony Orchestra has appointed ALLISON BURR-LIVINGSTONE as vice president of development.

MEI-ANN CHEN, music director of the Chicago Sinfonietta, has been appointed to two additional posts. In September, she becomes principal guest conductor of creation-Grosses Orchester Graz in Austria. She has also been named artistic partner for 2019-20 at River Oaks Chamber Orchestra in Texas.

JASON CHIN has been appointed general manager for the Hawaii Youth Symphony’s Pacific Music Institute.

The Stanford Symphony in Connecticut has named JANIE CHOY to the new position of director of community engagement and education.

ANDREW CRUST has been appointed assistant conductor of Canada’s Vancouver Symphony Orchestra, effective in September.

The La Jolla Music Society in California has named TED DEDDE president and CEO.

The Tulsa Symphony Orchestra has named KEITH C. ELDER executive director, effective August 5.

CHRISTOPHER FASHUN has been appointed music director of the Holland Area Youth Orchestra in Michigan, starting in September.

The Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra has appointed JULIE GOETZ director of communications.

The Amarillo Symphony in Texas has appointed ANDREW HAY executive director.

The Cleveland Orchestra has named JANE HARGRAFT chief development officer.

MARSHALL HUGHES has been appointed program manager for the Bridge to Equity and Achievement in Music initiative at Boston’s New England Conservatory.

DANIEL KELLOGG will become president of Young Concert Artists on July 1, 2019, succeeding founder and current director Susan Wadsworth. SAAD HADDAD has been named as the organization’s 2019-21 composer in residence.

ENRICO LOPEZ-YANÉZ has been named artistic partner for creation-Grosses Orchester Graz in Austria. She has also been named artistic partner for 2019-20 at River Oaks Chamber Orchestra in Texas.

The La Jolla Music Society in California has named DANIEL KELLOGG president and CEO.

The Marcus King Band has appointed Andrew Hay director, effective August 5.

The University of North Carolina at Greensboro has named JANNETTE ROSS executive director.

The Santa Fe Symphony has named JAY M. ROSE vice president and CEO.

The New Jersey Symphony Orchestra has named ALLISON BURR-LIVINGSTONE co-chairs of the board of trustees.

The Austin Symphony has appointed KATHRYN MARTIN interim president and CEO.

The Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra has named JACOB WEIDER director, effective on September 10.

The New Jersey Symphony Orchestra has named ALLISON BURR-LIVINGSTONE as vice president of development.

The New York Philharmonic has elected PETER W. MAY and OSCAR L. TANG co-chairs of the board of directors.
The Little Orchestra Society in New York City has appointed DAVID ALAN MILLER artistic advisor. Miller is music director of the Albany Symphony in New York.

HOLLY MULCAHY, the Chattanooga Symphony Orchestra’s concertmaster, has been appointed to an additional position as concertmaster of the Wichita Symphony in Kansas.

JOHN PALFREY has been named president of the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation, effective September 1.

MARY PALMER and MARK FISCHER have been appointed acting co-executive directors of Florida’s Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra.

Colorado’s Boulder Philharmonic Orchestra has appointed SARA PARKINSON director of education and community engagement.

The Los Angeles Philharmonic has selected violinist GABRIELA PEÑA-KIM for its Resident Fellows Program.

New Music USA has named VANESSA REED president and CEO, starting in August.

EVA MARIE RESTEL has been appointed executive director of Wisconsin’s La Crosse Symphony Orchestra.

Bassoonist KAI ROCKÉ has been named the Minnesota Orchestra’s next Rosemary and David Good Fellow, a two-year appointment effective in September 2019.

JO MAY SALonen has been appointed executive director of Montana’s Missoula Symphony Association, parent organization of the Missoula Symphony and Chorale.

The Cleveland Orchestra has appointed NATHAN SILBERSCHLAG principal horn, effective August 5.

CHRISTOPHER SMITH has been appointed principal trumpet of the San Diego Symphony.

GABRIEL SMITH has been named director, archives and exhibitions, of the New York Philharmonic Archives. He succeeds Barbara Haws, the orchestra’s longtime archivist and historian, who has retired.

