

MA 30

december 2014

PROFESSIONALS OF THE YEAR

PROFILES IN COURAGE



musical
america
SPECIAL REPORTS

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Introduction



Among Musical America's Special Reports, the "MA 30" is a favorite. This is the time of the year when we recognize folks in our industry who are making a difference, be they up and coming ([Rising Stars](#), in 2012), already arrived ([Movers and Shakers](#), in 2013), or, this year, courageous colleagues who have been risk-takers and/or innovators.

For our Profiles in Courage issue, we sent out a questionnaire to the international performing arts community. Nominees, we wrote, should be people who have "taken a risk, stepped up for the cause, spoken out where others were silent—all to the measurable benefit of their respective organizations and/or the field."

We received hundreds of responses. We based our 30 final choices on a number of factors including measurable results, uniqueness, persistence in the face of resistance or hardened tradition, and/or inventiveness.

Using our own research, the information provided on the ballots, and in some cases personal interviews, our all-star crew of journalists [[see p. 29](#)] set about writing up the profiles. For this editor, it felt a little like match making!

I'm particularly proud of this issue, because it has been an opportunity to honor our colleagues who go the extra mile, often with little or no recognition. One left a solid career path to launch a music festival; another broke through a bureaucracy to launch a pioneering arts journalism program; another saved an opera company from its board-approved death; still another puts instruments in the hands of inner-city children and created an orchestra that conductors from Simon Rattle to Bobby McFerrin have come to conduct.

The best part about the MA 30 is that it comes solely from your suggestions. For that, we and your nominees send our heartfelt thanks.

Regards,

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Music Director **Robert Spano**

Musical America's 2014 Profiles in Courage Recipient

PROFILES *in* courage

The Musical America 30 Profiles in Courage were chosen from hundreds of nominations from the worldwide performing arts community. Our criteria: people who have “taken a risk, stepped up for the cause, spoken out where others were silent—all to the measurable benefit of their respective organizations and/or the field.”



PETER ALWARD
Managing Director and Intendant
Salzburg Easter Festival

When Peter Alward [took over as intendant](#) in 2010, the [Salzburg Easter Festival](#) was embroiled in two of the biggest scandals in recent industry history. Following the dismissal of an [executive director who had allegedly embezzled](#) as much as \$2.8 million from operations and the attempted suicide of its technical director, the springtime event was scrambling to regain its balance.

The former president of EMI’s classical division, who oversaw recordings by the legendary Herbert von Karajan, among others, Alward had little reason to risk his reputation on an enterprise that seemed so close to a sinking ship. And yet, [citing a sense of fidelity](#) to the Berlin Philharmonic, Simon Rattle, and, of course Karajan, he took the job.

Shortly after Alward, 64, had balanced the books, the Philharmonic, resident orchestra since the festival’s founding by Karajan in 1967, [abruptly announced plans](#) to withdraw and launch its own, more lavishly funded Easter Festival across the border in Baden-Baden, Germany. Only three months later, Alward had [recruited the Staatskapelle Dresden](#) to replace it.

The move not only allowed the festival to carry on according to plan but created a healthy dose of competition. The Staatskapelle brought both a long tradition of accompanying opera and Karajan protégé Christian Thielemann as its music director. Thielemann was in place for both the new production of *Parsifal* in 2013 (originally planned for the Berliners) and the 150th anniversary of Richard Strauss in 2014, which featured a new production of *Arabella* starring Renée Fleming and Thomas Hampson. The premiere was sold out, as was the new, child-friendly “[Concert for Salzburg](#)” featuring the actress Isabel von Karajan in *Peter and the Wolf*.

The festival, which draws over half its budget from ticket sales, reported an overall attendance rate of 88% for the 2014 season. Now that Alward’s work is done, he will be passing on the reins, [announcing earlier this year](#) that he will not renew his contract when it expires in June 2015. —Rebecca Schmid

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MARTIN ANDERSON

Founder and CEO

Toccata Classics

In 2005, Martin Anderson launched his own record company, [Toccata Classics](#) to bring to life neglected works of music. “Basically, I got fed up waiting for other labels to bring out music I wanted to hear,” Anderson said. Today, his record label fills an important niche by disseminating what it bills as “forgotten music by great composers, great music by forgotten composers.” Its 200th release—orchestral, choral, and organ works of Norwegian composer Leif Solberg, to mark his 100th birthday—is due in December.

Anderson, 59, a Scot, fell in love with classical music around age eight or nine. After earning his degree in medieval French and German at St. Andrews University, he worked for 20 years in economic development in London and Paris. But his passion for music eventually won out and he turned to criticism, writing for *Fanfare*, *International Record Review*, and other publications. He launched Toccata Press to publish books on music and, with a staff of three part-timers, he now runs the label from London.

“I won’t repeat anything that is already adequately recorded, and every CD has something new,” said Anderson, whose catalog ranges from Renaissance to contemporary work.

The emphasis is on more or less obscure composers, such as Algernon Ashton, Benjamin Lees, David Matthews, Theodore Gouvy, Heinrich von Herzogenberg, Friedrich Gernsheim, and more. But the masters are also represented by works that have been lost or forgotten, such as Rameau’s keyboard music and Martinů’s early orchestral pieces.

Anderson, active with the International Centre for Suppressed Music, has a special interest in composers working under (or exiled from) totalitarian regimes, and his catalog reflects that with CDs of works by Julius Burger, Hans Gal, Ernst Krenek, Karel Reiner, Mieczyslaw Weinberg, and others who suffered from political tyranny.

Toccata Classics is a labor of love, with production costs running more than \$5,000 per CD, and modest sales, but every once in a while a release finds a sizable audience. “The second-best seller is Dvořák song transcriptions (my idea!) with Josef Suk and Vladimir Ashkenazy,” said Anderson. “But currently it is being well outsold by John Mauceri’s CD of music for Hitchcock films.” —John Fleming

STEVEN BLIER

Artistic Director

New York Festival of Song

Artistic Director

Vocal Rising Stars, Caramoor

Vocal Coach, Collaborative Pianist



Nothing has stopped [Steven Blier](#) from pursuing the art form he loves and taking it to an entirely new level.

Blier accompanied singers in grammar school, though his parents preferred he study medicine or law. He followed his own path at Yale, studying piano with Alexander Farkas. He trained

further in New York, and launched his career coaching the likes of Renée Fleming, Samuel Ramey, and Cecilia Bartoli.

In 1988, Blier co-founded [The New York Festival of Song](#) with pianist Michael Barrett. They believe that everyone has a need to be sung to, not unlike the need to be told stories. “A song is the

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closest thing in waking life to dreaming," Blier says, and he has made many dreams come true on both sides of the footlights.

What *Newsday* calls "the most reliably excellent musical organization in New York," NYFOS presents unusual or rarely heard songs, from lieder, Latin jazz, and doo-wop to Broadway and zarzuela, sung by emerging vocal artists and broadening the very definition of term "art song."

But Blier's most impressive feat is not coaching the greats or running a nonprofit arts organization. That he has done all this while living with FSHD, a form of muscular dystrophy, is testament to his courage and determination as an artist and an

individual. Today he works—unstoppably—from a wheelchair; medical breakthroughs offer hope that progression of his FHS can be slowed.

Recently Blier lent his talents to an FSH benefit, coming away with accolades and gratitude for his still-powerful hands and forearms. "I thought, I dodged so many bullets," he says. "Think what didn't happen to me."

The artistic director of Caramoor's Vocal Rising Stars, Blier has prepared singers for organizations from the San Francisco and (former) New York City Opera to Wolf Trap National Park for the Performing Arts. He has been on the faculty of the Juilliard School since 1992.



MISTY COPELAND

Soloist

American Ballet Theatre

Thanks to Misty Copeland, gone are the days when a company dancer waits for the person in charge (usually a man) to give her the spotlight. The first African-American soloist at the [American Ballet Theatre](#) in more than two decades, Copeland has been increasingly vocal about two things: the paucity of female black ballerinas, and her wish to be promoted to principal dancer at ABT, the company she joined in 2001.

Her two-fold campaign has ramped up since the March publication of *Life in Motion: An Unlikely Ballerina*. "This is for the little brown girls," she writes in the prologue. The autobiography describes her late introduction to ballet (age 13), and the custody battle between her first dance teacher and her mother. The dispute created a media storm in Los Angeles, where Copeland grew up and where she won a Spotlight Award as the best Californian dancer, just two years after beginning ballet. Luckily a 1999-2000 summer scholarship to ABT's training academy gave Copeland needed independence and she joined the corps a year later.

