

# Professionals

MA 30  
of the year

The

# Influencers



musical  
america  
SPECIAL REPORTS

december  
2015

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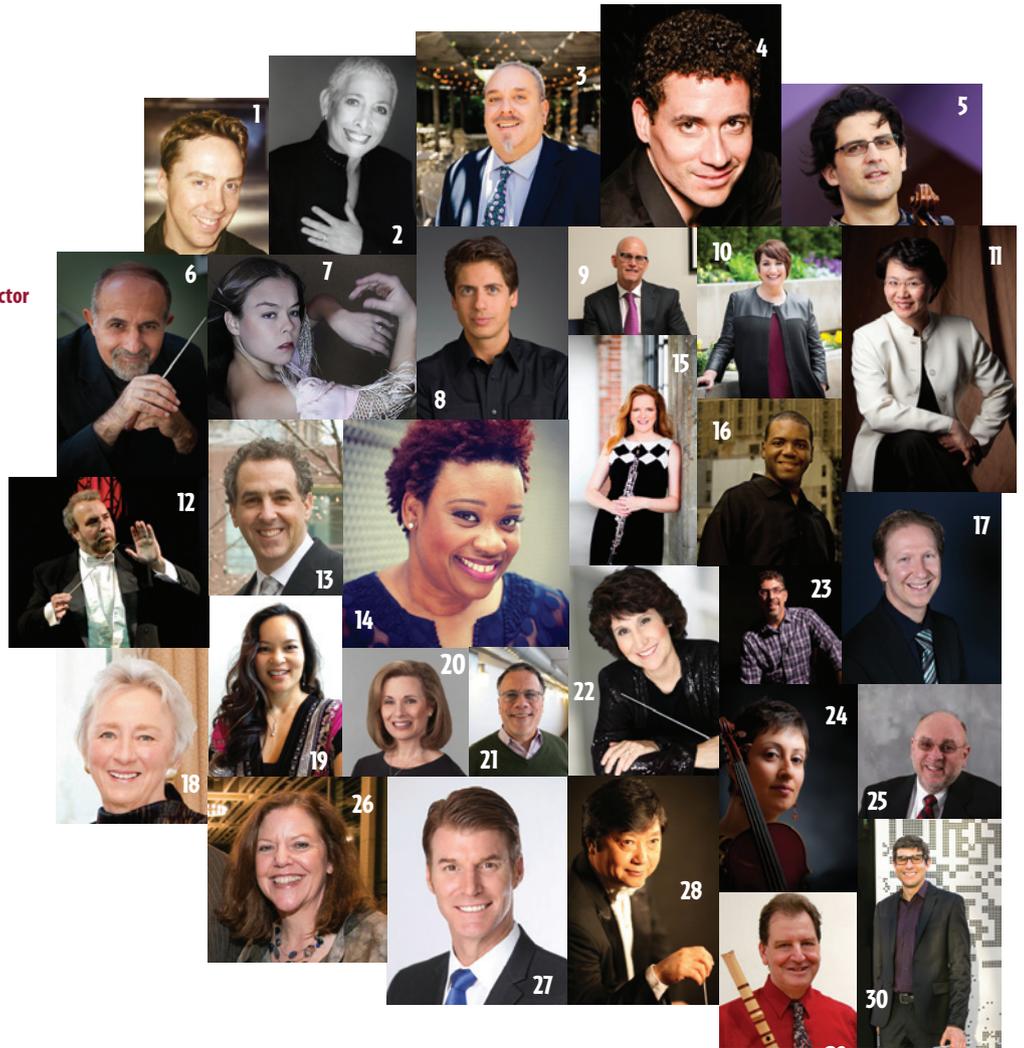
Founder, Artistic Director, and Principal Oboist  
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## Introduction



Musical America Professionals of the Year is one of my favorite special reports. While our other reports deal with critical issues facing the performing arts, this one is all about the people who make this industry work.

We like to focus on a different aspect each year. This year's crop is comprised of The Influencers, defined as people who are making a difference in our business, either by virtue of their position, their creativity, and/or their dedication—folks about whom you could say “When they speak, we listen.” Previous years have included [Rising Stars](#) (2012), [Movers & Shakers](#) (2013), and [Profiles in Courage](#) (2014).

To find our “Influencers,” we emailed hundreds of nomination forms several months ago to the MA “family.” You responded with gusto—winnowing the vast number of submissions down to 30 was no easy task. We based our final decisions not only on nominators’ descriptions, but also on our own research and in some cases personal interviews. A couple of respondents tried stuffing the ballot box, but we chose on the basis of quality, not quantity.

Our 30 Influencers cover a vast range, from the managing director of a highly celebrated string quartet to an international competition’s president, a much-admired university professor, an independent artist manager, radio programmer, venue presenter, and oboist/entrepreneur. Each, in his or her own way, has made and continues to make a vital impact on the performing arts. Bravo to all!

Regards,

Susan Elliott  
Editor, Special Reports

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# MUSIC ACADEMY OF THE WEST



The Music Academy of the West Board of Directors and administration congratulate **Scott Reed, President and CEO (center)**, on being selected as a **2015 *Musical America* “Influencer.”**

**Scott’s positive and supportive leadership truly inspires innovation.**

The Music Academy of the West is among the nation’s preeminent summer schools and festivals for gifted young classical musicians. At its ocean-side campus in Santa Barbara, the Academy provides these musicians with the opportunity for advanced study and performance under the guidance of internationally renowned faculty artists, guest conductors, and soloists. Admission to the Academy is strictly merit based, and fellows receive full scholarships (tuition, room, and board).

The Academy’s distinguished teaching artists roster has included famed soprano Lotte Lehmann, composers Darius Milhaud and Arnold Schoenberg, cellist Gregor Piatigorsky, pianist Jeremy Denk, and current Voice Program Director Marilyn Horne. Academy alumni are members of major symphony orchestras, chamber orchestras, ensembles, opera companies, and university and conservatory faculties throughout the world. Many enjoy careers as prominent solo artists. In 2014 the Music Academy entered into a four-year partnership with the New York Philharmonic, resulting in unprecedented training and performance opportunities for Academy fellows, and Summer Festival residencies for Philharmonic musicians.

The Music Academy of the West cultivates discerning, appreciative, and adventurous audiences, presenting more than 200 public events annually, nearly half of them free of charge. These include performances by faculty, visiting artists, and fellows; masterclasses; orchestra and chamber music concerts; and a fully staged opera. The 2016 Summer School and Festival will take place from June 13 to August 7 at the Academy’s scenic Miraflores campus and in venues throughout Santa Barbara.

The

# Influencers

For this year's Musical America Professionals of the Year, we asked our readers to nominate "key influencers." These are the folks who are making a difference in our business, either by virtue of their position, their creativity, and/or their dedication—people about whom you could say, "When they speak, we listen."



## MEI-ANN CHEN

Music Director

Chicago Sinfonietta and Memphis Symphony Orchestra

Mei-Ann Chen never misses an opportunity to try something new. During one [Chicago Sinfonietta](#) performance, for example, a Chicago-based punk marching band, Mucca Pazza, emerged from below stage wearing mismatched uniforms for Tchaikovsky's 1812 Overture. As a toy cannon shot confetti, younger listeners tried to grab handfuls. According to Chen, imaginative touches like these draw otherwise reluctant people to try classical music.