The Houston Symphony has named YODSHIN SONG concertmaster, effective with the 2019-20 season.

The Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra has appointed ROBERT SPANO principal guest conductor through the 2022-23 season.

The John F. Kennedy Center for the Performing Arts has named MO WILLEMSTEIN to the new position of education artist-in-residence.

KATHARINA WINCOR has been appointed assistant conductor of the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, effective with the 2019-20 season.

The Minnesota Orchestra has appointed IVAN WINSHIP vice president of finance and administration.

The Philadelphia Orchestra has named ERINA YASHIMA assistant conductor. LINA GONZALEZ-LEZ-GRANADOS is the orchestra’s new conducting fellow.

California’s Berkeley Symphony has named JOSEPH YOUNG music director, effective with the start of the 2019-20 season.

Arctic Sounds

Many orchestral works pay homage to the earth’s natural wonders, but Lera Auerbach took the unusual step of deploying an actual piece of the natural environment—a block of ice—as part of the percussion section. In March, the National Symphony Orchestra performed the world premiere of Auerbach’s Arctica at the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C., joined by the Washington Chorus and Auerbach on piano. Conducted by Teddy Abrams, Arctica included sounds of dripping water and cracking ice, with one percussionist hitting the ice with mallets while standing inside a special enclosure.

Auerbach’s piece, inspired by her travels to Svalbard, not far from the North Pole, as well as Greenland and Iceland, was co-commissioned with the National Geographic Society. Auerbach and National Geographic marine ecologist Enric Sala are friends, and Auerbach was familiar with Sala’s work to preserve the last wild places in the ocean.

Auerbach wrote the Arctica libretto, inspired by Inuit folklore and language. The NSO concert—part of the Kennedy Center’s Direct Current Festival this spring—included three other nature-inspired works: Mason Bates’s Sea-Blue Circuitry, Sibelius’s The Oceanides, and Dvořák’s In Nature’s Realm.

Leading Indicator

It has been a jam-packed year for Barbara Hannigan. This winter, Hannigan—who divides her time between conducting and singing—made her New York podium debut leading the Juilliard Orchestra at Alice Tully Hall (below). The orchestra performed “Salome’s Dance” from Strauss’s Salome; Haydn’s Symphony No. 96; Debussy’s Syrinx with Juilliard flutist Emma Resmini; Sibelius’s Luonnatar, with Juilliard soprano Meghan Kasanders; and Bartók’s Miraculous Mandarin Suite. In February, Hannigan won Denmark’s highest musical honor, the 2020 Léonie Sonning Music Prize, and in March, she picked up a Canadian Juno Award for her vocal recital album Vienna: Fin de siècle with pianist Reinbert de Leeuw. In June, she serves as music director of California’s Ojai Festival, where she will perform and curate multiple programs, including conducting a semi-staged production of Stravinsky’s The Rake’s Progress featuring members of her Equilibrium mentoring initiative for young professional artists. And in 2019-20, she becomes principal guest conductor of the Gothenburg Symphony, the national orchestra of Sweden. All that, and Hannigan continues her career as an in-demand soprano.
Pacific-Persian Connections

For many years, California’s Pacific Symphony and Music Director Carl St.Clair have hosted a popular celebration of Nowruz, the festival marking spring and the beginning of the Iranian new year. This year’s event on March 24, in a sold-out Segerstrom Concert Hall, featured Khachaturian’s Sabre Dance, Dvořák’s Carnival Overture, and the four-movement Dance of Spring by Iranian composer Shardad Rohani, who is music director of the Tehran Symphony and shared conducting duties with St.Clair at the concert. The event incorporated traditional Persian dance and music, with performers including vocalist Homayoun Shajarian and Sohrab Pournazeri on the tanbour and kamancheh. The Pacific Symphony’s Nowruz concert, said St.Clair, aims to “embrace Orange County’s rich and diverse communities through contextual programming” and “build and deepen bridges between cultures through art and music.”

