Building Bridges in Pittsburgh

On November 27, one month after the October 27 mass shooting at Pittsburgh’s Tree of Life Synagogue, the Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra performed a free Concert for Peace and Unity at Heinz Hall to honor and remember the victims. The concert featured Israeli-American violinist Itzhak Perlman, Principal Clarinet Michael Rusinek, and the Mendelssohn Choir of Pittsburgh in music by Pärt, Ravel, Shostakovich, David Zehavi, James MacMillan, Mendelssohn, Brahms, John Williams, and Elgar. All artists donated their services for the performance, and volunteers collected contributions for the Jewish Federation’s Our Victims of Terror fund and the Injured Officers Fund. The event provided an opportunity for the Pittsburgh community “to honor the victims, bridge differences and celebrate the human experience during this difficult time,” said PSO President and CEO Melia Tourangeau. Music Director Manfred Honeck said he hoped the concert could “bring people together as we collectively grieve and heal.” The concert was streamed live on the Pittsburgh Symphony’s Facebook page and broadcast live on Pittsburgh’s WQED radio station, and shown in December on PBS television stations.
“Deaf and Loud” in Detroit

The most salient fact from the Detroit Symphony Orchestra’s December 16 concert is not obvious from photos: the performance was tailored for the deaf community and featured deaf musicians onstage. Percussionist Dame Evelyn Glennie, jazz/pop singer Mandy Harvey, and hip-hop artist Sean Forbes were among the soloists performing at the “The Deaf and Loud Symphonic Experience”—a benefit concert for the Deaf Professional Arts Network, a Detroit non-profit co-founded by Forbes with Detroit music producer Joel Martin. The concert, conducted by Sly5thAve, was given in American Sign Language, with lyrics for each song appearing on large video screens. “The DSO prides itself on being the most accessible orchestra on the planet, so we were eager to collaborate on the very first Deaf and Loud Symphonic Experience,” said Erik Rönmark, the DSO’s vice president and general manager. He described it as a “one-of-a-kind event with outstanding musicians who happen to be deaf,” but noted in the Detroit News that he hoped it might lay the groundwork for a future series.

After the Detroit Symphony’s “Deaf and Loud Symphonic Experience” concert, audience members attended a “silent disco” with a vibrating dance floor and headphones for invited guests from the deaf community.

Fort Collins in Purple

Baseball fever hit Fort Collins this fall when the Colorado Rockies made it to the National League division series to compete against the Milwaukee Brewers. The Fort Collins Symphony encouraged fans to show their support for both the Colorado Rockies and the Symphony by wearing purple to a free, open rehearsal on October 4 before the orchestra’s season-opening all-Bernstein concert later that week. Music Director and baseball fan Wes Kenney (left, in baseball cap and purple shirt) led the orchestra’s 80 musicians, many of whom were also wearing Rockies apparel. Fun was had by all at the open rehearsal that the orchestra said “promoted the four Bs: Bernstein, Baseball, and Buffy Baggott”—the latter a mezzo-soprano featured in the concert.

MUSICAL CHAIRS

STEPHANIE BLAHA has been appointed principal horn of Ohio’s ProMusica Chamber Orchestra. ILYA SHTERENBERG is the orchestra’s new principal clarinet.

The Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra has appointed KEITH CERNY president and CEO, and STANISLAV CHERNYSHEV as principal clarinet.

LAURA COLGATE is the El Paso Symphony Orchestra’s new concertmaster.

The Valley Symphony Orchestra in McAllen, Texas, has named KATY KOY executive director.

RICHARD EGARR, a British conductor, keyboardist, and early-music specialist, will become an artistic partner at the Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra effective in September 2019.

BEN FAIRFIELD has been appointed co-principal trumpet of the Midland-Odessa Symphony in Texas.

Utah’s Timpanogos Symphony Orchestra has named LORI FISHER executive director.

NELL FLANDERS is the Princeton Symphony Orchestra’s new assistant conductor.

ERIC GARCIA will become artistic director and conductor of McCall Music Society’s SummerFest, an annual classical and pops series in McCall, Idaho, in July 2019. Garcia is also music director of the Boise Philharmonic.

The Houston Symphony has added violinist PATRICIA QUINTERO GARCIA and violinist ALEXA SANGBIN THOMASON to its Community-Embedded Musicians initiative.

GIORGIA GHIZZONI has been appointed executive director of Colorado’s Longmont Symphony Orchestra.

The Kurt Weill Foundation for Music has named ED HARSH to the newly created position of director of strategic initiatives. Harsh recently concluded an eleven-year tenure as president and CEO of New Music USA.