Since 2011 Chen has led the Sinfonietta, an ensemble that prides itself on inclusiveness and innovation in classical music. Under Chen's guidance, last year the orchestra's "Project Inclusion Conducting Fellowship" saw its first graduates secure assistant-conducting posts at the Minnesota Orchestra and San Diego Symphony. The more traditional (given its location) [Memphis Symphony](#), where Chen is in her fifth season as music director, became a positive force for diversity and inclusion at a recent concert honoring Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. Chen invited the city's Central

High School Choir of predominantly African-American students to sing spirituals between movements of Dvořák's spiritual-infused *New World* Symphony.

Chen says she hasn't felt constrained by both of her orchestras' limited resources. "We're the mightiest boutique orchestras in the country," she says proudly. Given that ticket sales at the Sinfonietta have been up as much as 50 percent the past few seasons, and up 30 percent during her tenure at the Memphis Symphony, Chen isn't boasting when she says, "We generate a circle of energy, and our audiences respond."

In addition to Memphis and the Sinfonietta, Chen was recently named artistic director and conductor for the 2016 National Taiwan Symphony Orchestra Summer Festival. Chen grew up in Taiwan playing the violin but knew from age 10, she says, that she wanted to conduct. "It was an impossible dream."

Not any more. —Rick Schultz

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## JANET COWPERTHWAITE

Managing Director

Kronos Quartet/Kronos Performing Arts Association

Hired by the [Kronos Quartet](#) part-time in the fall of 1981, Janet Cowperthwaite recalls the group, founded in 1973 and based in San Francisco, as being stuffed into “one room with one phone and one hold button.” Now starting her 35th year as managing director of what has evolved into the Kronos Quartet/Kronos Performing Arts Association, Cowperthwaite has played a major role in the group’s growth and success. Overseeing a staff of 10, she supervises pretty much everything: booking, artistic planning, recording, production, fund raising—the entire operation.

With Cowperthwaite facilitating the process, Kronos has widened the scope and impact of the string quartet and chamber music immeasurably, offering a model for other organizations. To

date, the group has made over 50 recordings and commissioned over 850 works, many of which have seen repeat performances by other groups. “I can tell you the story of each one—from raising the funds to where the piece was premiered,” she says.

Last year, the organization launched “Fifty for the Future: The Kronos Learning Repertoire,” a major educational initiative designed to help young musicians develop the skills required for performing 21st-century repertoire. The material will be distributed online for free. Cowperthwaite says the organization’s artistic ideas and vision are always evolving. “There’s no guidebook. You make it up as you go. I’m a matchmaker. We’re about creating the right fit. Kronos always did, and does, what it wants to do.” —Rick Schultz



## ADAM CRANE

Vice President for External Affairs

St. Louis Symphony Orchestra

Adam Crane disproves the old maxim that you can’t go home again. Crane grew up in St. Louis and played cello in the St. Louis Symphony Youth Orchestra. He then headed east to attend New York University and, after graduation, got a job at Carnegie Hall as an assistant to the executive director, the late Judith Arron. There followed a foray into the recording business, working with Universal Classics and Warner Classics, before moving into the orchestra world, as public relations director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic.

While in Los Angeles, Crane befriended Nathaniel Ayers, a homeless and schizophrenic musician, and introduced him to members of the Philharmonic. Those relationships were chronicled by *Los Angeles Times* columnist Steve Lopez in the book *The Soloist* and depicted in a 2009 movie. Today, Crane continues to be

involved with issues of homelessness, incarceration, and mental illness, and how they intersect with music, as a board member of Street Symphony, a nonprofit ensemble that brings free, on-site performances to poor communities in Los Angeles and elsewhere.

In 2008, Crane accepted an offer from the [St. Louis Symphony](#), where he now oversees all external affairs. The department he runs was created specifically for him and encompasses education, community programs, the youth orchestra, government relations, and live radio broadcasts from Powell Hall that he co-hosts on the local NPR station.

One October 2014 broadcast made news itself when a group staged a peaceful demonstration during a concert. They were protesting the police killing of Michael Brown in Ferguson, MO.

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“We were doing the Brahms Requiem, coming out of intermission,” recalls Crane. “The tuning had occurred and the conductor had walked out onstage—and all of a sudden, these protesters started singing, “Which Side Are You On,” then left the hall. “We were on the air, and had to go into breaking news mode, which was interesting. We had it documented on the radio, really live.”

Crane is versatile. In August, he took his baseball mitt to a parking lot behind Powell Hall to warm up St. Louis Symphony President Marie-Hélène Bernard as she practiced to throw out the first pitch before a Cardinals game against the Washington Nationals at Busch Stadium. —John Fleming

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## **GEOFFREY JOHN DAVIES**

**Founder and CEO  
The Violin Channel**



About six years ago, Geoffrey John Davies began uploading videos of violin performances onto YouTube. “Around the time that social media started, I very randomly started this thing called [The Violin Channel](#),” he says. “People were interested, and it just kind of took off. About three years later, I thought, ‘Oh, I think there’s a space for this in the classical music industry.’ It all happened quite innocently.”

Today, The Violin Channel comprises a web site of news and features focused on violins and other strings; an online store for string players; and a robust presence across social media platforms, including the original YouTube channel that now has more than 600 videos.

“The web site is only a percentage of what I do,” he says. “What I use the web site for is basically hosting my content, and

for the longevity. Social media, particularly Facebook, is a whole other service.”

Davies, an Australian who studied violin and viola at the Queensland Conservatory, worked in advertising in the financial services industry for about 12 years, and has lived in New York City since 2011. The Violin Channel has been his fulltime job since launching the web site three years ago. He figures that the majority of the audience members are string players, and his focus on promoting young artists is popular, but one of the most widely viewed stories he posted was on the death of conductor (and violinist) Lorin Maazel in 2014. “I got that story up very early, and I got something like 100,000 hits on my web site. But I don’t think anything like that has been a game changer. The growth has been slow and steady.” —John Fleming



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## **AFA SADYKHLI DWORKIN**

**President and Artistic Director  
Sphinx Organization**

In March, Afa Sadykhly Dworkin began the sometimes daunting task of taking over as the head of an organization from its founder. As president and artistic director of the [Sphinx Organization](#), which champions diversity in classical music, she succeeded her

husband, Aaron Dworkin, who is now dean of the University of Michigan’s School of Music, Theater, and Dance.

The Detroit-based Sphinx addresses the scant representation of black and Latino musicians in American

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symphony orchestras, which is only about four percent today, up from less than half that when Aaron Dworkin founded the organization in 1996.

A violinist trained in Azerbaijan, Afa Dworkin previously had been executive and artistic director of Sphinx, overseeing all fundraising and programmatic aspects of the operation. When the change was announced, Aaron Dworkin pointed out that his wife (they have two sons) was the organization's first employee before they had a personal relationship, and that she was the architect of many of its programs. Away from Sphinx, she once served as a tri-lingual interpreter and executive assistant to the president of ARCO, the gas and oil company in Baku, Azerbaijan.

The Sphinx Competition, open to all junior high, high school, and college-age black and Latino string players in the United States, is the organization's flagship event. (The 19th annual competition will be held Feb. 3-7 in Detroit.) Alumni winners of the event make up the elite Sphinx Virtuosi chamber orchestra, which received a glowing *New York Times* review for its Carnegie Hall performance in October, on its annual tour.