Tech/Music Explosion in Seattle

In March, the Seattle Symphony’s new Octave 9: Raisbeck Music Center opened with a bang: a 24-hour contemporary music marathon, with Seattle Symphony musicians and guest artists performing works by more than 50 composers, plus an immersive music installation. From March to June, the venue also offered free family open houses and interactive demonstrations of the space. The marathon began with the world premiere of an electronic piece by Melody Parker designed to showcase Octave 9’s sonic range and capabilities; among the composers featured during the marathon were John Luther Adams, Inti Logan Figgis-Vizuela, Jessie Montgomery, Gity Razaz, Alex Temple, and Julia Wolfe. The new space, located within Benaroya Hall, will host chamber concerts, performances, and conversations with artists and composers, and events for families. Features of Octave 9 include a surround-screen with moveable panels, projectors, motion-capture cameras, and an acoustic system with 42 speakers and 30 microphones.

“As the sounds of delight and laughter from the audience of over 2000 people filled the hall, I thought to myself, Dan Kamin’s not just a mime, he’s a rock star!”

— Don Reinhold, Executive Director, Wichita Symphony Orchestra

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OSL-NYC: Orchestra of St. Luke’s “Music in Color”

This spring, composer Gabriela Lena Frank was the focus of the Orchestra of St. Luke’s annual “Music in Color” series of free community and school concerts in all five boroughs of New York City. From March 19 to April 7, Frank curated selections from her own string quartets, as well as a piece by Chou Wen-Chung, whose works have inspired Frank. The Orchestra of St. Luke’s premiered new works it had co-commissioned, composed by Fellows of the Gabriela Lena Frank Creative Academy of Music: Anjna Swaminathan, Matthew Evan Taylor, Marco-Adrián Ramos, Iman Habibi, and Christine Delphine Hedden. Frank, who is also a pianist, performed at the free school concerts alongside the Orchestra of St. Luke’s, conducted by Edwin Outwater. The “Music in Color” concert tour, in its third year, highlights the works and lives of classical composers of color. The Orchestra of St. Luke’s education and community engagement programs reach more than 11,000 New York City public school students each year.

Cleveland Orchestra: Taipei → Beijing and Points Between

The Cleveland Orchestra’s March 28 to April 13 tour brought Music Director Franz Welser-Möst and the musicians to seven Asian cities: Taipei, Macao, Shenzhen, Shanghai, Nanjing, Wuhan, and Beijing. It was the orchestra’s seventh visit to Asia and second tour to China, with some performances taking place in concert halls that had not been built during the orchestra’s last China visit 21 years ago, in 1998. The ensemble’s performances in Macao, Shenzhen, Wuhan and Nanjing were their first ever in those cities. The tour launched at Taipei National Concert Hall, where the orchestra performed Prokofiev’s Symphony No. 3 and Strauss’s Ein Heldenleben. Tour repertoire also included Tchaikovsky’s Symphony No. 5 and Beethoven’s Piano Concerto No. 5 (“Emperor”), with pianist Daniil Trifonov, and there were masterclasses and individual lessons with students at the Shenzhen Arts School, Shanghai Symphony Orchestra Academy, Wuhan Conservatory, and Beijing’s China Conservatory of Music.
Both Sides Now

On opposite banks of the Rio Grande are the cities of Laredo, Texas and Nuevo Laredo, Mexico. On April 13, Yo-Yo Ma performed Bach’s Suite No. 1 for Unaccompanied Cello next to one of the bridges connecting them as part of his 36-city Bach Project tour. In addition to his performance at the Juarez-Lincoln International Bridge, Ma met with music students in Nuevo Laredo and performed in Plaza Juarez. In Laredo, Texas he was hosted by the Laredo Philharmonic, participated in a community conversation, and ended the day with a music and dance festival at Tres Laredos Park. Each stop on Ma’s Bach Project tour has included a “day of action,” and Ma had chosen Laredo/Nuevo Laredo because of its location straddling the U.S.-Mexico border. Brendan Townsend, music director of the Laredo Philharmonic, noted in Texas Monthly that Ma was “most interested in bringing communities together and seeing how they connect with culture. We’re two cities divided by a river, but really, we’re one community.”

