

The National Orchestral Association

A PROUD LEGACY OF INCLUSION

When the National Orchestral Association was founded in 1930, major American orchestras (including the New York Philharmonic) were comprised almost entirely of European-trained white males. To address this situation, the NOA's founding music director, Leon Barzin, decided to form a training orchestra that would permit students to play with outstanding international soloists at major venues like Carnegie Hall. Maestro Barzin auditioned all potential players behind a curtain so that only the talent and skill of the auditioner would be considered. The result was incredible. Unlike other orchestras at the time, the National Orchestral Association's symphony orchestra included talented women and African-Americans. Maestro Barzin believed that talent alone should be the sole criteria for admission to the ranks of any performing arts organization. Blind auditions facilitated the advancement of individuals who might otherwise not have opportunities to play with a major orchestra.

Maestro Barzin also pioneered efforts to bring music to inner-city students. When performing concerts at local public schools, Maestro Barzin would invite the students to come up to the stage to interact with performers and let them handle the musical instruments. Maestro Barzin stated that for many students, this was the first time they had actually seen or touched musical instruments. These in-school performances became a model for other organizations to bring music education to traditionally underserved communities. The National Orchestral Association is grateful for the rich legacy provided by Maestro Barzin's early efforts to make the symphony orchestra more inclusive.

Matthew J. Trachtenberg
President

MUSIC IN SPRINGFIELD, OHIO

The Springfield Symphony Orchestra is a cornerstone of the cultural life in Southwestern Ohio. The Springfield Symphony Orchestra was founded in 1943 with William Fiedler serving as the organization's first principal conductor. Since its founding, the Springfield Symphony Orchestra has performed in a variety of local venues. During the Symphony's 50th Anniversary Season (1993-94), the Symphony gave its first performance in Clark State Performing Art Center's Kuss Auditorium. The organization performs numerous concerts for young people, with students from Clark, Greene, Champaign, and Madison counties in attendance. For more information about the Symphony, please visit www.springfieldsym.org.

AIKEN SYMPHONY, SOUTH CAROLINA

Since 1986, The Aiken Symphony Orchestra has been supported by The Friends of the Aiken Symphony Orchestra, which seeks individual contributions, corporate sponsorships and foundation support. This organization provides a financial backbone for the Symphony and helps to sponsor the Youth Concert Series in both Aiken and Edgefield Counties. To date, more than 35,500 grade school students have attended these concerts. We are proud to contribute to The Friends of the Aiken Symphony Orchestra for its important work in enriching the cultural life in Aiken and surrounding communities. The Friends of the Aiken Symphony Orchestra is an all-volunteer organization that partners with corporate sponsors to fund area-wide concerts. In addition, this organization facilitates advertising in concert programs by local businesses. Aiken, South Carolina is a beautiful community known for its hospitality and equestrian activities. To learn more about the Friends of the Aiken Symphony, please visit the organization's website at www.friendsofaikensymphony.org.

MUSIC IN WASHINGTON STATE

The National Orchestral Association is proud to support the work of the Walla Walla Symphony. The organization was founded in 1854 and was named after the Walla Walla tribe of Native Americans. The Walla Walla Symphony has been an important part of the cultural life of the Walla Walla community since 1907. The Symphony is the "oldest continuously operating symphony west of the Mississippi," and is committed to making its region "a better place to live through awakening a passion for the arts in as many people as possible." The Symphony's vision is to attract audiences to programs of the highest artistic quality, and to provide wonderful musical experiences and deep and rich educational programs for the benefit of the Walla Walla community. The organization also provides extensive, free and low-cost offerings for youth and families because "no child with a love for music should be deprived of the opportunity to experience and learn about music due to socioeconomic status." For more information, please visit www.wwsymphony.org.



Maestro Barzin and students - NOA Public School Music Education Program circa 1947.

MUSIC IN PHILADELPHIA

The Settlement Music School was founded in 1908, and serves the Greater Philadelphia area. It is one of the oldest and largest community schools of the arts in the U.S. Settlement provides financial aid to more than 60% of its student population, with an aim to “ensure that arts education is accessible to all, from as young as 6 months to age 99.” Its branches “serve all eight counties in the Philadelphia region, in addition to more than 13 states across the country, ensuring that excellence in arts education is available to all, regardless of location.” For more information about Settlement Music School, please visit www.settlementmusic.org.

LYRIC CHAMBER MUSIC SOCIETY OF NEW YORK

We extend congratulations to the Lyric Chamber Music Society of New York, which is celebrating its 26th season. Lyric presents concerts in an intimate setting at the Kosciuszko Foundation, offering “up-close exposure to rising stars as well as Concert Masters and Principal Players from leading orchestras.” Lyric is also diligently involved in music education workshops and is committed to broadening its reach in underserved schools with and without music programs. To learn more, please visit www.lyricny.org.