The group also does outreach, and its presence in schools in underserved urban areas where classical music is unfamiliar can be galvanizing. "They are always greeted as rock stars," Afa Dworkin says of the Virtuosi. "You'd think it was Jay Z coming in. There is this sense of coolness when the music actually happens." —John Fleming

## RUTH FELT

Founder and President  
San Francisco Performances



From Hubert Humphrey to Yo-Yo Ma is quite a leap. But Ruth Felt, who worked for the presidential hopeful in the late 1960's, made the transition from politics to the arts with single-minded vision and grace. As founder and president of [San Francisco Performances](#), a presenting organization offering chamber concerts, recitals, jazz, and dance, Felt has made a profound impact on the city's cultural life. In 1979, she saw a limited number of chamber music and recital opportunities in the area, so she started San Francisco Performances. The first season, in 1980-81, offered seven programs; the current, 36th, season offers over 70.

During Felt's tenure, many artists, including Ma, Leif Ove Andsnes, Anne-Sophie Mutter, Andrés Schiff, and Dawn Upshaw, made their San Francisco recital debuts. In 2003, the organization became an early supporter of violinist Jennifer Koh (*Musical America's* 2016 Instrumentalist of the Year) and her four-part "Bridge to Beethoven" project, which comes to fruition this season. After Felt heard works by composer Thomas Adès, she brought him to the Bay Area in 2006, but made sure his program was consistent with her commitment to SF Performances's mission of

showcasing chamber music, or what Felt calls "the more intimate art form."

The organization's activities also include education. In the 1988-89 season, SF Performances's artists-in-residence, the Alexander String Quartet, started going into public schools. Since 1994, the Quartet, along with host and lecturer Robert Greenberg, have added an adult-education Saturday morning series in various venues in the Bay Area. Residencies expanded in the late 1990's to include classical guitar, jazz, and vocal music.

With a loyal subscriber base anchoring its operating budget, the independent, multi-disciplinary organization under Felt has remained comfortably in the black. "We are in very good shape," Felt says, "but there's no resting on one's laurels, because the marketplace is ongoing and challenging." Felt, who is 76, announced last month that she is retiring, though she leaves SF Performances having already programmed much of the next two seasons. "We succeeded against the odds," Felt says. "People predicted I could not do this. Now a new generation of leaders will take the organization into the future." —Rick Schultz

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**LEILA GETZ**  
Founder and Artistic Director  
Vancouver Recital Society

Leila Getz looms large as one of the primary driving forces on the classical music scene in Vancouver, BC. In 1980, at the age of 40, this South African native founded the [Vancouver Recital Society](#), a presenting organization that has consistently aimed high and brought many of the world's leading artists to a relatively isolated region.

It seemed like a foolhardy project at first, especially since there was an economic recession in Canada in the early 1980s. "Everybody said I was crazy and that it would fail—everybody except my husband," Getz remembered in an interview with *Fresh Vancouver*. But the series gradually expanded from five events at the beginning to 20 in 2015. All take place in the Chan Center for the Performing Arts or the Vancouver Playhouse, with occasional events in the larger Orpheum Theater for big names like cellist Yo-Yo Ma or baritone Bryn Terfel.

Most striking is Getz's knack for finding major artists before they become widely known. She presented the Canadian debuts

of mezzo-soprano Cecilia Bartoli, who reportedly stopped the first rehearsal cold after she sang her first note (the baton flew out of the amazed conductor's hand), and pianist Lang Lang, who was all of 15 at the time. Other Canadian debuts on this series include those of violinists Joshua Bell and Maxim Vengerov, Anne Sofie von Otter, and, one of Getz's earliest discoveries, pianist András Schiff. The VRS also books such well-established performers as Richard Goode, Leif Ove Andsnes, Kiri Te Kanawa, Ian Bostridge, Itzhak Perlman, Evgeny Kissin, Kathleen Battle, and Jeremy Denk. Getz has also championed lesser-known Canadian artists such as Angela Cheng, Scott St. John, James Ehnes, and Jon Kimura Parker, among others.

Getz has persevered in the face of the doomsayers who continually cite the aging, diminishing audience for classical music in North America. In continuing to juxtapose gifted unknowns with the stars, Getz's Vancouver Recital Series remains an important platform for emerging and established artists on the continent. —Richard S. Ginell

## YEHUDA GILAD

Music Director, The Colburn Orchestra

The Colburn School

Professor of Clarinet, Colburn and USC Thornton School of Music

As music director and conductor of the [Colburn Orchestra](#) at the Colburn School in Los Angeles, Yehuda Gilad has seen the orchestra emerge since its inception in 2003 as one of the nation's premier conservatory ensembles. Guest conductors like Sir Neville Marriner, James Conlon, and Esa-Pekka Salonen have consistently expressed high praise for the group, and Gerard Schwarz has called the Colburn "among the finest orchestras in the world."

There's little question that Gilad has had a powerful shaping influence on the ensemble's budding musicians, many of whom have gone on to play in professional orchestras the world over. But his reputation as a clarinet teacher, both at Colburn and at the University of Southern California's [Thornton School of Music](#), is second to none. Here again, the number of his students who have become professional musicians is testament to his skill and



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dedication. One former student, Todd Cope, principal clarinet of the Montreal Symphony Orchestra, said Gilad's level of preparation paved the way for successful auditions. "I still play for him once or twice a year," Cope says. "Once you're a Gilad student, you're his student for life." The New York Philharmonic, the Cincinnati Symphony, the Minnesota Orchestra, and the Stockholm, Hong Kong, and Seoul philharmonics all have former Gilad students in their ranks.

Prior to Colburn, Gilad served for 15 years as music director of the Colonial Symphony of New Jersey, transforming it, according to *The Star-Ledger*, "into one of [New Jersey's] artistic trendsetters." He has also served as music director of the Thornton Chamber Orchestra and the Santa Monica Symphony Orchestra and has guest-conducted internationally. In 1987 he became the first Israeli-born conductor to perform in China. He continues to tour as a clarinetist as well. —Rick Schultz



## MICHAEL HEASTON

**Director of the Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Program & Adviser to the Artistic Director  
Washington National Opera  
Associate Artistic Director, Glimmerglass Festival**

Michael Heaston is a man who hears plenty of auditions by young opera singers. He is head of both the [Domingo-Cafritz Young Artist Program](#) at Washington National Opera and the [Glimmerglass Festival Young Artists Program](#). He has been a judge for the Metropolitan Opera National Council Auditions and the Dallas Opera Guild Vocal Competition.

What does he listen for?

"I am listening, first and foremost, for the quality of the instrument," Heaston says. "The voice must be well-produced, technically solid, and make an artistic statement. I am listening for people who use words, interpret text, and have both a musical and a dramatic opinion."

In the past decade, Heaston has emerged as a key coach, mentor, and champion of young talent by virtue of his positions at Glimmerglass and WNO, and he has a close connection with Francesca Zambello, director of both companies. Previously,

he spent six seasons at the Dallas Opera, where he was head of music staff and assistant conductor for more than 25 productions, including the world premiere of Jake Heggie's *Moby-Dick*. For seven years, he was a score consultant to the Met's HD broadcasts. With a master's degree in accompanying and coaching from the University of Minnesota, he has served as a collaborative pianist in classes by singers such as Harolyn Blackwell, Håkan Hagegård, Diana Soviero, and others.

Heaston is also instrumental in the commission of short works as program director of WNO's American Opera Initiative, which is in its fourth season and features Domingo-Cafritz Young Artists. *Better Gods*, an hourlong opera on an important figure in the history of Hawaii by Luna Pearl Woolf (music) and Caitlin Vincent (libretto), will be premiered in a production by the program January 8-9, 2016. —John Fleming



**JONATHAN HERMAN**  
Executive Director  
National Guild for Community Arts Education

Since Jonathan Herman became its executive director in 2004, the [National Guild for Community Arts Education](#) has grown exponentially in its influence, impact, and services to the field. Founded in 1937, NGCAE is the sole national service organization for community arts-education providers, holding firm in the belief that the arts are an essential part of individual and community life. Its more than 450 member organizations include community schools of the arts, arts centers, and arts-education divisions of organizations ranging from universities to museums.

