



december 2018

PRO²⁰¹⁸FESSIONALS

of the Year Innovators, Independent Thinkers, and Entrepreneurs



musical
america
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Introduction



Welcome to the sixth edition of the “MA Top 30,” our annual round-up of the heroes, sung and (heretofore) unsung, of the business. With each successive year, our readers come up with an ever larger and more diverse pool of innovators, independent thinkers, and entrepreneurs who keep the business fresh, dynamic, and responsive to the times. In 2018, we have

composers, executive directors, educators, a brass band conductor, radio host, personal assistant, digital publishing guru, secular music director, chamber music festival founder, PR mastermind, jazz aficionado and community organizer, young artist nurturer—it’s an impressive list.

What’s more impressive are the individuals working toward creating diversity in the field. This is happening not only at organizations such as Sphinx, where Top 30–pick Abigail Venman ensures the nation’s orchestras are exposed to young Black and Latinx musicians, but also at presenters, schools, and others whose missions have historically been focused elsewhere. Thanks to Ravinia’s education-program Director Christine Taylor Conda, for example, the Festival sponsors its own El Sistema after-school program. At Interlochen, President Trey Devey sees diversity as a priority: “If there is any institution that can move the needle on this issue, it’s us,” he tells writer John Fleming. Philadelphia Orchestra assistant principal bass Joseph Conyers spends his time off-stage training inner-city high-school musicians in leadership skills they can use in their communities. In Michigan, Damien Crutcher heads up Crescendo Detroit, using the El Sistema model to enrich students’ lives in the city’s far Northwest side.

What always strikes me about this group of individuals is their passion, creativity, and dedication to making the arts thrive, even—perhaps especially—in times of adversity. These are the folks who make our industry tick, who get the artists on stage, who help build the audiences and train the artists of tomorrow. Hats off to every one.

Regards,

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PRO²⁰¹⁸FSSIONALS

of the Year Innovators, Independent Thinkers, and Entrepreneurs

With thanks to our reader/nominators and congrats to the huge number of nominees submitted this year, we present the Top 30 Professionals of 2018, the folks who keep the lights of the performing arts burning brightly.



BONNIE BARRETT

Director

[Yamaha Artist Services New York](#)

Bonnie Barrett has positioned Yamaha Artist Services, Inc. (YASI) New York not as a competitor to Steinway's glitzy showroom a dozen blocks away on the Avenue of the Americas, but as a multipurpose facility that provides technical support, and recording, rehearsal, and performance space for its artists.

And she has expanded the roster to include musicians of an enterprising, interdisciplinary bent, including pianist/composers Timo Andres and Gabriel Kahane, Vicky Chow, and the International Contemporary Ensemble. On the jazz side, she's lured genre-bending pianists including Dan Tepfer, Danilo Pérez, and Kenny Werner.

She's also kept the company current; as sales of digital pianos grow she has stoked the market, encouraging pianist/composers like Tepfer and Roberto Sierra to write pieces specifically for the [Disklavier](#), the company's trademark digital player piano. Other artists have tinkered with additional Yamaha digital/acoustic hybrids such as the AvantGrand and Transacoustic models.

In 2016, YASI NY hosted a [master class with Byron Janis](#) and students at the Moscow Conservatory using an Internet-connected

Disklavier. This enabled Janis (a Barrett signing) to see the actual keystrokes and pedal movements of pianists 4,600 miles away. It's a feat that's been repeated between YASI New York and in a number of other cities, including Tokyo and [Buenos Aires](#).

With Barrett's understanding of the new media landscape, she is especially alert to promoting Yamaha artists through digital platforms. "Nowadays, there's constant demand for content, whether a YouTube video, a website, or a promotional piece on social media," she says. "So we provide an environment for our artists to create that content."

With the company since 2010, Barrett previously worked in marketing and public relations with Sony Classical, EMI, and BMG Classics, followed by four years as a director of concert and artist activities at Steinway. From 2009–10, she served as VP of Barrett Vantage Artists. She calls her job "the perfect synthesis of my background." A pianist by training, she holds an MBA from Pace University. She is also the board chair of the Pro Musicis Foundation, which arranges for performances in hospitals, prisons, and homes for the elderly. —Brian Wise

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SHELLY BERG

Dean and Patricia L. Frost Professor of Music
[Frost School of Music](#), University of Miami

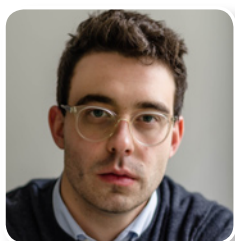
Jazz pianist, recording artist, and pedagogical innovator Shelton “Shelly” Berg has transformed Miami University’s Frost School of Music from a traditional conservatory to a modern academy relevant to a rapidly changing industry.

Berg began studying classical piano when he was six, first encountering jazz when his father, jazz trumpeter Jay Berg, took him to recording sessions. By the time he earned his MM from the University of Houston he had already played in a variety of professional settings. As he began his teaching career in 1981 at San Jacinto College in Pasadena, TX, he continued to perform, compose, and arrange professionally, in the studio, on the road, and for commercials. He then moved on to Los Angeles, spending 16 years at the USC Thornton School of Music, where he chaired jazz studies and wrote several books on jazz pedagogy, including *Jazz Improvisation: The Goal-Note Method*, still in use today. He was also an in-demand studio musician and to date has played on,

arranged, or conducted over 80 recordings, including TV and film scores, not to mention the theme for the 1986 LA Olympic Games.

His commercial career provided the impetus for the curriculum changes he began to implement when he arrived in 2007 as dean of the Frost School of Music. Classical curriculum was redesigned to help young musicians develop career as well as musical skills. Students gain hands-on experience in improvisation, accompaniment, and harmonization; as they study music, they study technology, communications, and business to help them realize their professional goals. Many of the Frost degrees focus on commercial elements. The school also offers online certificates and master’s degrees in business aspects of the music industry.

Berg continues to perform, tour, and record. He hosts a weekly jazz radio show and is music director of an annual Caribbean jazz cruise with marquee-name entertainment. Berg’s energy, vision, and experience have made the Frost School a destination for young musicians who are serious about pursuing a career in the music business. —Susan Brodie



LORENZO BREWER

Founder and CEO
[nkoda](#)

Lorenzo Brewer, 23, has managed to wed new technology with traditional music publishing. Aiming to be the Netflix or Spotify of music scores, he is CEO of nkoda, a sheet-music sharing app that he launched in June and today lays claim to 35 million pages of music. He has license deals with 50 of the world’s largest music publishers, whose catalogs are now viewable on tablets and other screens via Android, Mac OS, Windows 10, and iPhone for \$9.99 a month. Users can add annotations and share them with others.

“Its technology gives me the ability to access scores and parts wherever I go,” said Simon Rattle in a ringing endorsement statement, “and to be able to share my markings with other musicians. It could change our life immeasurably for the better!”

Brewer says he conceived of nkoda after having access to a Spotify account as a teenager. He marveled at the way the streaming service’s algorithms could lead him from a film soundtrack to music by Arvo Pärt or György Ligeti. Getting to their

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published scores, however, was a different matter. “It was very hard to get hold of these materials,” Brewer said in a call from his company’s London office. “They were expensive, they were exclusive, and they weren’t available to people.”

They are now. The app is available in ten languages: English, Chinese, Spanish, German, French, Italian, Japanese, Korean, Portuguese, and Russian. Nkoda reports that more than 32 orchestras, conservatories, and universities have already signed up.