For leading roles in *La Bayadere* (2003), *Raymonda* (2004), and Twyla Tharp's *Sinatra Suite* (2007), Copeland received critical acclaim. "I really felt like I was going to crack" she told *The New*

York Times of those days where she was performing principal roles and dancing in the corps simultaneously. She was finally named soloist in 2012; one of her first role with that title was Alexei Ratmansk's *The Firebird*, who has said that his inspiration partly derived from Copeland's piercing, athletic jump. Unfortunately, just after *Firebird*, she was diagnosed with six stress fractures to her tibia, and had to undergo surgery. She convalesced for a year.

Copeland is currently featured in an Under Armour campaign dedicated to women athletes, whose [I Will What I Want](#) video has received more than 6.5 million views. Slow motion close-ups reveal her taught, shapely musculature and elastic precision, as she ascends on pointe like a Phoenix rising from the ashes. A child's voiceover reads an official rejection letter from a ballet academy in which she is told she doesn't have the right body—in other words, she is not waif thin.

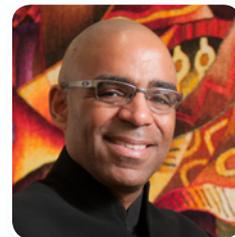
This notion of suitability infuses Copeland's *Firebird* (September 2014), a children's book in which a young, fragile girl doubts her ability to be, like Copeland, a black ballet dancer who succeeds in a white-dominated profession. As of this writing, Lauren Anderson (Houston Ballet, 1993-2006) is the only black female to be named principal of a major U.S. ballet company.

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Copeland's consistent advocacy is showing results. Last year, ABT announced its partnership with [Project Plié](#), an organization that offers free ballet training to underserved youth.

As the ABT season came to a close this fall, and Copeland performed the lead in the über white classic *Swan Lake*, many

are betting that the 32-year-old will be a principal within the year. The prodigy turned courageous proselytiser is making history. —Rachel Straus



AARON DWORKIN
Founder and President
Sphinx Organization

The representation of black and Latino players in today's American orchestras is staggeringly low at only four percent. But when Aaron Dworkin founded the [Sphinx Organization](#) in 1996, that statistic was less than half as high.

As a young violinist, Dworkin was appalled that, in the world of classical music, he was the only person of color on or offstage. He put a dream into action by starting an annual competition for black and Latino string players. That has since spawned a summer academy, an all-black and Latino orchestra, in-school elementary training, partnerships with prestigious institutions like the Southbank Center, and more. All American orchestras that

gained black members between 1998–2008 had a [relationship with Sphinx](#).

Dworkin [admitted in an interview](#) last year that founding the organization was a risk: How would the self-enclosed classical music world react? "There was no way to initially tell whether the vision would resonate with the community of constituents, funders, supporters," he says, citing "a combination of luck, hard work, and passion" that helped him "pave a different path."

A recipient of the MacArthur "genius" grant and President Obama's first nominee to the National Council on the Arts, Dworkin tirelessly labors to make the nation aware of the disparities that

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BOSTON SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA

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plague classical music institutions, arguing that diversity is not just a social imperative but fundamental to the art form's long-term health. [In a speech](#) last fall, he challenged orchestras to devote five percent of their budget to inclusion initiatives, maintaining that while times may be tough, "any solution that brings about real change will require sacrifice."

Sphinx's laureates are leading the way to that change, studying at top conservatories such as Juilliard and Curtis and playing at the White House. "Performances are [invariably energetic](#)

[and finely burnished](#)," wrote *The New York Times* of Sphinx's recent Carnegie Hall concert, an annual event. The Harlem Quartet, an ensemble of former Sphinx Competition winners, has collaborated with everyone from Itzhak Perlman to Chick Corea.

"What I love about the organization is that it tries to achieve in our society an equilibrium of people who are incredibly talented and motivated to be part of every aspect of our society," says [Special Artistic Advisor Yo-Yo Ma](#). "Talent does not pick demographics."
—Rebecca Schmid



HOBART EARLE
Music Director and Principal Conductor
Odessa Philharmonic Orchestra

In 1991 Hobart Earle, a 31-year-old conductor and composer living in Vienna, accepted the position of artistic director and principal conductor of the [Odessa Philharmonic Orchestra](#) with the salary of \$50 a month.

The Venezuelan-born Princeton grad moved to the port city on the Black Sea, known for its rich history and ethnically diverse population. When he arrived, just at the collapse of the Soviet Union, the city was in disastrous disrepair, its cultural institutions grossly under-funded. The Odessa Philharmonic, established in 1937, was playing war horses on tattered instruments to half-empty houses.

At the time, Earle knew no Russian or Ukrainian (he's now fluent in the former and his Ukrainian is improving), but the language barrier was the least of his problems. Apart from the bureaucracy and limited funds, he was resented for being a foreigner who had come "to teach us how to play Tchaikovsky and Rachmaninoff."

Earle persevered. He became the orchestra's cheerleader, business manager, and fund-raiser-in-chief, simultaneously gaining the respect of the musicians, polishing their performances, and building an audience.

He took the orchestra on its first international tours (in 1992 to Austria, in 1993 to the U.S., including Carnegie Hall),

gaining positive reviews (*The Chicago Tribune* declared, "it could join the top rank of American orchestras without breaking step"), and giving the musicians a huge morale boost. At home, the orchestra developed a loyal following, becoming the first performing arts organization in the Ukraine to have its official status raised from regional to federal to national, which meant more government money.

The tours continued—to Europe and around Russia and the Ukraine, and a second American tour in 2009–10 as the repertoire expanded to include Mahler, Bruckner, and even Elgar, along with contemporary Ukrainian composers such as Mikola Kolessa, Myroslav Skoryk, and Ivan Karabirz.

All that earned him the title of Honorable Artist of Ukraine and, in 2013, The People's Artist of Ukraine. Most important to Earle, however, it earned him love, respect, and appreciation from musicians and audiences alike. In a divided world, Earle is trying to make the arts an instrument of world peace. Last March, he took the orchestra to Odessa's open market to perform [Beethoven's Ode to Joy, flashmob style](#). The video has garnered hundreds of thousands of views.
—Maya Pritsker

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SUSAN FEDER

Program Officer Arts and Cultural Heritage
The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

When she joined [The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation](#) in January of 2007, Susan Feder [said in an interview](#) “It is difficult to imagine another position that would have tempted me away from the stimulation of working with the composers at Schirmer.” She was referring to G. Schirmer Inc., where, as vice president, she had spent the prior two decades nurturing the careers of many prominent Soviet, European, and American composers. In her new position as program officer for performing arts at Mellon, Feder would continue to support up-and-coming American composers, but also orchestras, dance companies, opera and theater companies, college and university presenters, and performing arts series.

Since her arrival at the Foundation, Feder’s recommendations—based on her extensive research, long experience in the field, and sound judgment—have yielded almost \$300 million in grant money. Among projects to have taken shape on her watch are a \$490,000 grant to support the development and production of new American operas at [Fort Worth Opera](#), \$1.73 million for the establishment of a composer-in-residence program at [Opera Philadelphia](#), and \$1.75 million to [Opera America](#) to promote the creation and production of new American operas.

Among the largest grants were \$5 million each in December of 2007 to support opera and music-theater programming at the Brooklyn Academy of Music (including a 2012 production of Philip Glass’s *Einstein on the Beach*) and to support an endowment for new commissions and collaborations at [Lincoln Center](#) (Toshio Hosokawa’s *Matsukaze* in 2013 and John Adams’s oratorio *The Gospel According to the Other Mary* in 2012–13).

Though it is the trustees of the Foundation who have the final say in grants awarded, the creativity and scope of the projects emanate from within her jurisdiction.

Feder, who graduated from Princeton University and completed her graduate studies in music at the University of California, Berkeley, has written extensively on music. The onetime editorial coordinator of *The New Grove Dictionary of American Music* and program editor for the San Francisco Symphony, she serves as vice president of the Amphion Foundation, which backs American composers, and is on the boards of the Kurt Weill Foundation and Charles Ives Society. She is the dedicatee of John Corigliano’s Pulitzer-Prize winning Symphony No. 2, Augusta Read Thomas’s *Helios Choros*, and Joan Tower’s *Dumbarton Oaks Quintet*. —Joshua Simka



ANTHONY FOGG

Artistic Administrator
Boston Symphony Orchestra

Taking charge of the artistic administration of the [Boston Symphony Orchestra](#) would seem job enough, especially with former Music Director James Levine’s frequent absences, but Anthony Fogg was never one for just fulfilling the job description. Always going the extra mile—and then some—over the course of his 20 years with

the BSO, he has been involved with the development of new talent and new repertoire, while keeping a cool head under pressure and winning himself a reputation as one of the good guys.