More than two-thirds of Guild member organizations were founded in the last 25 years, half of them after 1990. The oldest traces its beginnings to 1894, the newest to several months ago; budgets range from \$5,000 to \$10 million.

NGCAE provides its members with the tools and resources they need to bring arts instruction and advocacy to their respective communities. The organization conducts surveys and publishes research reports, newsletters, bulletins, and best-practices guides. An annual conference brings members together from

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across the country for networking and professional development, offering workshops in such topics as “Beyond the ABCs of Social Media,” “The Journey of Becoming an Anti-racist Organization,” and “Teaching Artist Professional Development: Spotlight on Five Effective Models.” Members can also connect with one another in online forums, chapter meetings, and teleconferences.

Overseeing this vast network of activity with his staff of eight, Jonathan Herman was recently named one of top 50 “Most Powerful and Influential Leaders in Nonprofit Arts in 2014” by the Western State Arts Federation. In addition to being executive

director, Herman oversees special projects such as Creative Communities, which aims to promote arts instruction in public-housing cooperatives, and Partners in Excellence, which promotes best practices in K-12 public school arts programs. As well, he was project leader for a national study commissioned by The Kresge Foundation that led to the publication of *More Than the Sum of Its Parts: Collaboration and Sustainability in Arts Education*.

The Guild reports that its activities result in opportunities for 2.5 million students to engage directly with the arts every year, and for 8 million more to experience the arts through performances and exhibitions.



**DAVID KATZ**  
**Founder and Chief Judge**  
**The American Prize**

David Katz has had a rather eclectic set of experiences in the performing arts world. He’s a published composer and a conductor who has worked with over 60 orchestras and opera companies in the U.S. and Canada. He has founded a number of organizations including Opera Maine, the Monteux Opera Festival, the Chamber Orchestra of Maine, and the Chicago Bar Association Symphony Orchestra. He is a playwright and the author of two books soon to be published by Del Gatto Press: *Muse of Fire: A Symposium on the Art of Conducting* and a companion volume, *Bruck Stories*. He is also the creator of a narrated touring concert, “Leroy Anderson: King of the Boston Pops.”

One of Katz’s most ambitious projects is the [The American Prize](#), a series of national competitions for the best recorded performances on all levels, from secondary school to professional. The American Prize offers recognition in a bewilderingly wide variety of categories, from the usual conductors, soloists, composers, and vocalists to actors, bands, theater and opera

companies, stage directors, and arts administrators. Submissions take the form of recordings for performers, and printed plans, press releases, etc. for administrators.

Among the characteristics that set it apart from other competitions, the American Prize seeks to reward compositions that have been already performed and recorded, in order to recognize the “thousands of hours of toil,” says Katz, from inception through performance.

Among the best-known winners of the Prize is Roomful of Teeth, for the 2010 choral competition. Nan Washburn, music director of the Michigan Philharmonic, a 2013 winner, is quoted on Katz’s web site as saying that the American Prize “has given us substantial visibility both on the national scale and here in the Detroit metro region. TAP also introduced us to a number of composers we’ve now performed.” —Richard S. Ginell



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**DR. TIM LAUTZENHEISER**  
**Vice President of Education**  
**Conn-Selmer**

Tim Lautzenheiser, or “Dr. Tim” as his students and colleagues call him, is a teacher, clinician, author, composer, consultant, and adjudicator. His writings and motivational workshops have inspired hundreds, if not thousands, of students and seasoned pros alike to become better music educators. He is a gifted communicator, known to pepper his talks with such inspirational or wry aphorisms as, “The world of academia is famous for pushing knowledge, not wisdom,” or, “Happiness isn’t getting what you want, it’s wanting what you get,” or simply, “Create what isn’t.”

A graduate of Ball State University and the University of Alabama, with an honorary doctorate from VanderCook College of Music, Lautzenheiser directed college bands at Northern Michigan University, the University of Missouri, and New Mexico State University. Following three years as executive director of the Bands of America marching band program, he formed [Attitude Concepts for Today](#), which manages requests for his books, workshops, and seminars on effective leadership training and the importance of a positive attitude. In addition to his own titles, he is a co-author of the Hal Leonard Corporation’s [Essential Elements](#) band-method series.

In 1997, Lautzenheiser and some colleagues from VanderCook started the [Conn-Selmer Institute](#), an annual three-and-half-day series of clinics and workshops at Bethel College in Mishawaka, IN. Originally designed for music majors and first-year teachers, the program has evolved to attract a huge range of experience levels. Said to be a more intimate affair than most conventions, the Institute encourages interactive conversation, networking, and information sharing about the latest developments in the field. There are also excursions to nearby Elkhart, where participants are given tours of some of the last remaining musical instrument factories in America.

In addition to his position with musical instrument manufacturer Conn-Selmer, Lautzenheiser is the Earl Dunn Distinguished Lecturer at Ball State University and the national spokesperson for National Association for Music Education’s “Make a Difference with Music” program.

Students and faculty alike testify that they come out of Dr. Tim’s sessions more energized and motivated than when they entered—and undoubtedly armed with a few choice quips to pass on to the folks at home. —Richard S. Ginell



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**ALECIA LAWYER**  
**Founder, Artistic Director, and Principal Oboist**  
**River Oaks Chamber Orchestra**

When the Houston Press asked Alecia Lawyer, the energetic founder of the [River Oaks Chamber Orchestra](#), just what her role in the organization was, she reeled off an exhaustive, tongue-in-cheek list, from musician to fundraiser to humorist. She’s also

been known to call herself, in true Texas fashion, “Wildcatting entrepreneur spreading joy through music.”

Lawyer studied oboe at Juilliard and Southern Methodist University (SMU) and has performed as a freelance both abroad,

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in France, and locally, in assorted Houston area orchestras. In 2005, she decided she needed to map out her own agenda. So she founded the River Oaks Chamber Orchestra with the idea of bringing musicians and audiences closer together, by keeping the house lights on during performances and encouraging musicians to mingle with listeners at intermission and afterwards. As such, she looked for good players who could relate easily to audience members on a number of levels, both outside and inside the music. She has called the ROCO “the *Cheers* of orchestras—‘where everybody knows your name.’”

The 40-member ensemble commissions and performs quite a number of new works, with 44 world premieres to its credit over

the last 10 years; when a soloist is involved, he or she comes from within the ranks, and concerts often include small ensembles drawn from the large. ROCO performs in a number of venues in the area and live streams some concerts to hospitals and nursing homes.

Lawyer’s idea has been met with great success in Houston, and she’s been asked to make presentations elsewhere, with ROCO serving as a model for other communities. But she intends to remain in Houston for the long haul. “You can’t start an organization if you’re not going to be there,” she says. “You have to invest in the community.” —Richard S. Ginell

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## CHARLOTTE LEE

President and Founder  
Primo Artists



Charlotte Lee picked up a violin at age 4, and developed into a fine player, serving as concertmaster of the New Jersey Youth Symphony and earning a degree in violin performance (plus a liberal arts degree) at the University of Texas at Austin in 1998. Lee considered pursuing a career as a musician, but after graduation, while on an internship at a record company in New York City, she discovered her true calling. “This is what I’ve been made for, the music business,” she says.