After he incorporated nkoda in late 2015, Brewer and a growing staff began securing deals with publishers like

Bärenreiter, Breitkopf & Härtel, Boosey & Hawkes, Faber, Novello, and Schirmer. Several musicologists helped format the individual scores. Designers and outside musicians beta-tested the app and gave their feedback.

Born in England, Brewer grew up in the U.S. and Italy as his professor parents held positions at Harvard, CalTech, and UCLA. After high school, he initially planned to study composition in college, but the idea for nkoda soon took hold.

Call him the Steve Jobs of music publishing. —Brian Wise



LINDEN CHRIST
Director of Education
[Chicago Opera Theater](#)

Soprano Linden Christ was still a graduate student at the Chicago College of Performing Arts at Roosevelt University in 2006, when she became a teaching artist for Chicago Opera Theater (COT), the city’s smaller alternative to the Lyric Opera of Chicago. Within two years of working with the local public schools, she became COT’s head of education, first as manager, now under her current title.

At first, Christ was one of three instructors who taught about 200 students in eight classes drawn from five schools. Today, the program enlists two full-time and nine part-time teaching artists to reach some 1200 students in 42 classes from eight elementary schools and four high schools.

The centerpiece of COT’s education program, and Christ’s main focus, is [Opera for All](#), for grades three through six. Teaching artists spend 60 minutes per week over 30 weeks, instructing a class in singing and acting techniques, and guiding them in creating, producing, and performing their own mini opera. Students write the script, compose a class song, and create sets, costumes, and choreography. Each spring the class performs its opera at school for parents and fellow students. Some classes are chosen for a

public performance at the historic Studebaker Theater, COT’s mainstage. Last year, Opera for All was one of six finalists in the education division of the International Opera Awards.

Christ also oversees the company’s [Young Artist program](#), a partnership with Roosevelt University that offers pre-professional artists a full scholarship and a stipend for two years of study. Participants perform in the public school programs, take small roles in COT productions, and emerge with a professional diploma in opera. Also under Christ is [COT Teens](#), administered in tandem with the Chicago Public Schools; students audition for admission, and, after spending a semester with COT teaching artists, produce a showcase, musical, or operetta, often for communities around the city.

These programs cost money, and Christ, who continues to teach and perform publicly, is a tireless and persuasive fundraiser; in her 12 years running the program donations have grown from \$73 thousand to \$317 thousand. Her passionate conviction of the value of arts education is palpable in [OFA’s video](#)—it would be very hard to say no to this woman. —Susan Brodie

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CHRISTINE TAYLOR CONDA

Chair, Board of Directors, [El Sistema USA](#)

Director, Reach*Teach*Play® Education Programs, [Ravinia Festival](#)

Christine Taylor Conda's leadership as director of the Ravinia Festival's music education programs has made them models for the profession. [Reach*Teach*Play](#), the Festival's three-tiered program to engage children with music, now annually serves more than 85,000 people.

Conda began her career with the Boston Music Education Collaborative, a since disbanded partnership of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, New England Conservatory, WGBH, and the Boston Public Schools. While in Boston, she also earned a master's degree in voice with a music-in-education certificate from NEC.

In 2002 she took charge of Ravinia's Reach*Teach*Play. [REACH](#), which dates from the 1960s, is a year-round program of mini-concerts in schools, instrument "petting zoos," free Ravinia lawn tickets for families who couldn't otherwise attend, and invitations to Chicago Symphony concerts. [TEACH](#) places artists in primary schools for multi-week teaching programs that annually reach more than 5500 students. At the end of their units, students perform for their friends at Ravinia.

[PLAY](#) is based on El Sistema and, like the original Venezuelan model, seeks to effect social change through music for children

with the fewest resources and the greatest need. Conda's 2010 visit to see El Sistema in action at a Chicago school led her to launch, two years later, the first Sistema Ravinia orchestra at the [Catalyst Circle Rock School](#) located on Chicago's west side. Conda found corporate funding for the purchase of 50 instruments, devised a curriculum, and hired and trained the teachers.

The success at Circle Rock, as witnessed and praised by Gustavo Dudamel, led to more demand and more funding. By 2015, Conda was able to add four more communities, which use the Festival facilities for practice and concerts.

Under her direction Reach*Teach*Play has become one of El Sistema USA's mentoring organizations to new and emerging programs. In 2016 Taylor Conda was appointed to El Sistema USA's board, where her work on membership contributed to a huge program growth. In July she was named board chair. Through Sistema Ravinia, Conda is realizing her lifelong goal of using music education as an agent of equal access and social justice. —Susan Brodie



JOSEPH CONYERS

Assistant Principal Bass, [Philadelphia Orchestra](#)

Executive Director, [Project 440](#)

Joseph Conyers wears many hats. When he's not playing bass with the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Savannah, GA, native runs an education nonprofit called Project 440; and when he's not doing that, he's conducting the Philadelphia School District's All-City High School Orchestra, of which he's the director. Oh, and he's also an adjunct professor at Temple University.

"Service has always been a part of my DNA," Conyers said

in a [recent interview](#). He described a childhood car trip through rural Georgia, in which he noticed two children playing on a ramshackle porch. "My mom made the passing comment that one of those two kids could be a genius—an Einstein, a Mozart, a Yo-Yo Ma—and no one would ever know," said Conyers, whose mother is an amateur singer in the Baptist church. "That has always haunted me."

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Formed by Conyers in 2007, Project 440 aims to teach community leadership skills to high school-age musicians. Its components include a 10-part series of college preparedness workshops and an after-school program devoted to building community outreach skills. Classes are led by teaching artists and guest speakers, and take place in Philadelphia School District buildings. In 2015, Project 440 developed an [affiliation](#) with the Philadelphia Schools, after Conyers became music director of the All-City High School Orchestra. Musicians in that ensemble can avail themselves of Project 440's resources, Conyers says, including private lessons and entrepreneurship training. He



DAMIEN CRUTCHER
CEO
[Crescendo Detroit](#)

In establishing the after-school arts education program Crescendo Detroit, Damien Crutcher has brought classical music to Detroit's far Northwest side, a neighborhood several miles removed from the emerging hub of trendy restaurants, hotels, and stores in the city's midtown and downtown corridors.

The El Sistema-inspired program launched in 2013 with 11 students; now it has 40 and has added a summer session; others in the region are taking notice. Early in 2018, the nonprofit launched a partnership with the [University of Michigan](#), in which its students are bussed to the Ann Arbor campus for private lessons with the university's music and dance students and the chance to hear concerts at the school's Hill Auditorium.

After earning a master's degree in conducting from the University of Michigan, Crutcher spent 15 years leading the high school band and orchestra program in suburban Southfield, MI. Looking for a change of pace, he reasoned that his own Dexter-Davison neighborhood would be fertile ground for an El Sistema-based program, since the local schools lacked any formal arts education classes. "I wanted to start a program where some of the kids in Detroit could get a chance to take music, dance, and choir," the native Detroiter says simply. He set up shop in the local

has also enlisted Philadelphia Orchestra musicians to conduct sectional rehearsals.

In September, [Conyers was recognized](#) with a Sphinx Medal of Excellence, which includes a \$50,000 career development grant (in 2004, fresh out of the Curtis Institute of Music, he won second prize at the Sphinx Competition). Conyers has received other accolades, not all music-related: In 2012, he took first prize in [Mr. Natural Philly](#), a bodybuilding competition.

Conyers says his various pursuits stem from a desire for self-improvement. "Whether it's bodybuilding, playing an instrument, or my nonprofit work," he said in a recent interview. "I've always had this insatiable desire to make things better—better than you found them." —Brian Wise

Community Church of Christ, with participants ranging in age from five to 18.