STRING ORCHESTRA OF NEW YORK CITY

The String Orchestra of New York City (“SONYC”) is a conductor-less chamber group consisting of extraordinary string players. Founded in 1999, SONYC “is a pioneer of the concert hall, as well as the classroom, having given over 250 performances and close to 100 master classes for children of all ages and backgrounds, nationally as well as in New York City’s public schools.” SONYC “strives to inspire and educate its audiences.” To learn more about the String Orchestra of New York City, please visit www.stringorchestraofnyc.org.

MUSIC IN DETROIT

The Sphinx Organization was founded in 1996 by the American violinist Aaron Dworkin, and is dedicated to “increasing representation of Black and Latinx artists in classical music and recognizing excellence.” In addition to its well-known annual competition, the organization has created educational programs across the United States, which are free and aimed at developing interest in classical music in urban underserved areas. These programs include: Musical Encounters, School Dayz, Sphinx Preparatory Institute, Sphinx Performance Academy, and Sphinx Journeys. To learn more about the Sphinx Organization, please visit www.sphinxmusic.org.

METROPOLITAN OPERA RUSH TICKETS

The NOA is pleased to support the work of the Metropolitan Opera in providing low-priced rush tickets to various performances. These low-priced tickets provide a gateway for students to be exposed to opera. Since its initiation in 2006 by the late Dr. Agnes Varis and her husband, Karl Leichtman, these deeply-discounted tickets have given a lifeline to many low-income opera lovers who otherwise would not be able to attend performances at the Metropolitan Opera. For more information about the rush ticket program and performances at the Metropolitan Opera, please visit www.metopera.org.

SOUTH DAKOTA SYMPHONY

Founded in 1922, the South Dakota Symphony Orchestra has a rich history of performing concerts in towns throughout South Dakota. Performances are attended annually by over 50,000 people, with live streamed concerts available through a partnership with South Dakota P:ublic Broadcasting. To learn more about this organization, please visit www.sdsymphony.org.

SINGING IN SOUTH CAROLINA

The Aiken Singers was established in 2005 as a way of giving an outlet to people seeking to have fun and sing together without having to audition or join church choirs. Since its founding, the organization has expanded its membership to include the entire county of Aiken, South Carolina. Members come from all walks of life and span a wide variety of ages. Aiken Singers perform at a wide range of venues, with a special focus on retirement communities and nursing homes. In addition, the group has been featured in the Hopelands Summer Concert series and has provided entertainment for many local clubs and civic organizations. Through their public concerts, the organization has raised funds for local charities, including the Cumbee Center, Helping Hands, The Children’s Place, and the Warrior Project, among others. More recently, Aiken Singers has been taking sing-along programs into nursing homes and memory facilities. For more information, please visit www.aikensingerstest.org.

MUSIC IN FLORIDA

Located in Charlotte County, Florida, the Punta Gorda Symphony provides world-class musical performances under the direction of Maestro Raffaele Ponti. The Symphony performs a wide variety of classical music, featuring performances throughout the fall and spring seasons. Performances at the Charlotte Performing Arts Center feature well-known titles by such composers as Brahms, Copeland, Dvorak, Wagner, Schubert, Shostakovich, Rossini, Elgar, Rachmaninoff, and Rimsky-Korsakov.

In addition to their highly-praised classical music concerts, the orchestra also participates in “Cinematic Sounds,” a unique event for orchestra music and film lovers alike. The program was created to celebrate the music of great films that inspire audiences and are an integral part of great cinematic works. In many cases, young people are exposed to classical music only through film, and this program seeks to develop an interest in classical music through the use of music in film. The Punta Gorda Symphony also sponsors concerts by some of the best jazz musicians in southwest Florida on the beautiful lawn at Florida SouthWestern State College. For more information about the Punta Gorda Symphony, please visit www.pgsymphony.org.

MUSIC IN MICHIGAN

Beautiful northern Michigan is home to the Interlochen Center for the Arts. Interlochen was founded in 1928 to offer an immersive arts experience which fosters a sense of closeness, discovered only through a deep, shared appreciation. Generations of artists and arts enthusiasts have experienced the special and intangible magic that occurs on Interlochen’s campus, nestled between two pristine lakes and surrounded by quiet pines. It is a true artist’s retreat, serving students in grades 3-12, as well as adults of all ages. Interlochen aims to help young artists transform artistically and personally through its performance programs. The organization continually strives “to find new ways to stretch talents, build confidence, and help artists find their unique voice.” For more information about the Interlochen Center for the Arts, please visit www.interlochen.org.