Lee went on to be a top agent at IMG Artists, where her mentors included industry leaders Edna Landau and Elizabeth Sobol. In 2007, at age 30, Lee was named IMG’s youngest vice president, managing Itzhak Perlman, Evgeny Kissin, and other major artists, as well as being in charge of orchestral bookings for conductors, instrumentalists, and symphonic pops shows.

After 17 years at IMG, Lee made a splash last January with the announcement that she was leaving the agency to form

[Primo Artists](#), and that she was bringing superstar Perlman and an important young violinist, Nicola Benedetti, with her. Lee is taking a boutique approach with a small roster that includes two other former IMG clients, Cristian Macelaru, an up-and-coming conductor, and French violinist Arnaud Sussmann.

One of the key roles of an artist manager, in Lee’s view, is to identify and cultivate promising new talent. “Working with young artists takes a lot of patience and perseverance,” she says. “We have to keep our ears close to the ground.” To that end, she has served on the juries of numerous competitions, such as the Ima Hogg Competition, the Parkening International Guitar Competition, and the Schubert Club Scholarship Competition.

Lee likes having a personal relationship with the musicians she manages. “The most important thing for an artist is to be modest, so there’s always room for growth,” she says. —John Fleming



**JON LIMBACHER**  
Managing Director and President  
St. Paul Chamber Orchestra

Less is more when it comes to ticket pricing. That's the philosophy of Jon Limbacher, who is returning to the [St. Paul Chamber Orchestra](#), where he first began implementing a policy of dramatically lowering ticket prices in order to spur attendance and expand the pool of orchestra supporters and potential donors.

In October, the SPCO announced that Limbacher, who has been with the Cleveland Orchestra as chief development officer since 2012, was to succeed its retiring Managing Director and President Bruce Coppock, in January. The new SPCO leadership team also includes Kyu-Young Kim, principal second violin in the chamber orchestra, as artistic director.

During his first time around in St. Paul, Limbacher, who held the title of vice president and COO, helped to initiate a strategy to make concerts as accessible as possible by lowering ticket prices. Ultimately, more than 80 percent of the ticket inventory was

available for \$25 or less. "When you have across-the-board lower prices, the message you send is that this is a community asset and it's here for everyone," he says. "Attendance increased by more than 40 percent and we found that full halls are part of the case for support for contributed revenue." Under his leadership, individual giving to the annual fund more than doubled, board giving more than quadrupled, and the endowment more than doubled in size.

Other orchestras followed suit in adopting "the St. Paul model" and restructured their pricing with good results, such as the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra, the Florida Orchestra, and the Evansville Philharmonic in Indiana. In Cleveland, Limbacher's efforts included the Center for Future Audiences, a program to create one of the youngest audiences of any symphony orchestra in the country through free and reduced-price tickets for students. —John Fleming



**BOB LORD**  
CEO  
PARMA Recordings

Bob Lord, a self-described "recovering English major," launched [PARMA Recordings](#) in 2008. Seven years later, this New England-based company—which specializes in orchestral, chamber, choral, and commercial recording—has 18 full-time employees and serves as parent to five labels. Navona, Ravello, and Big Round Records are still actively recording, while MMC and Capstone, two older labels, have a rich catalog from which PARMA mines reissues. Each month brings six to eight new releases.

Although he is a producer, composer, and bassist, Lord considers himself an outsider in the music business. Eschewing a conservatory

education, he argues, provided him with fresh perspectives and led him to question the traditional ways that recording companies operate. Favoring forward-thinking composers who "smash the walls of genre[s] and create groundbreaking new sounds while keeping one foot firmly rooted in tradition," Lord is especially proud of albums such as Sergio Cervetti's 2012 Navona release, *Nazca*. The Uruguayan-American composer's work for string orchestra, enthuses Lord, is "Latin-American, minimalist, Baroque music."

PARMA's releases also include works by Pulitzer Prize-winners Lewis Spratlan and Donald Martino and performances

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by recently retired New York Philharmonic concertmaster Glenn Dicterow and jazz bassist Eddie Gomez. Lord has also produced albums by clarinetist Richard Stoltzman and Pete Townshend of The Who. PARMA complements its recording activities by offering distribution, product design, strategic marketing, licensing, and publishing services. Every August the company also hosts an

annual PARMA Music Festival in Portsmouth, NH, to showcase contemporary music. Lord also serves as composer and bassist for the experimental rock trio Dreadnaught and music director for The Music Hall/New Hampshire Public Radio series *Writers on a New England Stage*. In the end, however, he insists that PARMA is “the most valuable thing I ever did.” —Rick Schultz



## CHERYL MENDELSON

Chief Operating Officer

Harris Theater for Music and Dance, Chicago

Located on the north side of Chicago’s Millennium Park, the [Harris Theater for Music and Dance](#) opened in November 2003. Cheryl Mendelson, its recently appointed COO, has been serving as executive VP for external affairs for the last six-and-a-half years, during which time she has established a number of important initiatives.

Mendelson grew up in Boston, went to the University of Massachusetts, Amherst, and has since spent over 25 years as an executive working with nonprofit organizations, including 13 years at the Rehabilitation Institute of Chicago. Her experience in the medical field was key to establishing the Access Tickets program, through which some 8,000 individuals who suffer from illness and disabilities, along with their families, have received complimentary tickets to Harris events. “It is inspiring to see the power that music and dance can have in healing the human spirit,” Mendelson told the Chicago women’s magazine *FW* earlier this year. “It makes the hard work worth it.”

She also secured an NEA grant to found the Harris Theater Learning Lab, a series of workshops for resident companies on topics like disability awareness training, working with the Chicago Public Schools, and engaging audiences through social media. Mendelson is credited with the launch of the \$38.8 million Imagine Campaign, the largest such fundraising effort in the theater’s history.

The Harris currently has 35 resident companies or series, including the Chicago Symphony Orchestra’s MusicNow, Chicago Opera Theater, and Hubbard Street Dance Chicago. It also presents touring artists; one of its most highly anticipated productions this season is a fully staged performance of Jonathan Berger’s harrowing theater piece *My Lai*, named for the 1968 massacre of Vietnamese villagers by American soldiers. It opens January 29, 2016 and features the Kronos Quartet, tenor Rinde Eckert, and Vietnamese multi-instrumentalist Vañ Añh Vanessa Võ. —Richard S. Ginell



**JERALD MILLER**  
Managing Director  
Nu Jazz Agency

“Classical, jazz, and world music are perennially behind the times in everything,” argues Jerald Miller, founder and managing director of [Nu Jazz](#), a digital and traditional music marketing and distribution company for independent artists and labels. From progressive new artists like Jimmy Greene to legendary icons like Duke Ellington, Nu Jazz discovers new music and refashions classics, connecting the best of both to today’s consumers using contemporary recording and distribution tools. Since its inaugural release in 2004, Nu Jazz has become the recording industry’s leading digital jazz label with an impressive list of firsts, such as launching the first jazz iTunes “LP” and making all recordings available on pre-paid digital download cards.

Miller says he’s helped many organizations transfer catalog material to the digital medium. But it’s not been easy to move clients out of their comfort zones and into more contemporary business strategies. One example, Miller said, is that most people who want to bring their music before the public don’t have Tumblr or Snapchat accounts. Nor do they make their social media posts in any language other than English.