He is unusual among administrators in being a musician of professional rank, having trained as a pianist at the Brazilian

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Academy of Music in São Paulo and at the University of Sydney. He was born in Australia and took American citizenship in 2007. During his time as head of programming for ABC Concerts (1986–94), the classical music arm of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation, he also served as the artistic director and pianist of leading contemporary music ensemble The Seymour Group. He performed as a soloist with the major orchestras in Australia and, since becoming artistic administrator of the BSO in 1994, has continued to play, collaborating regularly with members of the orchestra.

Being a musician while wearing a manager's hat has helped him win the respect of the musicians, who see him as walking the walk, not just talking the talk. His encyclopedic knowledge of the repertoire has also impressed. He has been deeply involved with the Tanglewood Music Center Conducting Fellowship

program, is a strong champion of contemporary composers, has served on funding panels such as the Aaron Copland Fund and the Pew Charitable Trust, served as an advisor to the New England Conservatory, and is a frequent adjudicator for national and international competitions and scholarships. The French government has made him a Chevalier of the Order of Arts and Letters for services to French music and culture.

A man who wears his honors lightly, Fogg also enjoys a keen sense of humor. Appearing at the San Francisco Symphony's American Orchestra Forum in 2011, he was asked what was the most creative part of his job. "Balancing the budget," he replied. "No really, it's finding that opportunity or circumstance to allow an artist to do something they've always wanted to do." —Keith Clarke



MICHAEL FOX
Director of Operations
Hale Centre Theatre

Everyone wants to feel like an insider, which explains the success of a social media effort by Michael Fox, director of operations at [Hale Center Theater](#) in a suburb of Salt Lake City. In the past year or so, Fox has produced more than 40 videos from behind the scenes at the theater for a YouTube channel called HCT—RAH (Real Access Hale).

Videos range from an actor applying makeup to play Marley's ghost in *A Christmas Carol* to the view from a spotlight operator's perch, from backstage goings-on during a performance of *Les Misérables* to the making of a wig. Some episodes get only a few hundred views, but an interview with Artistic Director Sally Dietlein announcing the 2015 season had more than 5,000 views.

The production values are homemade, but that doesn't seem to matter to fans. "I've learned not to be afraid of the videos not being professional," said Fox, 39, who mostly films with his phone or a hand-held camera and does interviews and commentary on the fly. "I've been complimented more than chastised for the videos not having the best sound and lighting and editing."

HCT, a 29-year-old community theater that pays its nonprofessional talent (principals receive from \$55 to \$75 per performance), has a subscription base of more than 23,000 that keeps the 613-seat in-the-round venue playing to 100 percent capacity, with an average of 10 shows a week during the 42-week season this year. With a 2015 budget of \$8 million, it is the largest U.S. community theater.

"We wanted the videos to be more of a value-added proposition for our season-ticket holders, rather than something that would bring us new patronage," Fox said. "So often people only see the performers and have no idea of the amount of work that goes into a show."

Fox has learned several lessons to pass on to arts organizations seeking to exploit social media. The first is, you can't predict what will catch on and go viral. And that leads to his second lesson: "Don't quit. Social media is a different animal." Don't give up after a few tries; folks need to find you, so give them time. And three: "There is no reason not to be fully engaged in social media, because it is so inexpensive. The key is to just be there." —John Fleming

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EDMUND AND PATRICIA FREDERICK

Co-founders

The Frederick Piano Historic Collection

How many grand pianos can you squeeze into a five-room house? For 25 years this was not a trick question for Edmund Michael Frederick, a former East Asian history major and current harpsichord builder and amateur performer, and Patricia Humphrey Frederick, an elementary music-ed specialist, organist, and choir director. In 1976, the couple purchased the first of what now amounts to over 35 historic pianos, an 1830 Stodart built in London that cost just over \$2,000 (plus \$1,000 for air freight). Today their collection includes 24 restored pianos, ranging in age from a Viennese instrument built about 1795 to a 1928 Erard from Paris. Another 12 pianos are in various stages of restoration.

The husband and wife team bring complementary talents to their [nonprofit enterprise](#), which gives student and professional musicians a chance to hear and play piano works as originally conceived by their composers. Edmund researches the history of the piano in the context of its repertory and performance practice, restores the instruments, and serves as a consultant and lecturer on historic pianos. Patricia, whose father curated the Casadesu Collection of Ancient Instruments at Boston's Symphony Hall, is the business manager, publicist, fundraiser, and assistant lecturer. Neither

receives any salary, and, in Frederick's words, they "beg energetically" to cobble together a shoe-string annual budget of \$40,000.

From the outset, the Fredericks have been intent on making the instruments performance-accessible, not museum pieces, and amateurs and luminaries alike play and occasionally record works ranging from Haydn and Beethoven to the French Impressionists. The Fredericks also present a 12-concert series in a nearby church (using a horse van to move the instruments back and forth).

In 2000 they were finally able to transfer the instruments from their home into a restored 1890 brick ex-library in the center of Ashburnham in north-central Massachusetts. The Frederick Historic Piano Collection, as it is officially known, is open to the public (walk-in tours are available on Thursdays from 10:00 to 4:00 and Saturdays from 1:00 to 4:00) and is a frequent haunt for international artists such as Richard Goode and Gilbert Kalish, as well as conservatory professors and their students.

The Collection is also the site of master classes, lecture-recitals, workshops, seminars, and panel discussions. It's a piano studio, a classroom, and a performance space, all in one. Patricia Frederick calls it, simply, "a mom and pop shop." —Susan Elliott

AMELIA FREEDMAN

Founder and Artistic Director

Nash Ensemble



As a young student clarinetist at the Royal Academy of Music, Amelia Freedman was frustrated that weekly orchestra rehearsals did not provide nearly enough repertoire to get her teeth into. Some of her fellow students felt the same, and encouraged her to start a chamber ensemble, on the basis that she was good at organizing.

She was more interested in playing than administrating, but having been plied with drinks at a local pub she said she would give it a go. "I wanted to give people some professional experience," she says.

The Academy Ensemble was an obvious choice of name, but the principal of the conservatoire would not allow it, fearful

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that the institution should be associated with failure. For it was generally assumed that a student ensemble would have a short shelf life and go down in flames. One professor said he gave it six months, max. Denied her choice of name, Amelia Freedman chose instead that of a favorite London architect. [The Nash Ensemble](#) was born, gave its first professional concert at the American Embassy, and in October 2014 it celebrated its 50th year of continuous existence.

Freedman played in the group for the first four years until she left the performance side in order to devote herself full-time to running it. And if it took courage to set it up in the first place, in the face of the gloomy prognostications of her teachers, the group has called on her reserves of patience and fortitude for each of its 50 years, with income from the Arts Council and various trusts and foundations never producing more than a third of what is required to meet the artistic ambition.

That ambition has been remarkable. Over the years, Freedman has commissioned 193 new works and the group has given more than 300 premieres by 225 composers, including Richard Rodney Bennett, Harrison Birtwistle, Elliott Carter, Henri Dutilleux, and Peter Maxwell Davies. "It's not bad for someone who hasn't got any money," she says drily.

While she has kept the Nash Ensemble on the road she has also served as director of the Bath International Music Festival (1986–93), head of classical music at the Southbank Center (1995–2006), and at 74 is still artistic director of the Bath Mozartfest and the Bath Bachfest.

She knows her mind, and purses her musical goals tirelessly. As Philharmonia Managing Director David Whelton has said, "No one has done more than Amelia Freedman to further the cause of chamber music in this country." —Keith Clarke

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Abel López
Associate Producing
Director, GALA
Hispanic Theatre



INTERVIEWER:
Bob Lynch
Americans for the Arts



WU HAN

Co-director

Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Music@Menlo

When pianist Wu Han arrived in the U.S. from Taipei, in 1981, she spoke not a word of English. Today, she is the modern model of the American success story, equal parts impresaria, scholar, performer, teacher, cheer leader, and recording producer.