The Las Vegas Philharmonic has appointed LACEY HUSZCZA executive director.

The Seattle Symphony has named NOAH GELLER concertmaster and JAMES BENOOT principal timpani.

PAM S. HERSBERGER is the new board chair of Ohio’s Toledo Symphony Orchestra.

Boston Baroque has appointed JENNIFER RITVO HUGHES executive director.

At the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, JAMES EDWARD DUNN has been named to the new position of assistant conductor, community engagement.

AL JACOBSEN is the new executive director of Miller Symphony Hall in Allentown, Pennsylvania, home to the Allentown Symphony Orchestra.

The Louisville Orchestra has appointed KEN JOHNSON interim executive director, following the departure of Andrew Kipe in June 2018.

MICHAEL MATTEO, principal percussionist in Pennsylvania’s Westmoreland Symphony Orchestra, has been named the organization’s new board president.
MUSICAL CHAIRS

The Reno Chamber Orchestra in Nevada has appointed THOM MAYES executive director.

NICHOLAS MCGEAN will step down at the end of the 2019-20 season as music director of California's Philharmonia Baroque Orchestra, after more than three decades leading the group.

The Dallas Symphony Orchestra has appointed GEMMA NEW principal guest conductor. BRADLEY HUNTER WELCH has been named resident organist.

The Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra has named CHRISTOPHER PELL principal clarinet, CHRISTOPHER SALES principal bassoon, and ROBERT SULLIVAN principal trumpet.

TOMMY PHILLIPS has been appointed president and artistic director of the Philharmonic Society of Orange County in California.

The Venice Symphony in Florida has named TROY QUINN music director.

The Wallace Foundation has named BAHIA RAMOS director of arts.

MICHAEL REMSON is the new president and CEO of the San Diego Youth Symphony and Conservatory.

The Minnesota Orchestra has appointed ERICH RIEPEL principal timpani and FELICITY JAMES as associate concertmaster.

VANESSA ROSE is the new president and CEO of the American Composers Forum, the St. Paul, Minnesota-based service organization for composers.

The Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra has named DERRICK SPIVA JR. to the newly created position of artist educator.

MICHAEL TETREAULT has been appointed principal percussion of Colorado's Boulder Philharmonic Orchestra. JAMES ANDRUS is the orchestra's new principal tuba.

The Rhode Island Philharmonic has named conductor BRAMWELL TOVEY artistic advisor, succeeding longtime conductor Larry Rachleff.

Cellist CARRINGTON TRUEHART and violist ROSA ORTEGA have been selected as 2018-19 participants in the IRIS Orchestra’s IRIS Artist Fellow program, based in Memphis, Tennessee.

Michigan’s Grand Rapids Symphony has named MARY TUUK president and CEO, effective early 2019.

WILLIAM WELTER is the Chicago Symphony Orchestra’s new principal oboe.

Milwaukee Bound

Ken-David Masur is the next music director of the Milwaukee Symphony, succeeding Edo De Waart, who led the orchestra from 2009 to 2017. Masur’s appointment is effective with the 2019-20 season and runs through 2022-23, during which period the orchestra plans to move to the new Milwaukee Symphony Center, in the former Warner Grand Theatre.

As music director designate, Masur is already involved with planning the upcoming season. Masur is currently associate conductor of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, principal guest conductor of Germany’s Munich Symphony, and, with his wife, pianist Melinda Lee Masur, co-artistic director of New York City’s Chelsea Music Festival. The son of the late conductor Kurt Masur and soprano Tomoko Sakurai, Ken-David Masur graduated from Columbia University, studied voice in addition to conducting, and has worked with multiple choruses. At Columbia, he founded and served as music director of the Bach Society Orchestra and Chorus. Current U.S. guest conducting appearances include the Chicago Symphony Orchestra at Ravinia, Louisville Orchestra, Detroit Symphony Orchestra, and the Chicago Civic Orchestra, plus the National Philharmonic of Russia, Collegium Musicum Basel, Norway’s Stavanger Symphony, and Mulhouse Symphony Orchestra in France.

