

# Composers, Conductors, Congress, and More

A roundup of recent activity by the League of American Orchestras



2018 Bruno Walter National Conductor Preview participants: from left, Lidiya Yankovskaya, Lee Mills, Mélisse Brunet, Raúl Gómez-Rojas, Ankush Kumar Bahl, and Nadège Foofat

**2018 National Conductor Preview**  
The [League of American Orchestras Bruno Walter National Conductor Preview](#), held April 3-4 and hosted by the Nashville Symphony, spotlighted six conductors this year: Ankush Kumar Bahl, Mélisse Brunet, Nadège Foofat, Raúl Gómez-Rojas, Lee Mills, and Lidiya Yankovskaya. The three men and three women—selected by an independent panel of music professionals for their experience, talent, leadership potential, and commitment to a career in service to American orchestras—

represent a wide range of backgrounds, with roots in Canada, Costa Rica, India, France, Russia, and the U.S. In addition to podium skills, they are accomplished in new and Baroque music, opera, jazz, young-musician mentorship, El Sistema-inspired music education, and more. The National Conductor Preview is one of the field's most effective pathways for orchestral search committees and industry professionals to encounter new talent.

Over two days, the conductors were observed as they rehearsed with the

Nashville Symphony and Music Director Giancarlo Guerrero. The League provided educational programming for attendees as well as the conductors. Henry Fogel, former president of the League, led a presentation for preview attendees about launching and executing a successful music director search. He also led a group discussion with the conductors, advising them how to navigate the music director search process. Conductors participated in mentoring sessions with Guerrero and Nashville Symphony musicians, and Nashville Symphony staff advised the conductors in areas such as orchestra operations and fundraising.

The event culminated with the six conductors leading a public performance by the Nashville Symphony, an eclectic program of works by Beethoven, Bernstein, Debussy, Tchaikovsky, and contemporary composer Kip Winger. The concert was live-streamed for free and made available for viewing for 45 days after the performance. The National Conductor Preview, held every other year, is a major pipeline for emerging conductors, with more than 50 orchestras engaging participants in conductor/music director appointments as a direct result since 1995.

The 2018 Bruno Walter National Conductor Preview is made possible by a generous gift from Martha Rivers Ingram. Additional support is provided by a generous grant from the National Endowment for the Arts.

## Treaty Negotiations Ahead for Musical Instruments and Protected Species

The League of American Orchestras assists orchestras as they navigate the permit requirements for international tours, and this summer and fall the League is also deeply engaged in efforts to improve the policies that restrict musicians from using their instruments across the globe. Next steps will build on recent successes in this area. Rules adopted by the U.S. Fish and Wildlife Service and policymakers in other countries this spring have now exempted most musical instruments from permit requirements for travel if they contain non-Brazilian rosewood. Changes are still needed to ensure that musicians will be able to buy and sell their instruments with ease, and to improve the process for obtaining and using the travel permits that are still required for instruments that contain ivory, tortoiseshell, and other more highly protected species material.

Action in the coming months will set the stage for decisions taken by the 183 global parties to the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES), when the terms of the treaty are renegotiated in May of 2019. Read [an in-depth article](#) in the Spring 2018 issue of *Symphony* magazine about how rules under the international treaty that manages endangered species had severe unintended consequences for orchestras and musicians. And then stay up to date with how the League is working in partnership with global music organizations and conservation leaders by visiting the “Travel with Instruments” section of the League’s Advocacy pages at <https://americanorchestras.org/advocacy-government.html>.

### Supporting Women Composers

Now in its fourth year, the [Women Composers Readings and Commissions](#) program from the League of American Orchestras continues to be a vital pipeline for new orchestral music in the U.S. Administered by American Composers Orchestra and supported by the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation, the program gives



Peter Gahhushkin/Downtowmusic.net



Dana Linnane



Frank Lehman

2018 recipients of League of American Orchestras Women Composers Commissions (from top) Robin Holcomb, Andrea Reinkemeyer, and Stacy Garrop

\$15,000 grants to composers and pairs them with orchestras. Recipients of the 2018 round of grants are composers Stacy Garrop, Robin Holcomb, and Andrea Reinkemeyer. Reinkemeyer’s work will be premiered by the Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra and Music Director Carlos Miguel Prieto on January 10, 2019. Garrop’s work will be premiered by the St. Louis Symphony Orchestra, and Holcomb’s by the Portland Symphony Orchestra (Maine), with further details to be announced. The Women Composers Readings and Commissions program is embedded in EarShot, an initiative of American Composers Orchestra in collaboration with American Composers Forum, the League of American Orchestras, and New Music USA.