Since she and husband cellist David Finckel took over as co-directors of the [Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center](#) in 2004, the field of chamber music has, if not exploded, been wholly revitalized, thanks to their imaginative programming and polished mix of young onstage talent with established performers. Add Wu Han's seemingly insatiable enthusiasm for the art form and exuberant personality and it seems she and her more reserved husband are the perfect complement. "I like to jump into the pool without knowing the temperature," Wu told *The New York Times* in an interview. "David always wants to know the temperature."

CMS's reported 50 percent increase in ticket sales over the last five years is attributable not only to sold-out houses at its home base of Alice Tully Hall, but also to the Society's vastly expanded activities, both Stateside and abroad: weeklong residencies, tours, masterclasses, vocal recitals, late-night café-style concerts, new-music concerts streamed live (CMS has commissioned 31 new works), a download-only recording series, and 26 weeks' worth of radio programs.

As Wu Han has been busy turning CMS's fortunes around, she has also maintained a busy teaching, performing, and recording schedule. In 1997, before anyone had even thought about downloading as an appropriate format for classical music, she and Finckel boldly launched ArtistLed, the genre's first internet based recording company, "led" by and for artists only. Han is involved in every aspect of the enterprise, from choosing repertoire and overseeing sessions to presiding over the final mix.

She also cofounded in 2003 [Music@Menlo](#), an annual three-week chamber music festival and teaching institute now coming up on its 13th season in the San Francisco Bay area. There is even a Music@MenloLIVE recording series.

And if the two are not exhausted enough after three weeks in California, since 2013, they have spent another three weeks in residence at the Saratoga Festival.

As both personality and artist, Wu Han seems to light a fire wherever she goes; she is a self-confessed risk-taker, a passionate, committed artist too busy making a difference to ever take credit.
—Susan Elliott



YIN-CHU JOU

Artistic Director

Friendship Ambassadors Foundation

The largest international choral festival in New York City involves at least seven ensembles from around the world with up to 500 singers and a week of performances, including one at United Nations headquarters. Who coordinates it all?

That would be Yin-Chu Jou, founder of the Rhythms of One World festival, which premiered in 2012, presenting adult

and children's choirs from Trinidad and Tobago, South Africa, Luxembourg, Canada, Australia, Norway, and the U.S. in concerts at Avery Fisher Hall at Lincoln Center and the U.N. General Assembly Hall, as well as other venues. Running the festival is part of her job as artistic director of the [Friendship Ambassadors Foundation](#), a nonprofit cultural exchange agency affiliated with the U.N.

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With its last iteration held in Geneva, Switzerland, the festival returns to New York in June, coincident with the 70th anniversary of the signing of the U.N. charter. “This is a huge undertaking, with so many moving parts,” said Yin-Chu in a recent interview. “The logistics, the bureaucracy, the venues, the sponsors, the selection of choirs, the funding, the audience development—it takes a lot of tenacity.”

Yin-Chu, 38, who is Taiwanese and grew up in the Philippines, received a postgraduate degree in piano performance at Manhattan School of Music. With the Foundation since 2005, she has moved to expand its business model from mainly an operator of tours by choirs, bands, and orchestras to a producer of music festivals around the world. She believes that

the choral festival is an ideal vehicle to further the U.N. goal of promoting peace.

“Choral music is great because many people continue their musical lives through choral singing, rather than playing an instrument,” she said. “It is easier to bring together a critical mass of choral enthusiasts from around the world who believe in this mission and the goals of the U.N. and to celebrate harmony and diversity through singing.”

In 2009, Yin-Chu was diagnosed with leukemia, and she credits the fervor she has for her job with helping her to overcome the illness, now in remission. “I strongly feel that my commitment to the festival actually is limiting the spread of the leukemia I had a few years back, because of the positive work I’m doing,” she said. “I don’t have time to focus on it. I just move forward with work on the festival.” —John Fleming



JOHANNA KELLER

Director Arts Journalism, Associate Professor

S.I. Newhouse School of Public Communications, Syracuse University

At a time when the future of arts journalism looks far from rosy, Johanna Keller has steadfastly refused to accept what many see as an inevitable decline. Her approach, flying in the face of accepted wisdom, is to train young writers to be the best possible arts journalists. She has been a dynamic presence in the industry for 30 years, writing about music and culture for *The New York Times*, London’s *Evening Standard*, *Opera News*, *Musical America*, *Strad*, and other publications on both sides of the Atlantic.

As a writer, her efforts have not gone unnoticed. She received the 2000 ASCAP-Deems Taylor Award and the 2001 Front Page Award from the Newswomen’s Club of New York and was a 2002 USC Annenberg/Getty Arts Journalism Fellow in Los Angeles and a 2001 journalism fellow at the Banff Centre in Canada. But being a leading arts journalist was not enough for Keller; she wanted to bring on young talent to perpetuate the craft.

In 2005 she managed to convince Syracuse University to establish the first master’s degree program in arts journalism at the school’s [S. I. Newhouse School of Public Communications](#). She has run what is known as the Goldring Arts Journalism program

ever since, pioneering the concept of training journalists for arts coverage. Goldring has graduated more than 130 arts journalists since, and 100 percent of the members of the 2013 class have been employed, full or part-time, by media companies or nonprofits. Young journalists are trained to communicate through video, social media, web, and print. Each year Keller takes her students to the Spoleto Festival in Charleston, SC, who provide Festival coverage to the local paper during their stay.

Goldring was not Keller’s first foray into education. She taught writing at The New School and held administrative positions at Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts. In 2007 she received the Excellence in Graduate Education Faculty Recognition Award from Syracuse University.

Keller was editor of *Chamber Music* magazine from 1997 to 2001. The publication picked up six national awards for excellence in editorial and design on her watch. Readers enjoy her clear-headed, pithy appreciation of the arts, and her innovative work in encouraging a new generation of writers and broadcasters is further reason to salute her contribution to arts journalism. —Keith Clarke

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CAROL LAZIER

President

San Diego Opera

Opera is full of heroic characters, but one of this year's greatest heroes is a real person: Carol Lazier, who stepped into the spotlight last March and took extraordinary measures to keep [San Diego Opera](#) from shutting its doors forever.

On March 19, the company announced that it would [cease all operations](#) at the end of the 2014 season. According to longtime General and Artistic Director Ian Campbell, San Diego Opera, which had begun presenting performances as San Diego Opera Guild in 1950 before incorporating in 1965, had apparently exhausted all of its resources.

The decision, announced as a unanimous vote among board members, shocked insiders. San Diego has long been rated among the top ten companies in the nation, but suddenly it looked about to go the way of New York City Opera, Opera Boston, and Baltimore Opera.

In the days that followed, questions arose: the company had ended its most recent fiscal year debt-free and with a surplus, so why the closure? News reports soon revealed that Campbell and his ex-wife had received combined salaries of nearly \$1 million in 2009—a disproportionate slice of the company's \$16.3 million

operating budget. Even more curious was the news that only 33 of the company's 58 board members were in attendance when that initial vote to close the company was taken.

Enter Lazier, a longtime board member who seemed determined to save the company. Elected the new board president in a tempestuous April 18 meeting in which 13 board members resigned, [Lazier urged the remaining members](#) to overturn the dissolution vote and consider alternatives. She launched a crowd-funding campaign, and pledged \$1 million of her own money to keep the doors open. That turned the tide; donations began pouring in. On May 19, after raising more than \$4.5 million, the reconstituted board rescinded the vote to cease operations and announced that the company would present a three-opera season in 2015.

Asked to describe Lazier, one of her colleagues on the board of directors called her someone who “walks quietly but carries a strong stick.” For her part, Lazier seemed eager to deflect attention away from herself and get on with the business of producing opera. “The public spoke, we listened, and we’re open for business,” she said. —Georgia Rowe



ALEXANDER LOMBARD

President and CEO

Lake George Music Festival

Who abandons a doctoral degree program, a fulltime teaching position, any hope of a decent social life, and financial stability to devote 40 to 50 unpaid hours a week to pursuing a dream? Alexander Lombard did just that when he created the [Lake George Music Festival](#) in upstate New York.

A talented pianist and teacher, Lombard had participated in numerous summer festivals and had long felt it would be great to have “one of these” in his hometown of Lake George. Spurred by his belief that his generation of emerging professional musicians—the “20-somethings”—were eager for a collaborative artists’

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retreat that focused on performing and networking rather than lessons or master classes, Lombard took a leap of faith in 2011 and launched a three-day grass roots festival in two local churches.