ROCO, Down Under in NYC

Getting out of the concert hall is happening more and more frequently these days. How a performance in … a crypt? Five musicians from Houston’s River Oaks Chamber Orchestra did just that in October when they traveled to New York City to perform in the crypt of Harlem’s Church of the Intercession. The concert featured oboist Alecia Lawyer, ROCO’s founder (below right), with (in photo from left) Scott St. John (violin), Kevin Lau (piano), Kristin Wolfe Jensen (bassoon), and Nathan Williams (clarinet). Despite the crypt setting, the program focused on music by living composers: Bill Douglas, Alyssa Morris, Heather Schmidt, Kevin Lau, and Anthony DiLorenzo, whose Anthem of Hope: Houston Strong was commissioned by ROCO to salute Houston’s resilience in the face of Hurricane Harvey’s devastation in 2017. The performance was part of a classical music series called the “Crypt Sessions” curated by Andrew Ousley, who curates a similar series, Angel’s Share, at the catacombs of the Green-Wood Cemetery in Brooklyn, New York.
Leadership Potential

For three days in October, twelve orchestra professionals gathered in New York City for the launch of the 2018-19 edition of the League of American Orchestras’ Emerging Leaders Program. Over the next ten months, participants in the Emerging Leaders Program—the field’s prime source for identifying and cultivating the leadership potential of talented orchestra professionals—will work together to develop leadership skills, engage in virtual and in-person seminars, and enhance their knowledge of orchestra culture. The 2018-19 ELP cohort—the most diverse in the program’s history—comprises orchestra executive directors, a conductor, a professional orchestra musician, and managers from a cross-section of orchestra departments. ELP is guided by leadership expert John McCann, with Mary Parish as leadership coach, plus additional faculty and guest speakers. The 2018-19 program wraps up in June, when participants will have the opportunity to present a capstone project at the League’s 2019 National Conference on a leadership issue affecting the field. The Emerging Leaders Program is made possible by generous grants from American Express, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, and the National Endowment for the Arts. For more, visit the Learning and Leadership Development section of americanorchestras.org.

Carolina-Cherokee Creations

In October, the North Carolina Symphony partnered with the Eastern Band of Cherokee Indians for the world premiere of Si Otsedoha (We’re Still Here), a new work for orchestra and chorus by William Brittelle that incorporated texts from students at Cherokee Central Schools in western North Carolina. Cherokee High School’s Cherokee Chamber Singers performed Si Otsedoha with the orchestra in Raleigh, Wilmington, Boone, and Cherokee, North Carolina, and selections from Si Otsedoha were performed at the orchestra’s education concerts. The work stemmed from meetings in fall 2017 at which student leaders at Cherokee Central Schools created a forum for classmates to discuss their thoughts and feelings around Cherokee identity. The texts of Brittelle’s work were written in and sung primarily in Cherokee, a language spoken fluently by fewer than 300 people today. At some performances, Si Otsedoha headlined a program that also included “Amazing Grace” sung by the Cherokee Chamber Singers in Cherokee, accompanied by North Carolina Symphony Principal Cellist Bonnie Thron. “The thing I was left with after each of my visits with the student choir was the passion that these young folks have—passion for the Cherokee people but also passion for the future,” said North Carolina Symphony Music Director Grant Llewellyn.

Audience Connect

Downtown Seattle is a boomtown right now, and the Seattle Symphony saw fresh opportunities to connect with newcomers in the neighborhoods surrounding Benaroya Hall, the orchestra’s home. But how to connect with these untapped audiences? A new video of the Connecting with New Audiences: Seattle Symphony Case Study session at the League of American Orchestras’ 2018 Conference shows how. The Seattle Symphony launched an ambitious market-research program, with support from the Wallace Foundation’s Building Audiences for Sustainability initiative. The new video, led by the Seattle Symphony’s Charlie Wade, senior vice president for marketing and business operations, consolidates the key facts and essential points of the hourlong seminar into a brisk eighteen minutes, with graphs, charts, and excerpts of a documentary film about the orchestra’s market research. No matter the size or budget of your orchestra, the topics and examples are great ways to start conversations about understanding and building your own audiences. Watch the video for free at https://tinyurl.com/ycepxu9d8.
New Philadelphia Sounds

In September, the Philadelphia Orchestra conducted readings of music by six women composers: Melody Eötvös, Robin Holcomb, Chen-Hui Jen, Hilary Purrington, Xi Wang, and Nina C. Young, led by Assistant Conductor Kensho Watanabe. At the readings, held in collaboration with the American Composers Orchestra, composers received feedback on their scores from ACO Artistic Director Derek Bermel and composer Melinda Wagner, and their pieces were recorded. Four of the six composers were earlier identified through the League of American Orchestras’ Women Composers Readings and Commissions program, made possible by the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation. The Philadelphia Orchestra will commission a work from each composer, said Philadelphia Orchestra President and CEO Matías Tarnopolsky, and the commissions are part of what the orchestra calls “a greater investment in the compositional process to support and empower you to play your part in influencing public policy. The guide includes:

- Facts about advocacy and lobbying
- Tips for identifying your policy issues, partners, and strategies
- Easy steps for tracking and reporting lobbying activity
- A Q&A section that explains the lobbying rules for orchestras


Composers Nina C. Young, Hilary Purrington, Chen-Hui Jen (obscured), Robin Holcomb, and Xi Wang listen as the Philadelphia Orchestra rehearses Melody Eötvös’s The Saqqara Bird, September 2018.