Since the program’s inception in 2014, ten composers have received commissions. 2014 commission recipient Julia Adolphe’s *Unearth, Release* (Concerto for Viola and Orchestra) received its New York premiere

in 2016 by the New York Philharmonic. Melody Eötvös’s *Red Dirt | Silver Rain* was premiered at Carnegie Hall in 2015 by American Composers Orchestra. On April 6, 2018, the Columbus Symphony premiered *Ciprés* by 2015 grant recipient Andreia Pinto-Correia. Xi Wang, also a 2015 recipient, is working on a piece for the Berkeley Symphony Orchestra for a future season. 2016 program recipients were Chen-Hui Jen, whose work *in eternal dusk* was premiered by the Indianapolis Chamber Orchestra on January 27, 2018, as well as Wang Jie and Hannah Lash (premieres to be announced).

“Thanks in large part to our Women Composers program, for the past four years audiences across America have been introduced to an array of significant new works composed by women,” said Jesse Rosen, the League’s President and CEO. “The Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation’s support has been instrumental in bringing this important work to the forefront, more



Connecting with Congress: On April 11, 2018, members of the Albany (NY) Symphony Orchestra's Brass Quintet gave a pop-up concert on Capitol Hill in Washington, D.C. The concert was part of the 2018 Shift Festival of American Orchestras in Washington, which brought live orchestral music to sites and venues throughout the capital city. After the pop-up concert, representatives from the Albany Symphony including Principal Trumpet Eric Berlin, Music Director David Alan Miller, Executive Director Anna Kuwabara, Marketing and Patron Services Manager Justin Cook, and the League's Washington-based advocacy team, Heather Noonan and Najean Lee, met with a staff member from the office of U.S. Senator Kirsten Gillibrand (NY).

pertinent now than ever in this moment of cultural reckoning.”

### Orchestras Connecting with Congress

Elected officials are returning to their home districts and states with increased frequency in the months ahead, with the longest recess period taking place this August. [Congressional recesses](#) are ideal times for orchestra stakeholders to meet with their senators and representatives, whether by inviting officials or their staff to attend a community engagement event, or visiting them in their district office to sit down and discuss the local impact of federal policies. With major decisions ahead related to the National Endowment for the Arts, arts education, and tax policies, orchestras are making plans and brushing up on the League's advice about how to be an effective orchestra advocate. Visit the Advocacy page of the League's

website at <https://americanorchestras.org/advocacy-government.html> to find background information and talking points on the latest key policy issues, a calendar of the exact dates when members of Congress will be returning to their home states, and an indispensable resource from the League, *Playing Your Part: An Orchestra's Guide to Public Policy Advocacy*.

### League Awards Futures Fund Grants to Smaller-Budget Orchestras and Youth Orchestras

Highlighting the groundswell of innovation at smaller-budget orchestras and youth orchestras across the country, seventeen orchestras have received \$30,000 American Orchestras' Futures Fund grants from the League of American Orchestras, made

possible with the generous support of the Ann & Gordon Getty Foundation. An additional five orchestras have been selected to receive seed grants of \$6,000 each. The Futures Funds grants were announced on April 19, 2018.

The League's American Orchestras' Futures Fund is a competitive grants program designed to advance the innovative work of orchestras. Initiatives by the 2018 grantees include performing contemporary repertoire by American composers, developing imaginative concert experiences and cross-cultural artistic programming, increasing diversity and access to music education, connecting with new immigrants and underserved populations, extending reach via digital streaming initiatives, investing in audience-development research, and working with multiple populations in rural and urban regions. Descriptions of the initiatives by the 2018 grantees supported by the American Orchestras' Futures Fund [can be found here](#).