Today, the festival is gearing up for its fifth anniversary in August with ten days of nightly chamber concerts, two full orchestra concerts, and community outreach performances and activities in just about every available public venue.

Defining itself as “an artist retreat for gifted young professionals,” the festival has hosted members of major orchestras, such as those of Philadelphia and Detroit, along with students and faculty from major conservatories from Juilliard to Curtis. Composers Richard Danielpour, David Lang, Libby Larsen, and David Ludwig are also active participants. Live festival recordings have been featured on a variety of radio programs, including NPR’s *Performance Today*.

From the beginning, Lombard has eschewed traditional distinctions among students, faculty, and guest artists, and instead

emphasizes collaboration and artistic growth. This populist attitude carries over to the festival’s decision, much debated, not to charge admission. “For now at least,” notes Lombard, “we’d rather have a full house . . . [than risk] decreasing our audience totals just for the money.”

The undeniable success of the Lake George Festival is all the more noteworthy in light of what one observer calls the “pervasive gloom-and-doom attitude towards the arts and especially classical and new music.

“Alex,” he continues, “has created a festival that has not only brought classical music to a community where it was previously missing, but has also brought the community to the music.”
—Susan Elliott

Orchestra musicians rarely make headlines, but [Ellen McSweeney](#) came to the classical world’s attention in a big way this year. Writing for her blog on [NewMusicBox](#), the Chicago-based violinist recounted a sorry incident in which she was having a hard time getting paid for playing in the 2013 Beethoven Festival orchestra.

The article was posted in June, after the Festival announced that it would present its fourth annual event in September. For McSweeney, the announcement was a stunner; she and others still hadn’t been paid for the previous year’s performances. According to McSweeney, she was still owed “in the neighborhood of PERIOD \$1,000.”

McSweeney writes on a variety of music-related subjects; previous posts have carried such titles as “The Power List: Why Women Aren’t Equals in New Music.” But “The Deafening Silence of the Beethoven Festival Musicians” touched a nerve (the article has 3,900 “likes” as of this writing). It cast light on the often devalued status of musicians—who, despite the rarefied image of classical music organizations, remain woefully underpaid. Freelancers, who don’t enjoy permanent, year-round posts with major groups,

receive especially small recompense. As McSweeney noted, many musicians, despite years of training and experience, still scramble to make ends meet.

McSweeney’s post didn’t simply reveal the Beethoven Festival’s questionable practices. It also pointed up the responses—of her fellow musicians, who seemed loathe to register their objections. A “deafening silence” pervaded the community, she wrote—one that revealed artists’ vulnerability. “Musicians,” she wrote, “were not only concerned that public complaint might have monetary consequences, but also about their own reputations.”

With her post, McSweeney went out on a limb for all of them. Even as she mused about the consequences of silence—and the fact that the Beethoven Festival eventually hired a whole new roster of musicians for 2014—she put herself at risk. But she felt it was only fair to inform the national music community of the debts that remained unpaid. It was the right thing to do. —Georgia Rowe [Post script: the 2014 Festival was cancelled, in no small part from being exposed by McSweeney. —Ed]



ELLEN MCSWEENEY
Musician and Blogger
NewMusicBox



MICHAEL MORGAN

Music Director

Oakland East Bay Symphony

No one ever accused Michael Morgan of playing it safe. Now in his 25th year as music director of the [Oakland East Bay Symphony](#), the conductor has charted a singular path—one that reflects the unique spirit of the diverse community he serves.

Throughout his tenure, Morgan's eclectic approach to programming has prompted him to mix appearances by rock stars, gospel singers, and funk masters with concerts featuring works by Beethoven and Brahms. He has shared the orchestra's programs with artists such as Carlos Santana, Isaac Hayes, local choirs,

and klezmer bands, and conducted large-scale performances of works such as Bernstein's *Mass*. Last year, he introduced a sitar concerto by Ravi Shankar; the current season has already featured an appearance by a jazz quintet. This month, he'll lead a holiday tribute concert to the late folksinger and activist Pete Seeger.

An outside observer might think these mix-and-match programs are simply the result of marketing strategies. But Morgan has a keen sense of the Bay Area's musical pulse. The D.C.-born, Oberlin-trained conductor has made his home in Oakland for years,

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and he can hold forth as fluently about the local jazz scene as he can about Mozart (another of his favorite composers.)

Morgan's work as music director has been transformative, but his reach extends well beyond the orchestra. Over the years, he's been a prime advocate for restoring music training in Oakland public schools. He has built the Oakland Youth Orchestra with similar success.

Morgan, who studied with Gunther Schuller and Seiji Ozawa at the Berkshire Music Center at Tanglewood, was a protégé of Leonard Bernstein, who invited him to make his New York Philharmonic debut in 1986. The same year, Sir Georg Solti chose

him as assistant conductor of the Chicago Symphony, a position he held for five years. Having made his operatic debut at Vienna State Opera conducting Mozart's *Abduction from the Seraglio*, he maintains his love of opera as music director of another East Bay-based company, Festival Opera.

When Morgan joined the Oakland East Bay Symphony, the downtown area was in desperate need of revitalization. Today, it's thriving—and Morgan's courageous, forward-thinking leadership is a big part of the reason. Morgan hasn't simply rebuilt his orchestra. He's helped chart a new course for the city he calls home. —Georgia Rowe



MATTHIAS NASKE

Intendant

Vienna Konzerthaus

The [Vienna Konzerthaus](#) has been struggling with debt since an expensive renovation in 2001. It receives only 13% in city funding, and it must hold its own against the famed Musikverein, where the ghosts of Mozart and Brahms are said to roam the halls.

But since [Matthias Naske became intendant](#) in July of 2013, the house has been forging a healthy future. The Vienna native, 49, has not only made the [financial challenges transparent](#), but taken an ambitious direction with programming.

Citing the need to avoid the "institutional arrogance" that can quickly put any organization in hot water, he has expanded jazz and world music series and even introduced experimental alternative bands under the premise that such acts are "already part of the heritage." "Local Heroes," one of four new series this season, will feature Vienna-based groups such as [Koenigleopold](#) and "Sofa Surfers."

Naske has expanded the children's music programming as well, offering five different subscription packages, with the new "Cinello" geared toward toddlers. He also created a strong partnership with the Wiener Symphoniker, which, among other appearances, is featured in one-hour concerts during the series [Fridays@7](#).

The spring and summer will bring new mini-festivals "[Gemischter Satz](#)," featuring music, literary readings, theater, and

art side-by-side, and "Bridges," which will focus on contemporary music outside Austria. Meanwhile, the leading contemporary festival Wien Modern is going strong this fall with the chamber ensemble Klangforum Wien, Arditti Quartet, and more.

This season features no less than 13 world premieres and 27 Austrian premieres, with composers ranging from John Adams and Mark Andre to Gyorgy Kurtág and Eno Poppe. With almost 29,000 subscribers, the house will feature up-and-coming artists such as [Patricia Kopatchinskaja](#) and Robin Ticciati while also hosting programs with the coveted baritone Matthias Goerne.

"I like to bring together the right people onstage with the right audience members and the right kind of communication in the right location," Naske said last year. "That for me is the definition of 'presenting.'"

A trained lawyer, Naske returned to Austria after serving as general director of Philharmonie Luxembourg and the Orchestre Philharmonique for over a decade. He also draws upon experience with organizations such as the Jeunesse Musicale Österreich, Gustav Mahler Youth Orchestra, and Camerata Academica Salzburg. —Rebecca Schmid

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SARA NEALY

General Director

Festival Opera

When Sara Nealy became general director of [Festival Opera](#) in 2011, she faced a decidedly uphill battle. Based in the suburban East Bay community of Walnut Creek, CA, the decades-old company suffered from declining attendance, recent regime changes, and a large deficit that had been building for years.

Nealy, who was still overseeing her final productions at the nearby Livermore Valley Opera, threw herself into the challenge. She immediately scaled back the company's large, grand-opera productions and focused on reversing its slide into debt. She produced a Make Our Garden Grow concert in which over 30 artists, several conductors, chorus, and orchestra, all donated their services. She presented a chamber opera titled *About Face—an Opera Experience*, and revived the company's popular Opera in the Park concert.

Her bold leadership and years of experience as a consultant in the for-profit world kept the company afloat. At the same time, Nealy began re-envisioning the company's future. In 2013, she joined with another regional company, West Bay Opera, to co-produce Verdi's

Otello. The production had separate runs in Walnut Creek and Palo Alto, and was well-received by critics and audiences alike.