Every Crescendo Detroit student is trained on a band or string instrument and participates in dance classes and "life skills" programming. Classes are held two afternoons a week and on Saturdays. Homework assistance and dinner are also provided, Crutcher says, "to focus in on the whole child."

"You have to build a culture of high expectations," he says. "You have to instill a sense of responsibility even if kids are not graded on it. We had to really work on getting parent buy-in especially." Tuition of \$100 a semester can either be paid directly or "worked off" through volunteer fundraising. Crescendo Detroit also hosts a monthly "parents huddle" that includes talks by parenting experts.

Fundraising is a growing part of Crutcher's role; to date the organization has cultivated some 450 donors, who give anywhere from \$5 to \$5000. His evenings and weekends are spent on the podium: He leads the suburban Farmington Community Band, and [two ensembles](#) administered by the Detroit Symphony: the Civic Concert Band and the Detroit Community Concert Band. —Brian Wise



TREY DEVEY
President
Interlochen Center for the Arts

When Trey Devey was CEO of the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra (2009–17), one ongoing issue he addressed was the lack of diversity among orchestra musicians. So the CSO partnered with the University of Cincinnati College Conservatory of Music to create the CSO/CCM Diversity Fellowship, a two-year graduate program for string players that includes tuition and the opportunity to be part of the CSO for part of the season and be compensated for it. Diversity has continued to be a priority for Devey since being named president of Interlochen Center for the Arts in 2017.

Founded as the National High School Orchestra Camp in 1928, the center in northwest Michigan draws young people from around the world to study music, theater, visual art, dance, creative writing, and motion-picture arts. More than 2500 students attend Interlochen's Summer Arts Camp and 500 are enrolled in the Arts Academy boarding high school.

"Because Interlochen is a place for gifted young people, if there is any institution that can move the needle on this issue of

diversity, it's us," Devey says. "We went straight to work with other institutions to help us identify talent from under-represented communities to audition. The biggest was the El Sistema-inspired Miami Music Project, but we also partnered with the Riverdale Children's Theater in the Bronx, Youth Orchestra Los Angeles, and other organizations."

His aim for diversity has been supported by a major increase in funding for scholarships. "We increased the number of students from under-represented communities by 32 percent this past summer for the camp," he continues. "This included 112 students coming through our new access and opportunity scholarship programs, and one of the things that was most gratifying was how they thrived. In fact, three of the students from Miami and one from Los Angeles were so successful that they are now enrolled in the academy. The impact may not be seen or felt for a number of years in the ranks of professional orchestras, but at least we're laying the foundation for talented kids to have those opportunities in the future." —John Fleming



ERIC EINHORN
General and Artistic Director
On Site Opera

PHOTO: Simon Pauly

Eric Einhorn is stretching the boundaries of opera—literally. As co-founding general and artistic director of New York's On Site Opera, he is taking opera out of conventional venues and into site-specific locales, such as Mozart's *La Finta Giardiniera* (The Secret Gardener) performed in a community garden or Gershwin's *Blue Monday* at the Cotton Club in Harlem. For its 2012 debut, the company put on Shostakovich's cartoon opera, *The Tale of the Silly Baby Mouse*, at

the Bronx Zoo. In March, Einhorn staged Ricky Ian Gordon's *Morning Star*, about the 1911 Triangle Shirtwaist Factory fire, in the historic Eldridge Street Synagogue.

Choosing the right opera for the right space is key. "It is a long process, finding the piece and venue that match," Einhorn says. "There have been pieces we wanted to do and we had to put them aside because we couldn't find the right space. But

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once the work and venue are matched up, everything else falls into place.”

On Site is part of a burgeoning indie opera scene in New York. “Audiences are craving more intimate experiences,” Einhorn says. “Entertainment in general now is more intimate—it’s a video on your phone, music in your ear; it’s up close, it’s personal. Indie opera and especially site-specific opera allows the performer to connect with the audience in a way that isn’t possible in a large proscenium theater. Sometimes, in site-specific opera, singers are a foot away from audience members, and there’s a connection made that is exhilarating to everyone—the singers, the audience, and me as the director.”

Einhorn, who studied vocal performance and directing at the Oberlin Conservatory of Music, has been on the directing staff of the Metropolitan Opera since 2005. As a freelance director, his engagements this season include a new staged concert version of *Madama Butterfly* with the Pacific Symphony in February. This month, On Site is giving free performances of Einhorn’s production of the Menotti Christmas classic, *Amahl and the Night Visitors*, at the Holy Apostles Soup Kitchen, with a community choir of formerly homeless singers along with the cast of opera singers and orchestra. —John Fleming

AIDEN KIM FELTKAMP

Director of Emerging Composers and Diversity
[American Composers Orchestra](#)



It’s no secret that the American orchestral field has a serious diversity deficit, with less than five percent of its workforce being African American, Hispanic, or Native American, according to a [2014 industry study](#). So when the American Composers Orchestra (ACO) hired Aiden Kim Feltkamp as its first director of emerging composers and diversity, it literally put its money where its mouth is.

Feltkamp hit the ground running in July, by examining how to get more composers of underrepresented backgrounds to apply for the ACO’s competitive readings and commissioning programs. He began by looking at the balance of current applicants: 66 percent white, 79 percent male.

Aiming for a more diverse mix, he then asked some 50 composers why they might self-select out of ACO’s opportunities for exposure. “When they do know about a call, why don’t they apply? What is holding them back?” From those conversations, Feltkamp has developed a master plan to identify and encourage a more diverse applicant pool. He has several lines of attack, including

contacting teachers and spreading the word on social media. He’s also set up a diversity task force for the orchestra.

The job is a natural fit for Feltkamp, a cellist and singer who identifies as transgender/nonbinary and holds music degrees from the Bard College Conservatory of Music and Hofstra University. He’s also the founding artistic director of [OperaRox Productions](#), a nonprofit established in 2015 dedicated to highlighting underrepresented artists and promoting socially conscious productions. Among its most recent was an evening of opera scenes at New York’s Stonewall Inn, and a workshop staging of *Ghost Variations* by Tony Manfredonia, about Clara and Robert Schumann.

“To me, inclusion is creating an environment that diverse people feel welcomed into,” Feltkamp writes in an e-mail. “ACO has been committed to diversity for years. It has amplified that commitment by creating this position. Now it’s my job to build on that foundation.” —Brian Wise

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GABRIELA LENA FRANK
Founder, [Gabriela Lena Frank Creative Academy of Music](#)
Composer

PHOTO: Mariah Tauger

When Gabriela Lena Frank in 2017 launched a nonprofit teaching institute for composers, it differed from the typical artist colony where residents retreat to their cabins, rarely to be seen or heard by others. Frank instead put civic engagement front and center, building the program around performances and outreach activities in Boonville, CA, a small, ethnically diverse town roughly 120 miles north of San Francisco.

The Gabriela Lena Frank Creative Academy of Music takes place on two farms that Frank and her husband own. Once accepted, composers are placed in one of three or four annual classes, which unfold in multiple stages: They begin with Skype consultations with Frank about the projected piece, followed by a four-day workshop session in Boonville with Frank and faculty. Six months later, the piece is performed in public by a guest ensemble—the Del Sol and Chiara String Quartets in 2018—as part of a three-day residency. Performances take place in two small community arts spaces; the aim is to present low-cost concerts for locals.

Additionally, composers participate in outreach projects at a local adult education center and a high school (attended, Frank

says, largely by children of the Latino farm and vineyard workers). An [alumni support network](#) helps fund commissions with professional ensembles (including the Orchestra of St. Luke's).