Miller is also trying to help his clients make better use of music streaming services. He is especially excited about the global possibilities of marketing music and encourages his customers to see that “we really are a global market place.” There’s no reason, he argues, why a small chamber orchestra in Nevada shouldn’t connect with fans in Russia, or a homegrown jazz group in Oregon can’t sell albums in Turkey. —Rick Schultz



**ROCÍO MOLINA**  
Flamenco Dance Artist

This year, flamenco dancer/choreographer [Rocío Molina](#) earned the U.K.’s Olivier Award for Outstanding Achievement in Dance for *Bosque Ardora* (*Ardent Forest*), a 2014 work that puts her in a league with pioneering female choreographers Pina Bausch and Martha Graham. In it, Molina takes a scalpel to the socialization of women by exploring how culture assigns them stereotypical roles, such as the victim, the innocent, and the goddess. She achieves this through her successful blend of classical flamenco, modern dance, and Butoh (Japanese dance of death), with film projection, a surreal set design (live trees hanging upside down), and the chameleon powers of her body.

Born in Malaga in 1984, Molina took to dancing when she was three years old. After graduating from Madrid’s Royal

Conservatory of Dance in 2002, she immediately began touring as a solo artist in flamenco festival productions. In 2008, she embarked on making full-length works. Because she melds genres as disparate as hip-hop dance, jazz music, Butoh, and improvisation, and often attempts to reconstruct large swaths of history, her dances have been equally criticized and commended for their ambitiousness. Nonetheless, three—*Danzaora y Vinática* (2010), *Afectos* (2012), and *Bosque Ardora* (2014)—are touring internationally.

As a dancer, Molina has won almost all of the awards available in her native Spain. The cutting precision of her rhythmic footwork (*zapatiado*) and the serpentine sensuality of her arms (*braceo*) give her, respectively, ferociousness and a lyricism.

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In *Bosque Ardora*, for instance, she successfully inhabits three distinct roles: the noble goddess Artemis of the hunt (who rides a stallion flanked by hunting dogs in the film's projected prologue); the vixen, who, in her fox mask, seduces two male partners like the most practiced of femme fatales; and the victim, who, in her high-heel stilettos, can barely walk, making the bullying by her man that much easier. Shape-shifting among these three archetypes, she offers a multiple, rather than a singular, vision of the feminine.

Molina has presented only one of her full-length works in New York. After performing her *Afectos* at the Baryshnikov Arts Center in 2014, Mikhail Baryshnikov entered her dressing room and knelt before her in unabashed admiration. Molina is a triple threat: a director-choreographer-dancer pushing the boundaries not only of flamenco but of the feminine mystique. —Rachel Straus

## FRANCISCO J. NÚÑEZ

Founder and Artistic Director

Young People's Chorus of New York City



In 2011 it was made more or less official: Francisco J. Núñez is a genius. Well, at least Núñez, founding artistic director of the [Young People's Chorus of New York City](#), was a recipient of one of the \$500,000 fellowships known as "genius awards" given out by the John D. and Catherine T. MacArthur Foundation. "I don't really feel like a genius," Núñez said at the time. "But I definitely feel a little taller."

Núñez, a conductor, composer, and pianist who grew up in the Washington Heights neighborhood of New York City, founded the Young People's Chorus in 1988 "to provide children of all ethnic, religious, and economic backgrounds with a safe haven for personal and artistic growth." Almost 1,400 children ages 7 to 18 participate in the chorus's in-school and after-school programs every year. And they sing some impressive repertoire. Through the years YPC has commissioned more than 80 works, most as part of its Transient Glory program. Among the composers are John Corigliano, Paquito D'Rivera, Meredith Monk, Michael Gordon,

Terry Riley, and Bora Yoon, all featured on *Transient Glory III*, the third YPC recording from the program, released in November on the Cantaloupe Music label.

YPC has made countless high-profile appearances, from singing *Yes, Virginia, There's a Santa Claus* on a float in Macy's Thanksgiving Day Parade to winding up a service with Pope Francis at Ground Zero with *Let There Be Peace on Earth*. In October, performing *Two Mountain Songs* by Gabriela Lena Frank, it was the first American choir in 54 years to win first prize in the Let the People Sing amateur choir competition, held in Munich, Germany.

Núñez, also conductor of the University Glee Club of New York City, has been called "the Horowitz of the choral world" by composer David del Tredici. He has a commercial side, too, having prepared a new SATB arrangement of *I'd Like to Buy the World a Coke* for the Coca-Cola Co. on its 125th anniversary. —John Fleming

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## JORDAN PEIMER

Executive Director

ArtPower!, University of California, San Diego

As the primary performing-arts presenter at the University of California, San Diego, [ArtPower!](#) seeks new ways to engage the student body while also adding to the artistic and cultural life of the La Jolla and San Diego communities. An October 2015 program epitomized the effort. Working in partnership with the San Diego International Airport, ArtPower! hosted the Bang on a Can All-Stars in an on-site performance of Brian Eno's 1978 classic *Music for Airports*. Onlookers were impressed by the sights and sounds, but for many, the most intriguing aspect was watching airport staff move in and out of the performance area while doing their jobs. "They had smiles on their faces," remembers ArtPower's Executive Director Jordan Peimer. "It was like the experience of their work life was being completely redefined."

In his position for only a year, Peimer wants to widen the scope and the effect of performing-arts presenting. His track record would indicate he'll have no problem doing so: as vice president and director of public programs at the Skirball Cultural Center in Los Angeles for 18 years, he established a reputation for taking risks on provocative theater, music, and dance pieces. Among the series he established there was one focused on global music titled "Sunset Concerts." He

also mounted "Zeitgeist," a festival that examined Jewish life in the new Europe, and the Latin-focused "Viva!"

"I'm really interested in engagement," Peimer told *The San Diego Union-Tribune* in a recent interview. "And one thing that has been fundamental since my days at Highways [Performance Space] is I'm very interested in how people use artforms to express their identity and express their beliefs, their world view and their experiences."

"We as audience members can just learn so much, see so much, and experience things that we never could in our daily lives, through the arts."

The opportunity to work with students is particularly exciting to Peimer. "If we don't lay the groundwork for a student's intellectual curiosity now," he says, "why would they take a chance on a new piece of theater, dance, or music when they're older?"

—Rick Schultz

*Congratulations*

**Lois Reitzes**

2015 Musical America  
Influencer Recipient

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**AMIT PELED**  
Cellist and Professor  
Peabody Conservatory

When [Amit Peled](#) was around 10 years old, his parents gave him a cassette recording of the great cellist Pablo Casals. Peled had been studying the cello, but was more interested in basketball than music (he grew to be six-foot-five)—until he listened to the recording. He considers the cellist “the grandfather of classical music of the 20th century.” Many nights he fell asleep to the tape playing on a boombox by his bed.

Today, more than 30 years later, Peled is not only a renowned concert cellist but he is playing the instrument that enchanted him

as a kid. Since 2012, he has been entrusted with the 1733 Goffriller cello that Casals played the most. Casals died at age 96 in 1973, and his widow, Marta Casals Istomin (a onetime student of the cellist, she married him in 1957 when she was 20), lent the cello to Peled, who calls it “Pablo.”

Peled vividly remembers the first time he played it. “How can I, a simple man, son of farmers from a tiny kibbutz in Israel, hold now the instrument that helped Casals redefine cello history,” he writes in *Opus* magazine. “This cello made the journey with the

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## ALLENTOWN SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

Celebrates Diane Wittry's *20th Anniversary Season!*

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*Congratulations*  
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Maestro from Spain into world fame. All the major recordings of Casals were created with this instrument, and so many musicians have grown up, and have been musically shaped listening to that sound. Simply no words!”