Everyone involved in an orchestra, whether as an administrator, musician, volunteer, or concert-goer, cares deeply about the future of orchestras and the communities they serve—which means we cannot afford to rest when there is advocacy to be done. As 501(c)(3) organizations, orchestras are permitted by the Internal Revenue Service to engage in issue advocacy, and many orchestras are leading such efforts at the local, state, and federal levels. Through its online handbook Playing Your Part: An Orchestra’s Guide to Public Policy Advocacy, at www.americanorchestras.org/playingyourpart, the League of American Orchestras offers advice on how to get engaged in the policy process and build successful relationships with policymakers. The goal is to support and empower you to play your part in influencing public policy. The guide includes:

- Facts about advocacy and lobbying
- Tips for identifying your policy issues, partners, and strategies
- Easy steps for tracking and reporting lobbying activity
- A Q&A section that explains the lobbying rules for orchestras


Salonen Heads West—Again

The San Francisco Symphony has named Finnish conductor and composer Esa-Pekka Salonen as its next music director, beginning in September 2020 and succeeding longtime Music Director Michael Tilson Thomas. Salonen starts as music director designate immediately, and leads his first concerts in that role this January. His initial contract runs for five years. In addition, the orchestra has introduced a new artistic leadership model, and Salonen will be joined by eight creative and artistic partners who include composers, vocalists, instrumentalists from multiple music genres, and even a roboticist. The collaborative partners are pianist and composer Nicholas Britell; soprano and arts activist Julia Bullock; flutist, educator, and founder of the International Contemporary Ensemble, Claire Chase; composer and guitarist Bryce Dessner of The National; violinist and music director Pekka Kuusisto; composer Nico Muhly; artificial-intelligence entrepreneur and roboticist Carol Reiley; and jazz bassist and vocalist Esperanza Spalding. Salonen is currently artist in association at the Finnish National Opera and Ballet, and he will step down as principal conductor and artistic advisor of London’s Philharmonia Orchestra in 2021. Previously, Salonen served as music director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic from 1992 to 2009, and is now its conductor laureate.
Dallas Symphony Expands Education Programs in Southern Dallas

The Dallas Symphony Orchestra recently announced an initiative that will provide instruments and instruction to children in schools and after-school programs in Southern Dallas, an area that has been afflicted by poverty. The DSO’s program launched in December with an instrument “playground” at Southwest Center Mall introducing children to the instruments of the orchestra, with follow-up up event in January at South Dallas Cultural Center. The DSO is conducting instrument drives that will provide hundreds of instruments to students by June 2019. The free music program will include lessons multiple times per week as part of school and existing after-school programs, with educational partners helping the DSO to develop curriculum and train teaching artists. As part of the initiative, DSO musicians will perform concerts and collaborate with artists in the community. The program is expected to expand in 2020 with weekly or twice-weekly music education for children from 3 to 5 years old. The program joins the orchestra’s ongoing music education programs, which include Symphony Yes! interactive music performances by DSO musicians in schools, and Young Strings, whose participants are students in grades 2 to 12 from disadvantaged neighborhoods.

Musical America’s 2019 Award Winners

This fall, Musical America, the publisher of Musical America International Directory of the Performing Arts and the news site MusicalAmerica.com, named Russian pianist Daniil Trifonov Artist of the Year for 2019. During a December ceremony at Carnegie Hall, Trifonov was honored along with his fellow winners, who included Carlos Miguel Prieto, music director of the Louisiana Philharmonic, Orquesta Sinfónica National de México, and Orchestra of the Americas. Also receiving 2019 Musical America awards were Julia Wolfe, Composer of the Year; Anthony Roth Costanzo, Vocalist of the Year; and the JACK Quartet, Ensemble of the Year. Leonard Bernstein was the first Musical America Musician of the Year, in 1960.