A native of Berkeley, CA, Frank says the inspiration for the academy was a cross-country car trip she took in the final months before the 2016 election. Seeing widespread poverty and cultural desolation, "I had this sinking feeling that Trump was going to win with his divisive messages and I feared for my country. I had to do something with the visibility I wielded as a woman of color with a successful career."

Frank's own music, for orchestra, chamber groups, and singers, often explores her mixed Peruvian, Chinese, and Jewish-Lithuanian heritage, and she has frequently traveled to South America for inspiration. In 2020, Fort Worth Opera is scheduled to premiere *The Last Dream of Frida & Diego*, her opera based on the lives of Frida Kahlo and Diego Rivera. She is also working on a symphonic piece for the Philadelphia Orchestra, where she is in residence through 2021. —Brian Wise

ALOYSIA FRIEDMANN
Founder/Artistic Director
[Orcas Island Chamber Music Festival](#)



A little over 20 years ago, violinist Aloysia Friedmann planned a weekend-long chamber music festival that, over time, has helped transform a small isolated island in the Pacific Northwest into an arts-loving community.

The daughter of two professional musicians, Friedmann grew up mainly in Seattle. Summers always involved family camping or cottage stays on tiny, idyllic Orcas, the largest of the San Juan

Islands (the winter population of 5000 more than doubles in summer), in Puget Sound.

Friedmann earned her undergraduate and master's degrees at the Juilliard School, after which she became a busy New York freelancer, playing with the such groups as the Orchestra of St. Luke's, American Symphony Orchestra, and on Broadway.

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When her parents bought a small cabin on Orcas in the early 1990s, she got to thinking about establishing a chamber music festival. In 1997 she proposed a two-day event to the director of the 213-seat Orcas Island Center Theater, promising to handle all details including fundraising. "I knew I would need four things," she remembers, "a bank account, a telephone number, a mailing address, and individuals who could help me within the community."

The learning curve was steep as she absorbed details of data bases, 501(c)(3) board formation, and fundraising, while still

gigging in New York. "I was [playing] at Madison Square Garden, and between shows I was writing notes and cards [to donors]. But I just felt that I really wanted to give it a shot." The first festival, in 1998, sold out so quickly that they added a third concert to handle demand.

Fast forward to 2018: last summer's two-and-a-half-week season comprised 14 concerts and other public events, plus an additional program on nearby Lopez Island. Year-round artist residencies serve school children, teachers, and local musicians. With a fulltime staff of five and a board of 10, OICMF has a robust organizational structure, and over 200 musicians have come to the island to play. Friedman's hard-won success has earned her a seat on the board of Chamber Music America. —Susan Brodie



HEATHER GLADSTEIN

Personal Assistant, Consultant & Tour Manager

"I often call myself a professional problem-solver," says Heather Gladstein, a personal assistant to a number of performing artists. "I'm there when things go wrong. When clients are at the airport

and flights are canceled, I'm the one they call. When there's something wrong with their hotel room, I'm the one they call. For some of them, I'm the steady presence in their life. They value my opinion, and we solve problems together."

Gladstein, former director of artist services in the vocal division of IMG Artists in New York, founded her company in 2005, when she and her husband moved to his hometown of Louisville, KY, where they are raising two children. Her roster of about a dozen clients is mainly made up of opera singers, including Laura Claycomb, Joyce DiDonato, Ana María Martínez, Angela Meade, Lawrence Brownlee, and Lise Lindstrom, as well as musical theater star Audra McDonald and pianist Jeremy Denk.

Gladstein keeps an online calendar for most clients and books their travel and accommodations. "For singers, feeling good—healthy and rested—is the No. 1

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priority. If a singer is flying internationally, they want to make sure their hotel room is immediately available so they can sleep before they have a rehearsal that afternoon.”

She also advises on everything from professional matters—hiring a website designer or photographer, organizing the requisite documents to file a tax return—to more personal tasks. “A client might say, ‘I’m going to Paris, and I’m trying to figure out which weeks my son should join me, and when my husband is going to come, can you work on that?’ Sometimes I provide a little bit of a reality check.”

Gladstein’s consulting company may be one of a kind. “Certainly, there are people who are assistants to a single prominent artist, but I haven’t come across anyone who works with multiple clients like I do. By having a number of artists employ me parttime I’ve been able to create a fulltime job for myself. It’s really empowering because it’s mine. And I love what I do.” —John Fleming

JAMES GOURLAY
Music Director and CEO
[River City Brass](#)



With more than four decades in the brass business—as a tuba player, administrator, and academic—James Gourlay has won back audiences for the River City Brass (RCB), just as they were slipping away. The Pittsburgh-based ensemble, which was founded in 1981 and today has 28 players, was staring down a [financial crisis](#) when Gourlay arrived in 2010. [Attendance had dropped](#) by 12 percent in the 2008–09 season and another 17 percent in 2009–10. “Pittsburgh newspapers already had our obituary in the top drawer,” Gourlay says. But the affable Scotsman soon discovered “a fiercely loyal subscriber base” with which he opened a dialogue.

Armed with subscriber feedback, Gourlay began to shake up the programming. Over time, there would be a greater focus on arrangements of classic rock songs, Broadway tunes, and jazz standards. This season’s 35 concerts mark a rebound from a low of 21 in 2009–10. “Because about 60 percent of our annual revenue has to come from ticket sales, our motto is ‘we can only eat what we kill.’ We’ve gone from a kind of pseudo-symphonic art-music organization into an entertainment organization. That’s been

successful for us in terms of winning the audience back.”

With subscribers still representing a majority of RCB’s followers, Gourlay says he routinely meets with them during intermissions. Once, he personally visited a 90-year-old subscriber at home to serenade her with *Happy Birthday*. He’s also reached out to newcomers, offering ticket deals through Groupon, or creating special programs, like a concert of Bollywood film music for the Indian community.

New to American arts administration, Gourlay previously conducted England’s Grimethorpe Colliery Band (depicted in the film *Brassed Off*) and has served as principal tuba of the City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, BBC Symphony, and Zurich Opera Orchestra. He has held administrative posts at the Royal Northern College of Music and the Royal Conservatoire for Scotland. He’s currently an adjunct professor at Pittsburgh’s Duquesne University.

Gourlay says that while the largest segment of RCB’s audience is over 60, it is no longer shrinking. “We’re in a really enviable position,” he says, “in that about 95 percent of subscribers renew their subscriptions.” —Brian Wise



LACEY HUSZCZA

Executive Director, [Las Vegas Philharmonic](#)

Former Associate Executive Director, [Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra](#)

The Las Vegas Philharmonic's brand new executive director (she started December 1) arrives after 13 years with the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra (LACO), which credits her with raising its profile in a very crowded musical landscape. A horn player with bachelors' degrees in music and communications, she launched her career with internships in marketing and special events while still a student at the University of Colorado. She joined those departments at LACO in 2005, moving on to become operations and promotions director while completing her MBA from Pepperdine University.

In her 13 years with LACO, Huszcza served in almost every department, from development, marketing, and special events to production, operations, and artistic administration. When Rachel Fine stepped down as executive director in January of 2015, the board turned to Huszcza to serve as interim until Scott Harrison's arrival later that year. In 2017, she helped then-outgoing Music Director Jeffrey Kahane realize his dream of mounting a Kurt Weill festival, a two-week, city-wide exploration of the power of music to bring people together during fraught times. Titled "Lift Every

Voice," the event put Kahane on the podium at UCLA to conduct *Lost in the Stars*, Weill and Maxwell Anderson's 1950 opera about apartheid, an adaptation of Alan Paton's *Cry the Beloved Country*. The production, by Anne Bogart's New York-based SITI theater company, marked the first in LA since the 1950 tour of the original Broadway production.