Nealy's greatest strategy, however, has been to re-focus Festival Opera on chamber works. Earlier this year, it offered two chamber operas on Holocaust themes—*Another Sunrise*, by Jake Heggie and Gene Scheer, and *The Emperor of Atlantis* by Viktor Ullman. The double bill, which featured respected artists such as soprano Marie Plette and baritone Eugene Brancoveanu, drew capacity audiences.

Festival Opera will return to the chamber format next year, with a double bill of Holst's *Savitri* and Jack Perla's *River of Light*. Nealy has also announced that the company will cautiously return to presenting a mainstage production—a 2015 staging of Richard Strauss's *Ariadne auf Naxos*.

Could the company have stayed afloat without Nealy's cogent leadership? Perhaps. But her choices have been smart, resourceful, and essential to Festival Opera's continued existence—and to the Bay Area's cultural life. —Georgia Rowe



NICOLE PAIEMENT

Founder and Artistic Director

Opera Parallèle

Launching an opera company is always risky business, but dedicating one to contemporary work takes exceptional courage. When Nicole Paiement started [Opera Parallèle](#) in 2007, naysayers didn't expect it to last out the year. Today, 30 world premieres, 20 commissions, 134 performances, and 14 recordings later, it is a unique and treasured presence on the San Francisco music scene.

Paiement, a native of France, gained a Bay Area reputation through her teaching posts at the San Francisco Conservatory of Music and University of California, Santa Cruz. She directed new music groups Ensemble Parallèle and Blueprint, of which Opera Parallèle was a natural outgrowth. Paiement, who often collaborates with her husband, stage director Brian Staufenbiel, has said that she wanted to explore obscure corners of the repertoire. The idea

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was to work “in parallèle” with other organizations and art forms, producing operas that would enhance and expand audiences’ perceptions of multiple disciplines.

She’s cast a wide net. Working in various intimate venues around San Francisco—productions have been staged at the 900-seat Herbst Theatre, the 500-seat Marines Memorial, and the 700-seat Yerba Buena Center for the Arts—Paiement has delivered eye-opening productions of Lou Harrison’s *Young Caesar*, Philip Glass’s *Orphée*, Osvaldo Golijov’s *Ainadamar*, and Dante de Silva’s *Gesualdo, Prince of Madness*, among others.

Yet her greatest—and bravest—coup was the company’s June 2014 production of Adam Gorb’s *Anya 17*. The British composer’s opera, which incorporates a ripped-from-the-headlines libretto by Ben Kaye, examines international sex trafficking in a searing work for contemporary audiences, and Paiement

conducted it with exceptional commitment and fervor. *Anya 17* was a cultural event as well as a musical one; Paiement mounted it in conjunction with victim advocacy groups, who were present in the theater lobby to dispense information at each performance. The result was a production of uncommon impact and relevance.

Throughout her tenure with Opera Parallèle, Paiement’s reputation has grown. Earlier this year, she was named principal guest conductor of the Dallas Opera after conducting Tod Machover’s *Death and the Powers*; next month, she’ll return to Dallas to conduct the world premiere of Joby Talbot’s *Everest*. Working in a profession that often leaves women scandalously underrepresented, Paiement has established stellar credentials, and her work in San Francisco appears to be just the beginning.

—Georgia Rowe



MICHAEL PASTREICH
President and CEO
Florida Orchestra



Before he went into orchestra management, Michael Pastreich worked as a firefighter—apt training for the job he took in 2007 to run the [Florida Orchestra](#). Pastreich needed to put out many fires with the Tampa Bay area orchestra, which had a long track record of rocky finances. Among other problems, the orchestra had a structural deficit of \$3 million, and when the new CEO presented a bold plan to tackle it, much of the board resisted. “Within six months all but three board members were gone,” he said. “But our next three chairs came on because of [my] plan.”

Pastreich’s aggressive approach was a risk, but it paid off. Today, the debt is gone, and since his arrival the orchestra has raised \$48 million for its annual fund, endowment, and other campaigns—all during a recession that hit Florida especially hard. This season, he projects a balanced \$9.5 million budget and expects to negotiate a new contract with musicians to continue an upward trend in their compensation that began in 2012–13.

A high-profile move in the turnaround came when Pastreich, 46, undertook a multiyear cultural exchange program with Cuba,

at the suggestion of former Music Director Stefan Sanderling. It began in 2011 when a wind quintet of principals from the orchestra went to Havana to give a concert and master classes. “There was significant danger of political fallout within the Florida political structure and within the community,” Pastreich said. “It turned out to be overwhelmingly popular.”

The exchange has gone on to include a 2012 guest-conducting engagement by Enrique Perez Mesa, music director of the National Symphony Orchestra of Cuba; a concert by the Cuban orchestra in St. Petersburg six months later; and in 2013 a performance of the Sibelius Violin Concerto in Havana by Florida concertmaster Jeffrey Multer. Percussionists from Cuba are featured in a Florida Orchestra concert this season.

In another brave, somewhat counterintuitive move, the orchestra sharply reduced and simplified ticket prices—to \$45, \$30 and \$15—in the face of a long-term decline in ticket revenue. It also developed a series of rock-themed concerts such as “Radiohead Meets Brahms.” The strategy has worked. “Not only

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have we seen a 34 percent increase in paid attendance over the past five seasons, but the people buying the tickets don't look like our regular audience," he said. "They're a little bit less white and they're drastically younger."

And then there was the case of the unhappy music director. When Sanderling stepped down two years sooner than called for

in his contract, Pastreich mounted an impressive search for his successor. He brought in a virtual who's-who of up-and-coming conductors as candidates the past two seasons, leading to the appointment of Michael Francis, who assumes the job in 2015–16.

—John Fleming



MATTHEW PEACOCK

Founder and CEO
Streetwise Opera

As a former assistant editor of *Opera Now* magazine, Matthew Peacock could have spent a lifetime enjoying press tickets and lounging on the red plush of the stalls. But it was not enough. He would often leave his desk early to go and help out at a local shelter for the homeless, and he entertained the view that opera was not just for the well-heeled but could help to transform the lives of those less fortunate. In 2000 one of the people at his homeless shelter read out a press quote from a politician, who said, "The homeless are the people you step over coming out of the opera house." That made its mark, and was the catalyst to the formation of [Streetwise Opera](#), a remarkable company that has now been giving homeless people a voice for over a decade.

"It was a stupid stereotyping of two different worlds," Peacock said, "and it occurred to me that if these worlds—opera and homelessness—could be brought into the same arena, it could say something about the way art and society make an impact on each other." Starting as a small London operation, it has grown to include 11 homeless centers across the U.K. and has an international presence in Australia, Japan, and North America.

Peacock's conviction that opera could be a vehicle for helping homeless people and his determination to do something

about it was recognized in 2007 by then Prime Minister Gordon Brown, who included Peacock in his book *Britain's Everyday Heroes*. In 2011 he won a place on the Queen's birthday honours list. The recognition is well earned, but Peacock deflects the attention, insisting that it is the homeless people who deserve it for their extraordinary courage in overcoming obstacles to move their lives on.

"So many things that you think are impossible have just to do with courage, actually," he says. "It never surprises me anymore that our performers can do so much, because of their courage, and the artistic standard of what we do has been a bit of a surprise actually."

It was a surprise for critics, too, including the opera doyen Rodney Milnes, who described Streetwise's first production of Britten's *Canticles*, staged around Westminster Abbey, as "Truly awe-inspiring. . . . Cynics detecting political correctness in overdrive would have felt satisfied if the results were makeshift and amateurish, but the opposite was true. Musically, the performances were superb." —Keith Clarke

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JOANNE POLK
Pianist, Teacher, Recording Artist

An evening in New York's Merkin Hall nearly three decades ago set pianist Joanne Polk on the road to becoming one of the country's staunchest advocates for music written by women. Moved to tears by a performance of *Parable*, by Judith Lang Zaimont, Polk sought out the composer, who soon became a close friend who schooled her in the many challenges facing female composers.

"I began to research music by women and discovered how few female composers were ever recorded," says Polk, "so I vowed

to record as many female composers, living and historical, as possible." She released her first CD, *Completely Clara* (Schumann) with soprano Korliss Uecker, in 1992. Five years later she paid tribute to Zaimont with *Zones*, a recording of the composer's piano trios and preludes.