Bridges to College

One of the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra’s more important activities doesn’t take place at Powell Hall, the orchestra’s historic concert venue. Through SLSO College Connections, launched in 2018, orchestra musicians give chamber concerts at local colleges to attract music students from middle schools and high schools with limited opportunities to visit campuses. This year, partner colleges and universities included St. Louis College of Pharmacy, Goldfarb School of Nursing at Barnes Jewish College, University of Missouri–St. Louis, McKendree University, and Harris-Stowe State University. Visits include a tour of the college, lunch, and a one-hour SLSO chamber concert. The program grew out Symphony in Your College, the orchestra’s long-running series of free chamber concerts on college campuses. Maureen Byrne, the St. Louis Symphony’s associate vice president of education and community partnerships, says, “We realized the unique position of the SLSO to serve as a special bridge to connect music students with area colleges. Colleges are very aware that students involved with school music programs are among the most likely to perform well academically in high school and go on to college.”
New Bedford Symphony, Learning from “Learning in Concert”

In March, the New Bedford Symphony Orchestra in Massachusetts presented results of a recent evaluation of its NBSO Learning in Concert program at the International Symposium on Assessment in Music Education at the University of Florida (in photo, right). The program at elementary schools in Massachusetts and Rhode Island integrates musical concepts alongside other art and academic areas. NBSO Education Director Terry Wolkwicz (center) presented the findings, together with Ronald Sherwin (right), associate professor and chair of the Music Department at UMass Dartmouth College of Visual and Performing Arts, and Lynn Souza (left), director of Fine Arts for New Bedford Public Schools. Initial findings suggest that among the 134 students in the program, less-privileged and under-achieving children demonstrated high academic growth from participating in the program, and average and high-achieving students benefited as well. The assessment project was supported in part by a grant from the American Orchestras’ Futures Fund, a program of the League of American Orchestras made possible by funding from the Ann and Gordon Getty Foundation.

Meow Music

The way Yannick Nézet-Séguin sees it, cats and dogs benefit from classical music, just like humans. In April, the Philadelphia Orchestra music director shared a curated playlist for four-legged friends along with personal notes related to each piece. The conductor and his partner, violist Pierre Tourville, created the 34-hour, 326-song playlist after noticing how classical music positively impacted the behavior of their three cats. “A Cat’s Music Playlist” now plays on loop at the Pennsylvania Society for the Prevention of Cruelty to Animals headquarters.

Marilyn Rosen Presents: In the Spotlight

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**Michigan Philharmonic’s “NANiversary”**

How do you celebrate a music director’s two decades leading an orchestra? If you’re the Michigan Philharmonic, you do it with a series of “Happy 20th NANiversary” concerts for Nan Washburn. The Plymouth-based orchestra opened the season in October with some of Washburn’s favorite music: Berlioz’s *Roman Carnival* Overture; Hindemith’s *Symphonic Metamorphosis on Themes by Carl Maria von Weber*; Wael Binali’s *Earth: Plunder, Wound, Renewal, Hope*, written for the U.N. Climate Change Conference in 2012; and Barber’s *Violin Concerto*, Op. 14, with soloist Danielle Belen. The season concluded in April with “PhilPalooza2,” a bursting-at-the-seams concert featuring the orchestra performing side by side with the Michigan Philharmonic Youth Orchestra and guest performers including the Plymouth Community Band, saxophonist Zach Sheman, and composer and bassist Rick Robinson. *PhilPalooza2* took place at a gym in the Plymouth Arts and Recreation Complex—the only space big enough to fit all 150 musicians plus audience.

**Music Alive, Coast to Coast**

This season, the long-running Music Alive composer residency program brought contemporary music—and contemporary composers—to orchestras across the country. Music Alive is a national, three-year orchestra-composer residency program of the League of American Orchestras and New Music USA. Music Alive embeds composers with orchestras, and the residencies venture beyond the creation of new works to embrace collaborations with community groups, curated concerts and events, explorations of the composers’ existing scores, readings, and more.