And it was Huszcza who spearheaded the LACO's participation in [The Los Angeles Orchestra Fellowship](#), a collaboration with the Inner City Youth Orchestra of Los Angeles (ICYOLA) and USC Thornton School of Music focused on increasing cultural diversity among orchestra musicians.

Clearly, the 20-year-old Las Vegas Philharmonic has made an inspired choice and will benefit from the connections Huszcza has forged in the field, as well as her skills in development, audience building, and tailoring an organization to respond—and stand out in—its community. —Susan Brodie



HOMER JACKSON

Director

[Philadelphia Jazz Project](#)

As the founding director of the Philadelphia Jazz Project (PJP), Homer Jackson wants to call attention to the rich legacy of jazz in his hometown of Philadelphia. The city, after all, is the onetime home of Billie Holiday, John Coltrane, and Dizzy Gillespie, and today is a magnet for artists drawn to its creative energy and relatively manageable cost of living.

Since its launch in 2013, PJP has functioned chiefly as a producing, advocacy, and grant-giving organization, working with arts and civic groups to bolster jazz's profile beyond the usual

places of late-night clubs and upscale concert venues. With two other staff members, Jackson has presented events in more than 75 parks, cafes, libraries, and markets, often free or at little cost.

Last summer, for instance, PJP worked with Visit Philadelphia, the city's tourism bureau, to offer jazz combos in the downtown Historic District. Dubbed [Street Corner Symphonies](#), the series featured 18 concerts in such venues as the Betsy Ross House, Museum of the American Revolution, and the National Constitution Center.

PJP also brings jazz to the Free Library of Philadelphia.

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Working with librarians, performers select materials from the collection, which in turn inspire them to create new works or new arrangements. One of PJP's most ambitious projects was a [nine-day festival](#) in 2016 marking what would have been Coltrane's 90th birthday. With collaborators including the Temple University Library, Philadelphia Parks and Recreation, and civic organizations, the event drew some 5,355 attendees.

A native of North Philadelphia, Jackson is a visual artist by training, with a BA from the Philadelphia College of Art and an

MFA from Temple University's Tyler School of Art. He developed his love of jazz while working as a late-night host on WRTI radio from 1980 to 1988. During the 1990s and 2000s, Jackson directed several arts projects and led workshops for at-risk youth, prisoners, and school students.

Among the current projects on Jackson's and PJP's agenda is the development of a jazz-themed sculpture park and a (separate) Coltrane statue, in or around Fairmount Park. "Those are situations that take some politicking and social finessing," he admits. "Also they would benefit from some community buy-in. Right now, it's one step at a time." —Brian Wise



BARBARA LISTER-SINK

Director, School of Music and Graduate Music Program
 Professor of Piano, [Salem College](#)

Barbara Lister-Sink has made it her life's work to develop an approach to keyboard technique that seeks to combat what she calls "the terrible plague" of playing-related injuries. "In 2014, a study said that about 50 percent of pianists will have neuromusculoskeletal disorders," she says, adding that another study indicated that 77 percent of female players in Japan sustained injuries. "It never ceases to amaze me that, as much as everybody in the field is trying to lower this injury rate, it remains stubbornly high."

At Salem College in Winston-Salem, NC, Lister-Sink designed and directs the U.S.'s first master's degree program in piano or organ performance and pedagogy with an emphasis on injury-preventive keyboard technique. The school also offers a professional graduate certificate for performers or students in gap years and college teachers on sabbatical.



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 America's 30 Top Professionals of 2018!*

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Her passion for promoting injury-preventive technique stems from personal experience. As a 16-year-old pianist, she suffered extensor tendinitis in her right arm that persisted until six years later when she studied with Edith Grosz, an American pianist and teacher based in Amsterdam. That Grosz's technique worked was proven when Lister-Sink became keyboardist with Amsterdam's Concertgebouw Orchestra in the 1970s; she also served on the Eastman School of Music faculty, from 1979–1986.

Lister-Sink's 1996 video/DVD *Freeing the Caged Bird—Developing Well-Coordinated, Injury-Preventive Piano Technique* has sold more than 15,000 copies. "My method is for teaching principals of good coordination," she says. "Musicians need to

have the body awareness of athletes. Great athletes learn complex motor skills in a step-by-step manner, and the same is true of great musicians." Two of her all-time models of healthy keyboard technique are Arthur Rubinstein and Van Cliburn.

"When you see my students playing, you'll see a commonality," Lister-Sink says. "They sit upright. Their arms move in a fluid way. They're not using extraneous motions. And they seem to be moving with great ease, even in virtuosic passages. Hopefully, those characteristics will be combined with beautiful phrasing, gorgeous tone, and all the musical ideas I try to cultivate."
—John Fleming



EVAN MACK

Composer, pianist, professor

Considered one of the most gifted composers of his generation by industry insiders, Evan Mack's first major opera, for which he wrote both libretto and music, was *Angel of the Amazon*. It was based on a true story about an American missionary working with natives in the rainforest of Brazil, who was assassinated because her work threatened a logging company's profits. The work was premiered by Encompass New Opera Theater at New York's Baryshnikov Center in May 2011; a subsequent recording on Albany Records received high praise from *Opera News*—not bad for a first outing.

Subsequently Mack teamed up with librettist Joshua McGuire, a friend since undergraduate days. This fruitful partnership yielded *The Secret of Luca*, premiered in 2013 at Fresno State Opera Theater; and *Roscoe*, a grand opera based on William Kennedy's novel (2014). It premiered at the Seagle Music Colony to rave reviews and later received a concert performance with the Albany Symphony starring Deborah Voigt in 2016. *Lucinda y las Flores de la Nochebuena*, a multi-cultural Christmas opera for children, was commissioned by San Francisco Opera,

Opera in the Heights, and Fresno State Opera, and is becoming an annual holiday tradition in San Francisco. Mack describes the Fresno premiere: "There were 300 children, most of whom had never been in the theater, laughing, crying and shouting at the opera. . . . It was so emotional and thrilling to see these children who had never experienced this genre responding to something they'd never seen before so enthusiastically."

Mack and McGuire have also written one of the first-ever operas for Twitter, *#IsOperaDead*, an opera in five acts lasting one minute and 40 seconds. Other premieres include Glimmerglass Festival and the Fort Worth Opera Festival.

Composer, pianist, producer, fundraiser, and administrator, Mack is the very essence of what it means to be a working musician in the 21st century. With a DMA from the University of Cincinnati's College Conservatory of Music, he is on the faculty of Skidmore College. He was a composing fellow at the John Duffy Composers Institute and a resident artist at Yaddo. Mack leads a quiet life with his family in the gateway to the Adirondacks, leaving the drama for the music he writes. —Susan Brodie

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TERRANCE MCKNIGHT

Evening Host
[WQXR Radio](#)

PHOTO: MarcoAntonio.com/WQXR

Terrance McKnight has one of the more familiar voices in New York as an evening host at classical radio station WQXR. “I feel like I’m talking to one person,” McKnight says of being on the air. “In the evening, listeners are more engaged than during the day. We can play longer pieces. We can have longer conversations, and I can tell more stories about the music.”

McKnight majored in piano performance as an undergraduate at Atlanta’s Morehouse College and sang in the bass section of the school’s glee club. He went on to get a graduate degree in piano pedagogy at Georgia State University, then transitioned into radio, doing a show for eight years with Georgia Public Broadcasting. He moved to New York in 2008 to work for WNYC and a year later joined the lineup at its sister public-radio station WQXR.