Go Low

Why does this tuba player look so happy? Maybe it’s because he recently took the spotlight when he premiered a new tuba concerto by Samuel Adler with the Toledo Symphony. David Saltzman, the Toledo Symphony’s principal tuba, performed the concerto’s world premiere on October 20, led by Music Director Alain Trudel at the Toledo Museum of Art’s Peristyle Theater. Saltzman said he had been a fan of Adler’s music “from the first time I played a piece of his in high school. I have loved the challenge of finding my voice in this complex and challenging work. I especially love the first movement, which Sam has written as a ‘Cantilization’ affirming our collaboration not only as musicians, but as Jewish musicians.” Before the premiere, Saltzman said he hoped that “even if you know nothing about Jewish music there will be moments in this opening section where something of his and my shared heritage can be heard.” The year 2018 featured at least one other entry in the rare tuba concerto category: in March, Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra Principal Tuba Craig Knox performed the world premiere of Jennifer Higdon’s new tuba concerto.
Toronto Symphony: Bienvenue, Gustavo Gimeno

The Toronto Symphony Orchestra has named Spanish conductor Gustavo Gimeno as its next music director, succeeding Peter Oundjian, who stepped down in June 2018. Sir Andrew Davis is serving as the orchestra’s interim artistic director through the end of the 2019-20 season, and Gimeno’s initial five-year contract takes effect with the 2020-21 season. Gimeno, who made his Canadian debut with the TSO in February 2018, has been music director of the Luxembourg Philharmonic Orchestra since 2015. He began his international conducting career in 2012 as assistant to Mariss Jansons while he was a member of the Royal Concertgebouw Orchestra in Amsterdam, and has also studied with Bernard Haitink and Claudio Abbado. Born in Valencia, Spain, Gimeno is fluent in Spanish, English, Italian, and Dutch, and is studying French. In the current season, Gimeno will guest conduct the Cleveland Orchestra, the Houston, St. Louis, and Seattle symphonies, and the London Philharmonic Orchestra, among others. This winter he makes his Zurich Opera debut conducting Verdi’s Rigoletto, which he will also lead in concert versions at the Luxembourg Philharmonic and the Théâtre des Champs-Elysées in Paris.

Get Ready for the League’s 2019 National Conference

Save the dates for the League of American Orchestras’ 2019 National Conference, June 3-5 in Nashville, Tennessee. Then join your colleagues from orchestras all across the country at the Conference, the primary forum for emerging practices and innovation in orchestras. The 74th annual Conference will be hosted by the Nashville Symphony, and will take place at the Omni Nashville Hotel—but be sure to book early, as the famed Country Music Awards happen in Nashville the same week, and rooms are expected to sell out. Get all the details, including hotel discount info, on the Conferences and Meetings page of americanorchestras.org.

Music Pathways

More and more orchestras are launching initiatives that use music to assist people with memory loss, following multiple studies showing that music can provide a pathway for those with memory impairment to connect with their past, and that participating in music-making can help reverse cognitive decline. Among recent orchestral activity in this area is the Virginia Symphony Orchestra’s “Generations in Unison” program for memory-care and assisted-living residents at retirement facilities in southeastern Virginia. The Roanoke Symphony Orchestra gives short concerts at assisted-living facilities, and also works with a music therapist to help residents suffering from dementia tap into long-term memories. North Carolina’s Charlotte Symphony Orchestra is partnering with two local universities to study how people with dementia and Alzheimer’s disease respond to live orchestral music. In California, small groups of musicians from the Pacific Symphony perform informal concerts for seniors and developmentally disabled adults in a program designed to encourage interaction among people with cognitive and other impairments. The B Sharp program at Colorado’s Fort Collins Symphony provides people living with dementia and a caregiver season tickets to concerts. The orchestra has also partnered with scientists at Colorado State University to study the effects of music on people with dementia and Alzheimer’s. New York City’s Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts launched a free six-concert “Moments” series in 2017 for people with dementia and their caregivers.
Utah Rock Stars

Performance attire for musicians is a perennial topic of discussion at orchestras. Several Utah Symphony musicians got radically new fashion looks for a photo shoot that briefly transformed them into iconic rock stars as part of a recent marketing campaign at the orchestra. Pictured (clockwise from right), Concertmaster Madeleine Adkins as David Bowie; percussion/timpanist Eric Hopkins as Bob Dylan; and Principal Tuba Gary Ofenloch, Associate Principal Bassoon Leon Chodos, Principal Trombone Mark Davidson, and Second Horn Llewellyn Humphreys as the band KISS. As the orchestra proclaimed, “In the symphony world, our musicians are basically rock stars.”