She has been particularly keen on composer/pianist Amy Beach, recording her complete piano music across three CDs: *By the Still Waters*, *Under the Stars*, and *Fireflies*. She has explored Beach's chamber works with the Lark Quartet and the English

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Chamber Orchestra in two CDs, *Morning Glories* and *Empress of Night*. Her *Songs of Amy Beach*, with baritone Patrick Mason, received a Grammy nomination in 2007.

In the last decade, she has devoted albums to Zaimont (*Callisto*, 2003), Fanny Mendelssohn (*The Piano Sings*, 2010), and Fanny and her famous brother (*Fanny and Felix Mendelssohn*, 2012). Cecile Chaminade's piano music is the focus of her latest album, *The Flatterer*, which made it to No. 1 on the *Billboard* Classical chart last September.

A member of the piano faculty at Manhattan School of Music, Polk lobbies students and colleagues alike to include

works by women on their programs while continuing her own efforts to build a recorded archive of women's compositions. "The obstacles have been enormous," she notes, "not only in attracting record companies, but in funding the recordings and having the music taken seriously. The music can be dismissed as feminine and second-class."

Spurred by Zaimont's advice that "If you can't walk through, walk around," Polk does see the landscape changing. "I believe it is easier," she optimistically concludes, "for women writing music today to be taken seriously." And Polk's efforts are part of the reason.



EVE QUELER
Conductor, Impresaria

[Eve Queler](#) has been fighting the good fight for over half-a-century. Her first salvo was to aspire to a conducting career at all, in an era during which female maestri were as rare as gorgons, and about as welcome.

A native New Yorker, Queler graduated from the High School of Music and Art and then studied conducting with Carl Bamberg at Mannes College of Music and with Joseph Rosenstock. She became assistant conductor to Julius Rudel at New York City Opera and a coach with the short-lived Metropolitan Opera Studio.

In 1971, she founded the Opera Orchestra of New York, for which she still serves as conductor laureate and which she has by now led in well over 100 operas in concert at Carnegie Hall and elsewhere. Consequently, her conducting career has taken her to opera houses and orchestras throughout North and South America, Europe, Australia, and Asia.

In OONY, however, Queler created much more than a showcase and career springboard for herself. She has long used it as a platform to advocate for what she cares about and her influence has been felt nationwide, even worldwide.

She has continually taken chances on neglected masterworks like Wagner's *Rienzi*, Berlioz's *Benvenuto Cellini*, Smetana's *Dalibor*,

Strauss's *Die Liebe der Danae*, and other exotic titles that most opera companies cannot afford to risk in multi-performance stagings. Years before Glasnost and the ubiquitous Valery Gergiev, Queler began introducing then-obscure Slavic operas to the U.S., including Glinka's *Ivan Susanin*, Tchaikovsky's *Mazeppa*, Rimsky-Korsakov's *The Tsar's Bride*, and Shostakovich's orchestration of Mussorgsky's *Khovanshchina*, as well as the first Czech-language performances of Janáček's *Jenůfa* and *Katya Kabanova* and Dvořák's *Rusalka*, all of which she has helped to nudge into the Western opera house repertory.

Queler has cannily anchored such daring ventures with bankable stars like Montserrat Caballé, Renata Scottò, Marilyn Horne, Carlo Bergonzi, Plácido Domingo, Nicolai Gedda, and Richard Tucker, who have relished the chance to test-drive or reprise juicy but taxing roles in concert. Some of these glamorous artists were actually given early career breaks by Queler, including José Carreras, Renée Fleming, James Morris, Deborah Voigt, and Aprile Mollo, which underlines another one of her greatest legacies: her unflinching ear for young talent and her tireless efforts to support it.

These days, thanks to her own yeoman work, Queler is no longer an anomaly among conductors and presenters. Now an

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octogenarian, she continues to make music, energetically, boldly, and indefatigably. And not just any music: At the helm of OONY's

performances, she provides the kind of increasingly rare, ineffable, visceral thrill that reminds us why we love opera. —Cori Ellison



MARK SFORZINI
Artistic and Executive Director
St. Petersburg Opera Company

For 15 years, Mark Sforzini was principal bassoon of the Florida Orchestra. But he left that tenured position in 2007, the year before the bottom fell out of the economy, to make a bold leap into the unknown and found an opera company. Since its inaugural production in 2007 of *La Bohème*, [St. Petersburg Opera](#) has presented more than 20 operas and attracted a loyal and ever growing following. Its offerings include not just standard repertoire, but a healthy complement of less familiar works such as *Samson et Dalila*, *Ariadne auf Naxos*, *Susannah*, and *Norma*, most making their Tampa Bay area debuts. Stephen Sondheim's musicals are in the mix as well.

Sforzini, 45, also a composer, credits his early teacher, David McGill, former principal bassoon with the Cleveland and Chicago Symphony Orchestras, as a key influence in his transformation from orchestra player to opera conductor. "David was a Maria Callas fanatic, and he was always pointing out things about her musicality and phrasing," he said in a recent interview. "It was part of my training as a bassoonist to play in a vocal style."



ROBERT SPANO
Music Director
Atlanta Symphony Orchestra and Aspen Music Festival and School

When Robert Spano arrived at the [Atlanta Symphony Orchestra](#) as music director in 2001, the orchestra was in the doldrums. A music director who stayed too long at the party had left the ensemble divided in its loyalties; morale was at an all-time low; and repertoire

With a 2014–15 budget of \$850,000, St. Petersburg Opera is casting more and more singers with credits from major companies, and Sforzini and his creative team have drawn plaudits for inventive stagings at the Palladium Theater, a converted church that lacks an orchestra pit and wing space but makes up for its limitations with warmth and intimacy. In 2012, the company purchased a warehouse and undertook a renovation to include rehearsal space, costume and set shops, offices, and an art gallery; the \$1 million capital campaign to pay for it is nearly complete.

A key to the company's success is Sforzini's accessibility to the community through popular talks on opera he gives at local venues. He has a knack for entertainment that goes back to his youth in Alabama, where the opera-impresario-to-be was a 1979 World Hula Hoop Champion, a skill he put to zany good use in the party scene of *Die Fledermaus*.

"I am most proud," he says, "that through our outreach we have brought a lot of new fans to the art form by making it fun and understandable without dumbing it down."
—John Fleming

was decidedly predictable for a decidedly conservative audience.

Enter new-music specialist Spano, having spent five seasons building the Brooklyn Philharmonic into a highly regarded testing ground for new and unusual repertoire.

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The antithesis of the remote maestro, Spano used his considerable energy, affability, and passion for the art form to heal the orchestra. He listened, he cajoled, he inspired, and the end result was not only a better-sounding ensemble but a far more united ASO community.

Which, in turn, enabled him to till the soil of new music and musicians—one of his passions. Spano calls nurturing composers “the biggest joy in my life.” Since he arrived, the orchestra has performed over 100 works written within the last 60 years, including seven ASO-commissioned world premieres, most of them by the Spano-launched Atlanta School of Composers—[Jennifer Higdon](#), [Christopher Theofanidis](#), [Osvaldo Golijov](#), [Michael Gandolfi](#), and [Adam Schoenberg](#). Golijov calls him “a shaman with a beat. Every time I give him a new piece, he understands it better than I do. . . . Maybe it’s because he’s a composer too.”

And a teacher. His credentials range from Oberlin faculty member to head of the Conducting Institute and director of the Festival of Contemporary Music at Tanglewood to Emory University artist-in-residence to, most recently, music director of the [Aspen Music Festival and School](#).

Spano has the courage of his convictions: When the orchestra’s trip to Carnegie Hall to perform the Britten *War Requiem* last May was at risk of cancellation, he personally stepped forward with the funds to make up the difference. “I marched in to one of our symphony board meetings and said this is not going to be canceled,” he told *The New York Times* in a recent interview. “There are people who think it should be canceled, I don’t agree with them, I’m putting \$50,000 on the table right now. Who’s going to join me?” The ASO and its stellar chorus were able to make the trip after all; the performance was gripping and a huge success.

When the ASO parent, Woodruff Arts Center, locked the Atlanta musicians out earlier this fall, Spano boldly took on his bosses and argued in defense of the musicians, both in public statements and private meetings with WAC officials.

Affable, energetic, and musical to the core, Spano goes the extra mile—be it in the Rocky Mountains of Colorado or the red clay of Georgia—and the music world is all the better for it.
—Susan Elliott

BECKY STAROBIN

President
Bridge Records



Pierre Boulez said it couldn’t be recorded. George Crumb’s most ambitious work to date, *Star-Child* (1977), requiring four different conductors and 70 different percussion instruments, nevertheless made it onto compact disc on [Bridge Records](#) and won a 2001 Grammy Award.