Some of McKnight’s most notable work is a series of hourlong audio documentaries for which he was writer, producer, and host. They include profiles of Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr., and the place music held in his life; Florence Price, the first African-American woman composer to have a piece played by a major symphony

orchestra; jazz pianist Hazel Scott; Coleridge-Taylor Perkinson (named after 19th-century African-British composer Samuel Coleridge-Taylor), who co-founded the country’s first racially integrated symphony orchestra, the Symphony of the New World; poet Langston Hughes and his collaborations with composers and musicians; and Leonard Bernstein as viewed through his commitment to racial justice in classical music.

McKnight has been programming music and other audio for the Museum of Modern Art as part of exhibitions of artwork by Jacob Lawrence, Francis Picabia, Robert Rauschenberg, and Charles White. “When you go into a gallery at MOMA to look at the art, you can listen on earphones to a play list I’ve put together,” he says. For the White exhibition, which is up through January 13, selections range from James Brown’s *Say It Loud—I’m Black and I’m Proud* to a Handel chorus.

And beginning in February, he hosts “Only at Merkin with Terrance McKnight,” a three-concert series at Merkin Hall featuring pianist Ursula Oppens with the Cassatt String Quartet, harpist Bridgett Kibbey, and pianist André Watts. —John Fleming



NAOYUKI MIURA, MARI ONO

Artistic Director
Executive Director/Associate Artistic Director
[Music From Japan](#)

PHOTO on right: Mark Berghash

Music From Japan has been presenting Japanese music in New York and elsewhere in North America since 1975. “We had no idea we would be doing this for so long,” says Mari Ono, whose husband, Naoyuki Miura, was a double bassist with the New York City Opera Orchestra when they started the organization. She was a member of the Lar Lubovitch Dance Company. “Yuki (Miura) just felt that

you didn’t hear much Japanese music then, and there was a lot of contemporary music from Japan that he wanted to introduce to audiences here.”

MFJ has an impressive record of commissioning that includes 92 world premieres, mainly by Japanese composers. Many of the works have received repeat performances around the world,

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such as the quartet *For You I Sing This Song* by Yuji Takahashi and *Guardian Angel* for string orchestra by Karen Tanaka. A consistent theme has been the incorporation of traditional Japanese instruments into modern scores.

Miura and Ono were both born in Japan, he in Fukushima, she in Nagano. Miura still spends much of the year in Fukushima City, where he is the mayor's music and culture adviser and professor emeritus at Fukushima College. In July, MFJ presented concerts in Tokyo and Fukushima as part of U.S.-Canada-Japan "Encounters in Music," a cultural exchange that brought to Japan music critics and composers from the U.S. and Canada.

Music From Japan undertook an ongoing artistic project to remember the 2011 earthquake, tsunami, and nuclear meltdown at the Fukushima Daiichi power plant, and has commissioned works that draw attention to the predicament of surrounding communities. Miura has family ties with the village of Iitate, where the entire population was evacuated because of radiation. "We feel that people should not forget about what happened," Ono says. "The nuclear problem is far from taken care of."

MFJ's Festival 2019, held in March in New York, will showcase music of composer-in-residence Yumi Saiki as well as works by Japanese composers influenced by John Cage. —John Fleming

PHOTO: Angela Morris

AMY SCHWARTZ MORETTI

Director

[Robert McDuffie Center for Strings](#)



When violinist Robert McDuffie launched a string training program in his native Macon, GA, in 2007, he needed a director with artistic chops, administrative savvy, and an entrepreneurial bent. That was Amy Schwartz Moretti, a violinist trained at the Cleveland Institute of Music whose CV includes concertmaster posts at the Oregon Symphony and the Florida Orchestra.

More than 10 years on, Moretti continues to build the Robert McDuffie Center for Strings, guiding 26 students in their studies, overseeing the curriculum, managing a 13-member faculty, and maintaining a busy performance career, notably as a member of the Ehnes String Quartet. She is "exactly what the 21st-century musician should look like," says McDuffie.

Located within Mercer University's Townsend School of Music (about an hour south of Atlanta), the institute trains 12 violinists, six violists, six cellists, and two double bassists, all of whom receive full tuition scholarships toward bachelor's degrees or artist diplomas. Among Moretti's responsibilities is wrangling a busy faculty that, apart from herself and McDuffie, includes

Philadelphia Orchestra concertmaster David Kim, Emerson String Quartet violist Lawrence Dutton, and Julie Albers, principal cellist of the St. Paul Chamber Orchestra.

Moretti also brings in notable artists for concerts in Mercer's 200-seat Fickling Hall. "When they come to campus, they give master classes and interact with the students," she says.

Under Moretti's direction, in 2015 the center moved into the Bell House, an antebellum mansion now outfitted with practice rooms and a 60-seat auditorium. The McDuffie Center has developed affiliations with the New World Symphony and the Brevard Music Festival. Last October, Moretti [forged a partnership](#) with Mercer University's men's basketball team, in which basketball players and string players attended each other's events and socialized.

Future plans include launching a BM degree in which students can take such courses as marketing, management, and accounting through Mercer's business school. "We're excited for this big step to complete a longtime goal of ours," says Moretti. —Brian Wise

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DANTES RAMEAU
Co-Founder and Executive Director
[Atlanta Music Project](#)

Dantes Rameau earned performance degrees in bassoon from McGill University and the Yale School of Music and did post-graduate study in his instrument at Carnegie Mellon University. But his ambitions changed from performance to outreach after he spent a year on an El Sistema fellowship and learned about the Venezuelan model of bringing classical music to children in underserved communities. In 2010, the bassoonist turned entrepreneur to co-found the Atlanta Music Project, which provides tuition-free music education in mostly black neighborhoods in

the city's south and west sides where public school music programs are limited.

"I love working on music with kids who look like me," Rameau says. "I feel that having a young male, black leader means something to the kids and their families and the communities they live in. To me, that connection, that authenticity, is important."

AMP has grown from 19 students and one program site in the first year to 350 students, grades K-12, in five sites in 2018-19; from a first-year budget of \$150,000 to \$1 million. The

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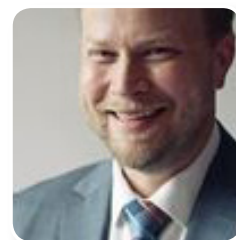
organization has a staff of 10 along with 50 teaching artists, and its student groups give 40 concerts a year. Its young players have been accepted into Georgia All-State music ensembles, and seven participated in a youth orchestra festival in Mexico City, with Gustavo Dudamel conducting.

Rameau has raised \$5 million from corporate donors such as Bank of America and Chick-fil-A, and AMP has partnerships with the Atlanta Department of Parks and Recreation, Clayton State University, and the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra. Collaborations with Atlanta's thriving hip-hop and pop music scene have included performances with rapper T.I. and R&B star Monica.

Atop Rameau's agenda is a \$2.9 million capital and endowment campaign for AMP's headquarters with office, rehearsal, and performance space in a former grocery store in the Capitol View neighborhood, slated to open in 2019. "We're going to get ourselves a home," he says. "A place for our kids to come and hang out, practice and rehearse, be all about music, and be safe. It'll be a good example of how music can be a holistic part of the community." —John Fleming

ERIK RÖNMARK

VP and General Manager, [Detroit Symphony Orchestra](#)
Co-founder and Executive Director, [New Music Detroit](#)



Detroit Symphony Orchestra President and CEO Anne Parsons credits Eric Rönmark with playing a major role in the orchestra's resurgence. A onetime professional saxophonist with a DMA from the University of Michigan, he began his career at the DSO in 2005 as a part-time library assistant. Within a year he was named artistic coordinator, drafting contracts and managing logistics for guest artists. Rising through the ranks, he served as artistic administrator (2010–13), then added the role of general manager (2013–16); he has been in his current post for two years.