Composer Theodore Wiprud’s Music Alive residency with the South Dakota Symphony Orchestra included a performance of Wiprud’s *Grail* with the South Dakota Youth Symphony Orchestra and the world premiere of his *Wind of Many Voices*, inspired by the South Dakota landscapes. In addition, Wiprud worked with local community groups. With California’s Berkeley Symphony, Anna Clyne was involved with a multimedia version of her *Night Ferry* and saw her *This Midnight Hour* interpreted by a modern-dance troupe. In Minnesota, the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra gave the world premiere of a new work by Lembit Beecher that included samples of 47 recordings of Twin Cities community members reflecting on what home means to them, along with newly commissioned poetry. In Illinois, the Champaign-Urbana Symphony Orchestra performed Stacy Garrop’s *Krakatoa* viola concerto and *Terra Nostra*. Garrop and CUSO Music Director Stephen Alltop hosted a composers institute. Hannibal Lokumbe’s Music Alive residency with the Philadelphia Orchestra culminated in the world premiere of *Healing Tones*, a large-scale work that pays homage to the composer’s ancestors and focuses on communities that are experiencing trauma, homelessness, and divisiveness.

Music Alive is made possible by a lead grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, with additional support from The Aaron Copland Fund for Music, the Francis Goelet Charitable Lead Trusts, The Ampthion Foundation, and The ASCAP Foundation Bart Howard Fund.
The Future of Music is Visual

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A symphonic evening devoted to the extraordinary collaboration between Duke Ellington and Billy Strayhorn, including such standards as “Take the A Train,” “Satin Doll,” and “Black, Brown and Beige.”

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A SYMPHONIC EXPERIENCE
The symphonic tribute to The Fab Four with hundreds of rare and unseen images from the historic Beatles Book Photo Library, restorative orchestrations, and immersive, visually stunning projection and lighting designs.

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SYMPHONIC EXPERIENCE
The Queens of Soul are front and center in this evening that explores genius female artists including Aretha Franklin, Patti LaBelle, Alicia Keys, Adele, and many others.

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The Paul Simon Songbook
SYMPHONIC EXPERIENCE
Grammy®-winner Jeff Tyzik’s new orchestrations of Paul Simon’s legendary music explore his unique artistry from the Simon and Garfunkel years through his solo albums.

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A full evening symphonic tribute to the magic of Motown featuring a projection design and 20 new arrangements of music immortalized by Smokey Robinson, James Brown, Marvin Gaye and more.

Ghostbusters
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Experience Ivan Reitman’s classic 1984 blockbuster film, screened live as an orchestra performs Elmer Bernstein’s Grammy®-nominated score.

Women Rock
SYMPHONIC EXPERIENCE
A full evening, authorized symphonic tribute to the female singers and songwriters of the ‘60s, ‘70s, and ‘80s who put the “rock” in Rock ‘n Roll, complete with an iconic projection design.

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The Rogue Valley Symphony is proud to have commissioned seven new works over the last two seasons. We recommend to you for your future programming:

- Ilana Cotton: *Cantus* notimemusic.com
- David Ludwig: Concerto for Violin and Orchestra davidludwigmusic.com
- Tracy Silverman: *Love Song to the Sun* tracysilverman.com
- Jonathan Leshnoff: *Rogue Sparks* jonathanleshnoff.com
- Malek Jandali: Concerto for Viola and Orchestra malekjandali.com
- Christopher Theofanidis: Piano Concerto #2 theofanidismusic.com

“….I sincerely wish to make symphonic music an important voice in the reflection of our own time.”