Since last year, Peled has been playing the Casals cello, which he had restored to bring out its full sound, in a program called “Homage to Pablo Casals.” The tour began last February at

Johns Hopkins University’s Peabody Conservatory in Baltimore, where Peled is a professor. Including a Bach suite and Handel sonata, it’s the same program that Casals played in a concert at the school in 1915.

Peled recently released his first recording on the Casals cello, performing the Schumann Cello Concerto with the Washington Chamber Orchestra. —John Fleming



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## **SCOTT REED**

**President and CEO**

**Music Academy of the West**

The [Music Academy of the West](#) in Santa Barbara has been carrying out its mission of developing young musicians since 1947; among its founders were Lotte Lehmann and Otto Klemperer. Scott Reed, who began his association with MAW as an unpaid intern in 1997, is now the Music Academy’s president and CEO as of August 2010, and he has lifted the program’s visibility into higher orbit with a number of initiatives.

Among them is the link he has established between the Academy and the New York Philharmonic, a four-year partnership that began in the summer of 2014, with Music Director Alan Gilbert and members of the orchestra in Santa Barbara, teaching and mentoring MAW students (the Academy is primarily a summer program). The following January, ten highly vetted MAW students arrived in New York to perform with the orchestra on a subscription concert. Last summer, the full Philharmonic travelled to MAW, performing in the Santa Barbara Bowl to an enthusiastic, sold-out crowd, attracted in large part by the subsidized ticket prices—one of Reed’s many inventive ideas that is helping to raise the Academy’s profile.

A number of Philharmonic principals remained in Santa Barbara as visiting artists and teachers, also performing a

concert on their own. Once again, a number of elite students will be coming to New York in January 2016 to perform with the orchestra.

Prior to becoming president, Reed served in a number of capacities, notably as vice president for institutional advancement, where he proved to be a brilliant fundraiser. During his tenure as president, he has presided over the opening of the Luria Education Center in 2012 and helped launch the Mosher Guest Artist Residency, which brings in four major classical music artists to perform, conduct master classes, and act as mentors with Music Academy Fellows (among 2015’s participants were tenor Anthony Dean Griffey and pianist Leon Fleisher). He also launched the Compeer Program, which pairs Fellows with donors and other Santa Barbara community members for informal socializing throughout the summer season.

“Scott Reed is a highly effective, visionary leader, who is using his position at the Music Academy of the West to influence the entire music business in a highly positive way,” says Gilbert. “This is partly because Scott has been so good at developing the faculty at MAW but owes lots to Scott’s capacity to connect the MAW experience to the real world.” —Richard S. Ginell

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## LOIS REITZES

Director of Arts and Cultural Programming  
WABE-FM, Atlanta

Lois Reitzes has fought for classical music in the radio wars of Georgia for a period of well over three decades and counting. She has been with [WABE-FM](#) since 1979 when a fellow Georgian named Jimmy Carter was still president, longer than any other radio personality in Atlanta.

Originally from Chicago, Reitzes has made her mark at WABE as a classical music announcer, the station's program director from 1992 to 2007, the producer and host of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra broadcasts, and, since 2007, as director of arts and cultural programming. "Lois is known throughout the region as THE champion for classical music and the arts in general," says Atlanta Chamber Players General Manager Rachel Ciprotti.

In January of this year, Reitzes's ability to keep classical music on the agenda was severely tested when, in response to a small but vocal faction, WABE— an NPR outlet— scrapped

daytime classical music in favor of local and network news and talk shows. Today, Reitzes is back on the air from 11 a.m. to noon with a new program titled *City Lights*, in which she interviews artists and covers news of all the local performing arts, including visual art and theater. She also has a weekly hour-long evening show, *Serenade*, that starts at 8 p.m. and kicks off the night's all-classical programming. Plus, she oversees five hours' worth of WABE's HD-2 classical streaming channel, available 24-7 online or on HD radios, where she is able to play longer classical works that were not possible to air due to required NPR hourly news breaks.

"I feel like this is a job of a lifetime to be able to have five hours of music and engage the arts community," Reitzes told the *Atlanta Journal-Constitution* in January. "It's a dream come true."  
—Richard S. Ginell



## JAMES NYORAKU SCHLEFER

Artistic Director  
Kyo-Shin-An Arts

As founding artistic director of [Kyo-Shin-An Arts](#), James Nyoraku Schlefer inhabits a distinct niche as a performer, educator, and composer. In addition to being an extraordinary virtuoso of the western flute, he is among the few non-Japanese artists to become Grand Master of the shakuhachi, and among a handful of that rank with a background in Western music. His Kyo-Shin-An Arts project seeks to meld two sophisticated "high art" musical traditions by integrating Japanese classical instruments—specifically the shakuhachi (bamboo flute,) koto (harp/zither),

and shamisen (three-string lute)—with western classical music. These three instruments are essential to "hogaku," the vibrant genre of Japanese classical chamber music whose development since the late 17th century parallels the late Baroque, Classical, and Romantic periods in classical music.

While Japanese and western music traditions share such characteristics as adherence to structure and long histories marked by distinct periods, there are significant differences. Western music uses harmony and incorporates the concepts of

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repetition, contrast, and variation to define the common forms. Japanese music follows “jo ha ky”—meaning, roughly, a quiet beginning, a complex middle section, and a fast conclusion, followed by brief stasis. Scale patterns are also different, as are tone color, dynamics, and pitch.

Working internationally with both established and emerging composers, virtuosos from the Japanese tradition, and top western ensembles, Kyo-Shin-An Arts commissions chamber and orchestral music that includes Japanese instruments. The organization creates artistic partnerships, provides program administration, and assists with guest artists’ fees, travel, and

other expenses related to performances of the new repertoire.

Since 2009, Kyo-Shin-An has commissioned and premiered works by 22 composers including Victoria Bond, Carlos Sanchez-Gutierrez, Daron Hagen, Matthew Harris, Mari Kimura, James Matheson, Paul Moravec, and Somei Satoh. Performing ensembles include the Arianna, Cassatt, Ciompi, and Voxare String Quartets, Orchestra of the Swan, River Oaks Chamber Orchestra, and many others. Schlefer’s efforts have opened the ears and minds of musicians and audiences to previously un-imagined east-west syntheses. —Richard S. Ginell



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## DAVID SREBNIK

Classical Music Program Director

Sirius XM

As classical music program director of commercial-free [Sirius XM](#) satellite radio since 2010, David Srebnik has been sharing his passion for music (and his insider’s knowledge as a onetime professional clarinetist) with millions of listeners. With his extensive background as a producer and program director in public radio, Srebnik today works out of facilities in Washington, DC. He’s been known to say that the only thing greater than playing music is listening to it. “I like the music to flow naturally from piece to piece,” he says.

But his programming also is known for its delightful unpredictability. On one show, Srebnik played Debussy’s *La Mer*, following it not with another water piece, like Ravel’s *Jeux d’eau*, but with Enescu’s *Konzertstück* for Viola and Piano.

Responsive to his audience, Srebnik programs the requisite warhorses, like Mendelssohn’s Violin Concerto or the Pachelbel

Canon (there are always listeners who are hearing it for the first time, he reckons). But he also makes room for relatively obscure composers’ works, like those of Frenchwoman Cécile Chaminade (1857–1944) and Italian composer Agostino Steffani (1654–1728). Contemporary composers and artists also get a hearing, with pieces by Jennifer Higdon, Kenneth Fuchs, and Bryce Dessner and performances by the string trio Time for Three or even Mumford & Sons.