The orchestra has seen its ups and downs, including a contentious six-month musicians's strike in 2010–11. By the time negotiations for the next contract began in 2014, Rönmark had a seat at the table. Parsons credits him with co-leading talks both for that agreement and the one in 2017, and both an unprecedented eight months early. He also successfully renegotiated the 2015 and 2018 IATSE Local 38 (stage and film technicians' union) contracts.

Rönmark launched the William Davidson Neighborhood Concert Series, which regularly brings the DSO to areas surrounding Detroit. He is also behind the symphony's live streaming series, the first instituted by an American orchestra, which has significantly widened audiences and, in turn, increased ticket sales. And he oversaw the DSO's first international tour in 16 years, which brought the orchestra to Japan and China for 11 concerts in July 2017.

Currently, Rönmark oversees about half of the orchestra's \$29M budget, 40 staff members across eight departments, and over 80 musicians. As if that wasn't enough, he is executive director of New Music Detroit (NMD), a musicians' collective he co-founded in 2006 that has commissioned some 30 new works, including those for saxophone. NMD's annual September [Strange Beautiful Music](#) marathon, now marketed through the DSO box office, has become the largest new music festival in the midwest.

Small wonder he was named one of *Crain's Detroit Business's* Top 40 Under 40, and now, one of Musical America's Top 30 Professionals of the Year. —Susan Brodie

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CLYDE SCOTT

Director of Video Production/Resident Projection Designer
[New World Symphony](#)

PHOTO: Abdiel Thorne

As director of video production for the New World Symphony, Clyde Scott has a key role in the orchestral academy's mission to make its home, the Frank Gehry-designed New World Center, the world's most technologically advanced concert hall. Since the center opened in 2011, Scott has produced more than 90 Wallcast concerts, New World's trademark HD simulcasts of concerts in its hall that are shown on a 7,000-square-foot outside wall. They draw crowds that average 2,000 to SoundScape Park in Miami Beach.

Ten [Wallcasts](#) are scheduled in 2018–19, many conducted by Artistic Director Michael Tilson Thomas, with programming that ranges from Beethoven's Seventh Symphony to the world premiere of a work by Musical America 2019 Composer of the Year Julia Wolfe. "New work is definitely more difficult because of its inherent complexity," says Scott of coordinating the live video feeds from the concert hall's multitude of cameras. "Stravinsky tends to be challenging because of the way he breaks melodies up."

Wallcasts use as many as 16 cameras, including robotic ones throughout the hall as well as tiny cameras that enable the viewer to "get deeper into the experience

of the orchestra," Scott says. "If we have a cello soloist, we can put one of these cameras on the end pin of the cello, looking up at the bridge and the cellist's face. We hide one in front of the podium that gives a powerful, intimate view of the conductor." A production may have up to 700 camera shots.

Scott, also a trained violinist, is overseeing the multi-million-dollar upgrade of New World's simulcast system from HD to 4K, which will increase image resolution almost fourfold for Wallcasts. He also designs immersive video art for inside the concert hall, which can be projected onto the large, curved acoustic "sails" above and around the stage to complement the music on stage. His favorites include the "cubist cabaret" he designed for George Antheil's *A Jazz Symphony* and the atmospheric projections he created for Niccolò Castiglioni's *Inverno in-ver*. —John Fleming



Congratulations, Clyde!

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STEVE SHAIMAN
Senior Vice President
[Concert Artists Guild](#)

Steve Shaiman has helped shape the careers of hundreds of young musicians during his 15 years at Concert Artists Guild. He is, in a close colleague's words, "simply an institution!"

At Oberlin College he realized that a life as a musician was not for him and turned instead to arts management. As a junior he parlayed a January internship with famed impresario Sheldon Soffer into an eight-month off-campus experience, assuming clerical tasks and making travel and personal arrangements for Soffer's artists.

By graduation, he had created Oberlin Student Ensemble Management to help conservatory students get performance jobs. After college he joined the New York Youth Symphony as manager of operations and spent two years learning the nuts and bolts of putting on concerts. At his next stop—IMG Artists—he handled tour arrangements and personal details for classical performers like Itzhak Perlman, James Galway, André Watts, and Joshua Bell as well as famed jazz artists like Fred Hersch, Art Farmer, and Johnny Griffin.

The September 11 attacks led Shaiman to a career reassessment and his 2003 decision to join Concert Artists Guild as director of artist management. He is now responsible for about 20 artists, both soloists and ensembles, many just out of conservatory. He functions as a finishing school of sorts, teaching them what being a touring musician entails, and how to integrate into the industry. Interviewing, self-promotion on social media, teaching, and self-care are just some of the skills covered under his direction.

Shaiman also arranges performance opportunities, giving the young musicians experience with different kinds of audiences and a chance to discover what they like, all while preparing to "graduate" to regular commercial management. Most importantly, he helps them identify and highlight the distinctive personal qualities that will make them stand out in this competitive field.

As a trustee of the New York Youth Symphony since 1989, Shaiman assists this training orchestra for gifted teen musicians with searches for both guest soloists and music directors and with programming consultation. He also chairs the organization's jazz program. —Susan Brodie



AMANDA SWEET
President
[Bucklesweet](#)

Amanda Sweet loves coming up with offbeat ideas to publicize and market her clients. "I try to find interesting things outside of what they do professionally so I can tell an artist's story in a non-traditional place," she says. "Does an opera singer play golf? I'll try a golf magazine. Do they do meditation and yoga? I'll pitch them to a yoga journal."

Sweet's approach has been working well. Her Washington, DC-based Bucklesweet media firm has a roster of institutions such as Washington Performing Arts and the Strathmore arts center, as well as artists and ensembles that include ex-Police drummer Stewart Copeland, the King's Singers, and Turtle Island Quartet.

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The 10-year-old Bucklesweet has a fulltime staff of four plus a part-timer to handle digital media, a growing part of the business. “We work with clients’ Facebook, Twitter, and Instagram,” Sweet says. “If there are ways to show an artist’s personality and go behind the scenes with social media, that is such a powerful thing because you’re talking directly to your fans. That’s really what’s changed in the media landscape. An artist can engage directly with people.”

To compensate for the shrinking number of arts journalists at media outlets, Sweet has turned to what she calls content creation. “We look for ways to partner with media, especially in smaller markets, by essentially writing an article that they can edit in their style and then use. It is like a press release but written more in a story format.”

Sweet studied voice at Shenandoah Conservatory in Virginia. “A lot of people trained as singers have gravitated to the publicity side of the business. I think that’s because we’re not afraid to go in front of people and present ourselves.”

The name of her company reaches back to Sweet’s youth in Radford, VA, where she was a precocious citizens band radio enthusiast. “My handle was Bucklesweet Mandy, because Mandy was my nickname growing up. I don’t know why, but I always had this vision in the back of my mind that I was going to have my own company someday and it would be called Bucklesweet.”
—John Fleming

ALAN VALENTINE
President and CEO
[Nashville Symphony](#)



In his 20 eventful years as head of the Nashville Symphony, Alan Valentine has raised the profile of classical music in a town best known for country and other genres. His tenure has been marked by bold initiatives interspersed with major unexpected challenges.