Martin Majkut, Music Director

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Commissioned artwork by Kamron Coleman

Lisa Bielawa conducts the Mannes String Orchestra in a program presented by the new Philip Glass Institute at the New School's College of Performing Arts in New York City.

arias from Bielawa’s online opera *Vireo*, sung by Rowen Sabala; Jon Gibson’s *Chorales for Relative Calm*; and David T. Little’s 1986. At the Glass Institute, Bielawa is composing new works, curating concerts, and designing courses for students in the college’s Mannes School of Music, School of Jazz and Contemporary Music, and School of Drama.
Beyond Borders

Mumbai, India was the site of a remarkable debut this April: “Chiragh: A Concert Beyond Borders” (below), the first concert by a new orchestra whose musicians come from countries including Afghanistan, Sri Lanka, Nepal, and India, led by American conductor Viswa Subbaraman. The orchestra’s name, Chiragh, means “a little flame that lights the darkness, and it is a metaphor for our quest and passion for peace in our divided region,” says co-founder Nirupama Rao, the former Foreign Secretary of India. The April 26 concert at Mumbai’s National Centre for the Performing Arts came just five days after hundreds were killed in church and hotel bombings in Sri Lanka. The concert opened with Maithreem Bhajata, a Sanskrit invocation, arranged for orchestra. There were two commissioned works: Hamsafar: A Journey through South Asia, by the Afghan National Institute of Music’s Lauren Braithwaite (commissioned by the Eric Daniel Helms New Music Program, of Classical Movements), and Indian-American composer and instrumentalist Kamala Sankaram’s Bhadke, as well as Western repertoire.

Rocking Knoxville

Every March, the multi-genre Big Ears Festival in Knoxville, Tennessee, draws thousands of concertgoers for an eclectic lineup, with the Knoxville Symphony Orchestra frequently among the performers. This year the orchestra’s string section joined British folk-rock artist Richard Thompson for his song cycle K.I.A.: Killed In Action (above), conducted by Peter Askim with the composer on guitar and vocals. K.I.A. was written in commemoration of World War I’s centenary and uses archives, journals, and reflections as basis for the texts. Previous Knoxville Symphony performances at the festival have included Were You There, a collaboration with American Modern Opera Company and baritone Davoné Tines, and music by John Adams, John Luther Adams, and Matthew Aucoin.
Berkeley Mash-Up

This spring, California’s Berkeley Symphony packed the stage of Zellerbach Hall for a classical-meets-jazz program that featured some special guests: the Berkeley High School Jazz Ensemble. Christopher Rountree, founder and conductor of the L.A.-based chamber orchestra wild Up, led the concert, which included the orchestra and jazz ensemble performing together in Duke Ellington’s three-movement Black, Brown and Beige from 1943 and Sofia Gubaidulina’s 1976 Concerto for Symphony Orchestra and Jazz Band. The Berkeley Jazz Ensemble has performed widely for decades, in the U.S. and internationally. The group’s current leader is trombonist Sarah Cline, who has led four tours by the ensemble to Cuba and is the founder of the annual JazzGirls Day event encouraging jazz participation by young women.

Saxophonists from the Berkeley High School Jazz Ensemble and the Berkeley Symphony perform music by Duke Ellington and Sofia Gubaidulina, conducted by Christopher Rountree, March 2019.

“InsideOut Concerts are transforming the traditional concert experience...the seats are with the players themselves, in the thick of the violins or right next to a harp. There’s no separation here, just a mass of pumping hearts in a singular musical communion.” WQXR

“I felt every note. I could hear everything and could see the faces of the musicians. It was fantastic!” Andrea Arroyo audience member

“Holy cow... Ligeti’s ‘Atmosphères’ sounds EVEN MORE AMAZING when you’re in among the players.” Steve Smith music critic, commenting as an audience member

Letter to the Editor

Re: “Start Spreading the News,” an article by Susan Elliott in the Spring 2019 issue of Symphony which reported on diminishing arts coverage by traditional media, https://www.americanorchestras.org/SymphonyArtsCoverage:

To the Editor:

Susan Elliott’s glibly inaccurate description of the Times’ classical coverage is irritating. But using “trans-sexual” as a pejorative? In 2019? That’s why people think classical music is dying.

Zachary Woolfe Classical Music Editor The New York Times

From the Editor:

Zachary Woolfe’s message is a reminder of how, even with the best of intentions, extreme care must be taken to consider how language can offend. We understand that the use of the word trans-sexual in this context offended some, and we apologize. The League staff and board are actively engaged in an organization-wide effort to continually build competency concerning equity, diversity, and inclusion.