Leading the way was Becky Starobin, president of the label since 2006 and, until then, managing director. In an age when major labels pander to the masses, issuing little or no new classical repertoire, about half of Bridge Records’s catalogue consists of contemporary music, with a roster running from Elliott Carter and Charles Wuorinen to Hans Werner Henze and Henri Dutilleux. It also manages composers such as Crumb, Paul Lansky, and Danish native [Poul Ruders](#).

A trained violinist, Starobin, 63, has helped ensure an audience for composers whose works might otherwise be neglected, not only through recordings (a performance of Ruders’s Symphony No. 5 with the Danish National Radio Symphony Orchestra, part of a complete cycle, comes out in 2016) but also commissions: she played a role in conceiving Ruders’s Symphony No. 4 “An Organ Symphony” (2010), which has so far been performed by the Dallas Symphony Orchestra, City of Birmingham Symphony Orchestra, and the Odense Symphony Orchestra.

The mission of Bridge Records has not wavered since Starobin and her husband, guitarist David Starobin, founded it in 1981. Writing of their rationale, David Starobin cited “the need to create a wide-ranging forum for repertoire and performance—

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a home for the exceptionally interesting and challenging personality—performer and composer alike.” Upcoming projects include a recording of all Carlisle Floyd’s major operas, a George Crumb 85th-birthday set, and the Paul Lansky cantata *Contemplating Weather*.

And there is no reason to think these albums won’t sell hundreds of copies. A [recent release](#) of pianist Leon Fleisher performing works by Perle, Mompou, Koston, Kern, and more

topped the Nielsen charts in late September. Writing in the *New Yorker*, Alex Ross called the recording one of Fleisher’s [“finest hours on record.”](#)

Bridge is also making the transition to cyberspace thanks to the Starobins’ son, Rob, who oversees web distribution via platforms such as Spotify, iTunes, Archiv Music, and Amazon. Currently in the works is a digital-only compilation of the complete Beethoven Piano Sonatas performed by Garrick Ohlsson.
—Rebecca Schmid



STANFORD THOMPSON

Founder and Artistic Director

Play On, Philly!

Chairman

El Sistema USA

Last April, a chamber orchestra from West Philadelphia’s St. Francis de Sales School performed the first movement of Mozart’s *A Little Night Music* under the baton of Yannick Nézet-Séguin. “It’s just like a really great privilege,” said the 14-year-old violinist Raven Burckhalter in an [ABC news broadcast](#). “Because there are other music programs for kids, but they’re not as intense.”

Burckhalter is one of over 200 students in the Philadelphia area to receive tuition-free instruction on an orchestral instrument as well as in training in choral singing, composition, and chamber music through [Play on, Philly!](#) The after-school program started out as a “big experiment,” in the words of founder and artistic director Stanford Thompson, 27. After graduating from the first class of [New England Conservatory’s Sistema Fellows Program](#), he launched Play on... as a pilot course at St. Francis de Sales with the support of philanthropist Carole Haas Gravagno, in 2011.

“It was a scary thing to spend so much money on a small number of kids,” he recalled in a [recent speech](#). “And [to see if] this could inspire more of this kind of work inspire throughout the city... and maybe even throughout the country.”

Today, thanks to Thompson’s efforts, Play on, Philly! has grown into one of the biggest success stories of [El Sistema USA](#), modelled after the famous Venezuelan social action program

invented by José Antonio Abreu. The program, which has attracted guest conductors from Sir Simon Rattle to Bobby McFerrin, has had measurable impact on its students.

According to a study by the non-profit consulting group WolfBrown, Play on Philly! students scored an average of 10 points higher on standardized tests and had 30 percent fewer absences from school. The program, which sets out to develop cognitive functions such as working memory and selective attention, requires that students maintain a certain grade level to participate.

“Progress IS a sustained relationship-building effort of providing exposure to classical music, but it matters how that work is implemented,” [writes Thompson](#), an accomplished professional trumpeter. “The best ideas to reach these communities mean nothing if we are not ready to give our stage to them.”

Since he launched Play on..., Thompson is credited with raising millions in funds for Philadelphia-based social action music programs. He is a trustee of the Interlochen Center for the Arts, Chairman of the Curtis Institute of Music Alumni Council, and Chairman of El Sistema, USA.

A new documentary, [Crescendo! The Power of Music](#), by filmmakers Jamie Bernstein and Elizabeth Kling, chronicles the lives of two Play on, Philly! children, including Raven Burckhalter. Who knows where we’ll see her next? —Rebecca Schmid

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KAREN ZORN
President
Longy School of Music

When Karen Zorn took over as president of the Cambridge, MA-based [Longy School of Music](#) in 2007, the school faced grave financial challenges. She recognized immediately that radical change was needed, especially if the school hoped to keep its doors open through its centenary in 2015.

Thanks largely to Zorn's bold initiatives, the Longy School is a very different place from what it was eight years ago. A major part of its transformation was the merger with Bard College in 2012, which paved the way to balancing the budget, boosting enrollment, and forging a partnership with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and the El Sistema-based Youth Orchestra of Los Angeles. In January 2013, Longy and Bard launched a one-year Master of Arts in Teaching (MAT) degree in Los Angeles, which specializes in El Sistema training for teachers.

None of this has come about easily. Zorn had to clarify what the new Longy's identity should be and win a consensus among its stakeholders. And there were some tough calls, not least the decision to eliminate Longy's popular community music program. That sparked loud criticism, but Zorn stuck to her guns, maintaining that private lessons were for the most part available only to

families who could afford them, whereas the new programs would be "a place where we are fulfilling the school's mission to prepare musicians to make a difference in the world."

"The more conservatory students we train, the greater the number of students they can reach in their own communities, particularly children in underserved communities who might never otherwise be able to experience music instruction."

The latest fruits of the Longy-Bard partnership is [a training orchestra](#), announced in late October. The three-year program for post-graduate instrumentalists grants a masters of music degree in "Curatorial, Critical and Performance Studies." Modelled on the New World Symphony, the orchestra is already accepting applications for its first, 2014–15 season. Orchestra members receive a full tuition fellowship and an annual living stipend of \$24,000.

Forging radical change requires fortitude and courage. Zorn's reserves of both were recognized when El Sistema's celebrated founder José Antonio Abreu declared Longy "the ideal organization to advance El Sistema's mission in Venezuela and the United States."
—Keith Clarke

About THE AUTHORS



Keith Clarke is a freelance music journalist and consulting editor of *Classical Music* magazine, which he edited for 21 years. He has been the London correspondent for Musical America and MusicalAmerica.com since 1999.



Georgia Rowe has been a Bay Area arts writer since 1986. She is *Opera News*' chief San Francisco correspondent, and a frequent contributor to *San Francisco Classical Voice*, Musical America, *San Francisco Examiner*, and others. Her work has also appeared in *Gramophone*.



Cori Ellison is the dramaturg at Glyndebourne Festival Opera and a member of the Vocal Arts Faculty at the Juilliard School. She was the staff dramaturg at New York City Opera (1997–2010), and has served in that capacity for numerous companies. She also creates supertitles and helped launch Met Titles. Her English singing translations include *Hansel and Gretel* (NYCO), *La vestale* (English National Opera), and *Cheryomushki* (Bard). She writes for the *The New York Times*, appears on the Metropolitan Opera's radio broadcasts, and leads master classes for young singers worldwide.



Rebecca Schmid is a music writer based in Berlin. In addition to Musical America, she contributes regularly to publications such as *The New York Times*, *Financial Times*, *neue musikzeitung*, and *The Strad*.



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*.



Joshua Simka, a freelance writer and musician, studied voice at The Juilliard School and is now editorial assistant at *The Juilliard Journal*, to which he frequently contributes articles on opera and song.



Maya Pritsker is a Russian-American journalist, music critic, and cultural commentator. Born and educated in Moscow, she is currently based in New York, where she writes and lectures in Russian and in English and produces a weekly arts and culture show for the Russian Television Network of America (RTN/WMNB).



Rachel Straus, MusicalAmerica.com's dance critic, teaches dance history at The Juilliard School and writes program notes for the Jacob's Pillow Dance Festival. Her more than 200 articles are archived at rachelstraus.com.

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