A San Antonio native who studied arts administration at the University of Houston, he arrived in Nashville after holding executive positions with orchestras in Richland, WA; Greensboro, NC; Chattanooga, TN; and San Antonio, TX. When he took over in Nashville, the symphony already had several recording projects under its belt. Looking for a niche not already filled to overflowing, he focused on American works, commissioning and recording pieces by Richard Danielpour, Jennifer Higdon, and Joan Tower, among others. Of the 34 albums issued since his arrival, 24 have been nominated for Grammy awards, with 13 wins.

Valentine also set his sights on a new concert hall. To ensure the success of a five-year, \$120M capital campaign, called “A Time for Greatness,” he created the “Nashville Advisory Council,” a group

of several hundred prominent individuals who received news of the project’s progress before the press. The buzz they created among their networks helped generate excitement and open checkbooks. Schermerhorn Hall, named in honor of the orchestra’s longtime music director who died at age 75 in 2005, opened in 2006 with great fanfare.

Its success was short-lived; the financial crisis of 2008 saw a big drop in the Nashville Symphony’s subscription and investment income. Then in 2010 came a catastrophic flood, which caused \$40M of damage to the new hall (water in the basement rose to 24 feet at one point). By 2013 the orchestra was on the brink of bankruptcy and almost lost the Schermerhorn. Valentine went to the bankers to restructure the debt, introduced 15 percent pay cuts, reduced the orchestra’s season, and made the Schermerhorn available as a rental.

Today, thanks to his adept leadership and connection to the community, the orchestra is thriving, and a source of great civic pride. —Susan Brodie



ABIGAYL VENMAN
Senior Director of Arts Leadership
[Sphinx Organization](#)

As a key staff member of the Sphinx Organization, one of Abigail Venman's chief responsibilities is the planning and presentation of [SphinxConnect](#), the third annual "epicenter for artists and leaders in diversity" put on by the Detroit-based nonprofit organization dedicated to developing young black and Latinx classical musicians. To be held January 31–February 2 in Detroit, this year's gathering will have more than 60 speakers, as well as Sphinx Competition finalist concerts at Orchestra Hall. "Last year attendance was more than 600, and this year it may be more than that," Venman said. "The idea is to share success stories but also to share stories about barriers that people are coming up against."

An important part of SphinxConnect is the Sphinx Orchestral Partner Auditions in which an expected 30-plus musicians of color will participate in a shared audition for at least 20 orchestras. "It's a way for musicians to be heard by multiple orchestras without the considerable cost it would be to travel to each orchestra individually," Venman says, noting that when Sphinx was founded in 1996, less than three percent of American orchestra musicians were black and Latinx; in 2016, the figure was 4.3 percent. "It's

significant that the numbers have increased, but we still have work to do."

Venman, a Michigan native, was a voice major at Northwestern and Southern Methodist University. For eight years, she lived in New York and worked in administration at the Juilliard School, Opus 3 Artists, and Carl Fischer music publishing, before moving back home to join Sphinx in 2014. "It is unique to work for an organization that supports Michigan in terms of Sphinx's education programs in Detroit and Flint but also has an impact nationally. From our humble base in Detroit, we're able to support musicians across the country."

One of her favorite events is when the Sphinx Virtuosi, a chamber orchestra of soloists, most of them Sphinx alumni, goes on its national tour and plays a multitude of venues, including, last October, Carnegie Hall. The theme of this season's program was "Music Without Borders," with works ranging from Shostakovich's Chamber Symphony to the New York premiere of Terence Blanchard's *Dance for a New Day*. —John Fleming

JULIAN WACHNER
Director of Music and Arts
[Trinity Wall Street](#)
Composer



In 2010, when Julian Wachner was appointed to his current position at the historic Trinity Wall Street (founded 1769), the Financial District was still recovering from the devastating effects of the 9/11 World Trade Center attacks. In the intervening eight years he has had an outsize impact on New York's musical life. Wachner oversees an annual season of hundreds of events as

curator, conductor, composer, organist, and sometimes all of the above simultaneously. In 2016, he completed the first cycle of his signature project Bach at One, presenting all the Bach cantatas; this season he has expanded the series into Bach + One, pairing one work by the master with one or more pieces by other composers. Under his direction, programs are performed by the Choir of Trinity

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Wall Street and Trinity Baroque Orchestra, ensembles that he has brought to a new level and are considered by many to be the best of their kind in the city.

His early-music reputation notwithstanding, Wachner is also founding director of the new music orchestra [NOVUS NY](#), which has premiered such works as the Pulitzer Prize-winning *Angel's Bone*, by Du Yun, and Missy Mazzoli and Royce Vavrek's *Breaking the Waves*. He also conducted the Grammy-award winning recording of *Anthracite Fields* by Julia Wolfe (Musical America's 2019 Composer of the Year) with the Bang on a Can All-Stars and

the Choir of Trinity Wall Street. With these forces and as a guest conductor, Wachner has led performances around the world, from Honolulu to Utrecht.

He continues to compose, with a large catalog of vocal, orchestral, sacred, and secular works. Among his operas, the most recent is *Rev. 23*, an eclectic farce about an imagined second *Book of Revelations*, set to an original libretto by Pulitzer Prize-winner Cerise Lim Jacobs. The piece premiered last season in Boston and finds its way to New York's [Prototype Festival](#) in 2020, another one of Wachner's myriad musical contributions to the city's cultural life. — Susan Brodie



LECOLION WASHINGTON

Executive Director

[Community Music Center of Boston](#)

In September 2017, Lecolion Washington arrived at his current position at Community Music Center of Boston (CMCB), a community music school that serves some 5,500 students each week, through links to 35 Boston public schools, nursing homes, hospitals, and community centers. It is also among the recipients of the \$2.5 million [Andrew W. Mellon Foundation grant](#) toward a pilot project that aims to support young musicians of color as they train for classical music careers.

Washington says that in his previous role, as co-founder, executive director, and bassoonist of the Memphis-based [PRIZM Ensemble](#), he sought to have the hard discussions that often get soft-pedaled in the genteel performing arts world.

"One of the things that I learned in Memphis was how to engage in some very challenging and courageous conversations," says Washington, who also led the [Memphis Music Initiative's](#) school programs. "You had a lot of poverty in Memphis, particularly in the black community, and so I really learned there to be able to

engage in that conversation in a way that was honest and open and unapologetic.

At PRIZM, Washington organized a concert at Clayborne Temple, a site in the civil rights movement, featuring *Seven Last Words of the Unarmed*, Atlanta composer Joel Thompson's [musical eulogy](#) to black males who were killed by law enforcement. The concert, which also featured works by Mozart and John Legend, capped PRIZM's International Chamber Music Festival, an event that included a two-week music day camp for some 110 inner-city students.

Washington raves about Samuel Coleridge-Taylor, Chevalier de Saint-Georges, and other black composers whom he'd like to bring into the conversation, if not the curriculum, at the CMCB. And he hopes to question some of the underlying assumptions behind the musical canon. "I think this is a great place to be able to do it because it's not a conservatory," he said. "This is the place where students are learning about and learning to love music." —Brian Wise

About THE AUTHORS



Susan Brodie is a New York-based writer whose reviews and features have appeared in *American Record Guide*, *Early Music America*, and *The Log Journal*.



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*.



Brian Wise is a journalist and digital producer based in New York. His writing has appeared in the *New York Times*, *The Guardian*, *BBC Music Magazine*, *Slate*, and *Listen Magazine*. He produces the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's national weekly radio broadcasts.

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