On his in-depth interview program, *Virtuoso Voices*, Srebnik talks with major performers like Yo-Yo Ma, Hilary Hahn, and Gustavo Dudamel. He believes strongly that radio remains an effective storytelling medium. At the same time, his advice for anyone in the business of trying to engage a new generation of listeners is simply, “Shut up, play it, and let the music speak for itself.”



**XUN SUN**  
Music Director and Conductor  
Orchestra of Southern Utah

The highly photogenic yet relatively remote region of southern Utah is not exactly the first place you would think of as a hotbed of intercontinental cultural exchange. Yet Xun Sun, music director of the semi-professional [Orchestra of Southern Utah](#) and director of orchestral activities at Southern Utah University in Cedar City, is making it so, utilizing his contacts and energies to establish a two-way connection between this region and his native China.

In 2011, Xun Sun took 11 members of the orchestra on a tour of China, performing concerts in honor of Helen Foster Snow, a Cedar City-born journalist and author who helped the Chinese organize workers' cooperatives during the Japanese invasion in World War II. Back in Cedar City, Xun Sun spearheaded the campaign to have a stature of Snow erected in the city park.

While on tour, he introduced Chinese audiences to works that have been commissioned by the orchestra, including the

Marshall McDonald/Steven Sharp-Nelson *Spanish Trail Suite*. The musical exchanges have gone in the other direction as well, one example being Chinese conductor Tao Wu being invited to lead a choral/orchestral composition, *Chao Yang Valley*, in Cedar City in 2014, with the OSU Chorale singing in Mandarin. "Xun Sun has helped open our musical world," says Sara Penny, OSU violist and past president of the orchestra.

His connections have given SUU students access to various Chinese universities and performing organizations, including Hunana Normal University, for instruction in Mandarin. With China an increasingly prominent economic and cultural world power, Sun is bringing that influence to a region that might have been otherwise left out of the loop. —Richard S. Ginell

**PIERRE VAN DER WESTHUIZEN**  
President/CEO  
Cleveland International Piano Competition



Pierre van der Westhuizen—concert pianist and president/CEO of the [Cleveland International Piano Competition](#) since 2011—has made great strides in raising the prestige, profile, and programming of the competition. He succeeded Karen Knowlton, who is credited with pushing the competition, whose origins stretch back to 1975, into the big time by engaging the Cleveland Orchestra for the final rounds.

Van der Westhuizen, who hails from the town of Heidelberg in South Africa, remembers being impressed by the Cleveland competition upon attending a few early rounds shortly after arriving in America in 2001. He got his first teaching job at Heidelberg

University in Tiffin, OH (a coincidence), where he started a piano festival, a recital series, and a concerto competition to help recruit students. "I found myself enjoying those aspects of the job more and more and more," he said when interviewed on the film *Living The Classical Life*. "So when this (the Cleveland post) came along, it was at the right time."

His accomplishments in the job are many. By moving the event to University Circle in a newly renovated concert hall at the Cleveland Museum of Art, he instantly raised the competition's profile. Two years ago he added a festival component, including social events, master classes, guest artist recitals, films, and

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discussion groups, making it a richer experience for participants and audiences alike. He negotiated the rights to live stream the final-round concerto performances with The Cleveland Orchestra, after years of only streaming solo rounds. He's added a chamber-music phase to the finals, widening evaluation criteria for both contestants and judges. And he's raised funds to increase

the first prize cash award from \$50,000 to \$75,000, as well as adding a CD and expanding complimentary management, from two years to three.

He has also brought an increased emphasis on fairness and routinely reaches out to participants, greeting them backstage and wishing them well. —Richard S. Ginell



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## **DIANE WITTRY**

**Music Director**

**Allentown Symphony Orchestra**

**Ridgewood Symphony Orchestra**

For Diane Wittry, being an effective music director is not just about making music. It's also about connecting her ensembles—the [Allentown Symphony Orchestra](#) in Pennsylvania and the [Ridgewood Symphony Orchestra](#) in New Jersey—with their communities.

A graduate of the University of Southern California with a degree in violin performance and a master's degree in conducting, Wittry was recently named the "Outstanding Alumnus (2013) of the Thornton School of Music" at USC. In addition to her two music directorships, Wittry is artistic director (USA) for the International Cultural Exchange Program for Classical Musicians through the Sarajevo Philharmonic (Bosnia), and the Bosnian-Herzegovinian American Academy for Arts and Sciences. She also serves as the artistic director for Pizzazz Music and the Pizzazz Symphony Orchestra, an orchestra that specializes in bringing classical music to people in new and different ways.

Coming out of USC, Wittry discovered, to her dismay, that there was no single guide to such things as getting a job, negotiating a contract, working with orchestra boards and unions, fundraising, or developing family and educational

programs. Drawing on her own experiences—which also include guest conducting in the U.S. and abroad, as well as being music director of the Norwalk Symphony, the Symphony of Southeast Texas, and Greater Miami Youth Symphony—she published *Beyond the Baton: What Every Conductor Needs to Know* (Oxford University Press, 2006). Her comprehensive treatment includes tips and strategies to guide students and professionals alike through the leadership and organizational skills necessary for success. Henry Fogel, former president and CEO of the American Symphony Orchestra League, has deemed *Beyond the Baton* to be "of immense value to every aspiring conductor who hopes to work and flourish in American orchestras."

Wittry has continued to explore and clarify the conductor's craft through her second book, *Baton Basics—Communicating Music Through Gestures*, and in her frequent appearances at international workshops. In Allentown, she's been guiding an El Sistema-modelled music education program, now in its fourth year, and has recently implemented adult outreach programs, including some for amateur musicians and retirees. After all, Wittry observes, "We're not just about entertainment. We're about enriching people's lives." —Rick Schulz



**YOLANDA WYNS**  
Music Program Director  
Harlem School of the Arts

Yolanda Wyns was behind one of the highlights in a New York Philharmonic presentation in October called “In Their Footsteps: Great African-American Singers and Their Legacy: A Tribute to Marian Anderson, Betty Allen, George Shirley and William Warfield.” Wyns led the Dorothy Maynor Singers in William Dawson’s choral arrangement of *Ev’ry Time I Feel the Spirit* and Aaron Copland’s *Simple Gifts*.

The group includes intermediate and advanced vocal students from the [Harlem School of the Arts](#), which was founded by Maynor, a soprano, in 1964. “I make sure at the beginning of each year that I explain to the students who Dorothy Maynor was, and how she started the school in the basement of the church right next door to us,” says Wyns, HSA’s music program director and a onetime student of Allen, the mezzo-soprano who was handpicked by Maynor to be president of the school.

Wyns has worked with the group for four years. “When I was asked to teach the choir, I walked into a classroom of four students—four girls, to be exact,” she says. “And I said, ‘This is not a choir. It’s a group of singers.’ So we changed it to the Dorothy Maynor Singers. Since then it has grown. This year we have four men and 12 women.” The group’s repertoire ranges from classical to spirituals to pop, and it sang *God Bless the Child* for Billie Holiday’s 100th birthday celebration at the Apollo Theater in April.

Along with teaching, Wyns has had an eclectic career onstage. Starting as a 4-year old in Brooklyn, she grew up singing gospel in church and then studied for four years at the Manhattan School of Music. For 15 years, she was a backup singer for Freddie Jackson, Stephanie Mills, Patti Austin, and other pop and R&B stars. She spent two years as Doris the Church Lady in the musical *The Color Purple* on Broadway and on tour. —John Fleming

# About THE AUTHORS

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John Fleming writes for *Classical Voice North America*, *Opera News*, and other publications. For 22 years, he covered the Florida music scene as performing arts critic of the *Tampa Bay Times*.



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