The \$4.5 million American Orchestras' Futures Fund program included a first round of grants for larger-budget orchestras, announced in 2017. For this 2018 round, smaller-budget and youth orchestras that are based in the U.S. and that are members of the League of American Orchestras were eligible to apply. An independent review panel selected the orchestras. Learn more about the [American Orchestras' Futures Fund here](#).

### Five Orchestra Musicians Receive League's Ford Musician Awards for Excellence in Community Service

Five orchestra musicians will receive Ford Musician Awards for Excellence in

Community Service from the League of American Orchestras at the League's 73rd National Conference in Chicago, June 13-15, 2018. Recognizing the transformative power of music, the Awards honor those in the orchestra field who employ music for the benefit of the greater community. In partnership with their orchestras and organizations, the musicians have used music to engage, inspire, and heal multiple populations: Latinx children and teens, rural communities with limited access to quality music education, cancer patients and their families, the homeless and housing-insecure, and visual and performing artists united in support of sheltered animals.

The five award recipients and their orchestras and programs are:

- Jeffrey Barker, associate principal flute, Seattle Symphony: Lullaby Project, Sensory Friendly Concerts, Simple Gifts Initiative, among others;
- John R. Beck, principal percussion, Winston-Salem Symphony (NC): HealthRHYTHMS drumming with cancer and pediatric behavioral health patients; collaborative research study with physicians on the benefits of interactive group drumming;
- Jody Chaffee, flute II and piccolo chair, community engagement director, personnel manager, librarian, Firelands Symphony Orchestra and Chorale (OH): Providing in-school access to quality music programs for students in rural communities;
- Erin Hannigan, principal oboe, Dallas Symphony Orchestra: Concerts for Kindness, DSO's Young Strings program, DSO Teen Council;
- Juan Ramirez, violin, Atlanta Symphony Orchestra: Musicians in Schools, Musicians in Communities, and Talent Development Program, among others.

Now in its third year, the League's Ford Musician Awards program, made possible by the generous support of Ford Motor



**The Volunteer Council of the League of American Orchestras Salutes the League on its 75th Anniversary**

As the only national organization dedicated solely to the orchestra experience, the League links more than 2,000 organizations and individuals across North America, providing invaluable resources over the years. This includes volunteers who demonstrate outstanding support for their orchestras.

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**EarShot New Music Readings:  
3 Composers, 10 Scores, 3  
Orchestras**


This winter and spring, the Fort Wayne Philharmonic, Charlotte Symphony, and Jacksonville Symphony became the latest orchestras to present readings of works by emerging composers through EarShot, the National Orchestra Composition Discovery Network. EarShot is administered by American Composers Orchestra in collaboration with American Composers Forum, the League of American Orchestras, and New Music USA. EarShot's New Music Readings are the culmination of several days of rehearsals, feedback sessions, and work with mentor composers. The process gives composers the opportunity to hear their scores and get feedback from orchestra musicians and conductors, and orchestras get to perform music—hot off the press—by up-and-coming composers.

In all, ten new works received public readings between February and April. On February 7, Fort Wayne Philharmonic Music Director Andrew Constantine conducted readings of Nathan Kelly's *Redwood*, Sohwa Lee's *Palindrome*, and Robert Rankin's *Nijinsky Dances*. On March 1, the Charlotte Symphony performed readings of Niloufar Iravani's *Fantasy*, Jihyun Kim's *At Dawn*, and Felipe Nieto's *Artesiana Sonora*, led by Charlotte Symphony Assistant Conductor Chris-


topher James Lees. On April 20, Music Director Courtney Lewis conducted the Jacksonville Symphony in readings of Nicholas Bentz's *E.W. Korngold Goes to Kikkatsu*, Will Healy's *Kolmanskop*, Ursula Kwong-Brown's *Night & Day*, and Meng Wang's *Blooming in the Long Dark Winter's*

*Night*. Mentor composers working with the emerging composers were Melinda Wagner, Chen Yi, and Alex Mincek (Fort Wayne); Trevor Weston, Wang Jie, and Robert Beaser (Charlotte); and Courtney Bryan, Marcos Balter, and Steven Mackey (Jacksonville). **S**


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