



LAFF

THE LAFF SOCIETY Promoting Social and Professional Contacts Among Former Staff Members of the Ford Foundation

Spring 2019, No. 94



Nearly 100 people—LAFF members, family and friends, and Ford Foundation staff—attended the get-together March 21 at the renovated, recently re-opened and re-named Ford Foundation Center for Social Justice in New York City.

“Legacy is palpable in this room,” noted **Darren Walker**, the Foundation’s president, speaking to the gathering before they toured the building and attended a reception. “A legacy organization is only as good as its legacy.”

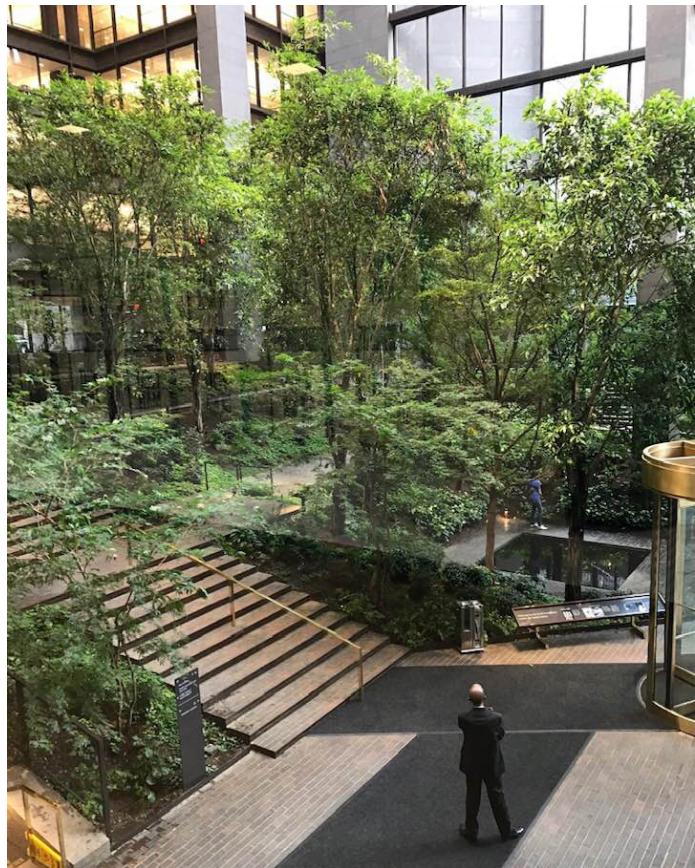
Shep Forman, ending nine years as LAFF’s president, described the Society as a “family that binds us to this institution. In subtle and small ways, we give something back.”

Recognizing the growing relationship between the Foundation, as it charts a changing future, and LAFF as a repository of its past, he emphasized the need to “reach out and be useful to a new generation”. *Continued on next page*

THE LAFF FAMILY GATHERS IN NEW YORK



Continuing the legacy: Shep Forman, LAFF's outgoing president, poses with Darren Walker, president of the Ford Foundation, and Suzanne Siskel, who with Betsy Campbell is one of LAFF's new co-presidents, addresses the gathering.



MEETING FRIENDS, TOURING THE BUILDING

As he ended his tenure as head of LAFF, Forman was presented a crystal globe, inscribed "with deepest appreciation and affection from the LAFF community".

Suzanne Siskel, one of LAFF's two new co-presidents, also spoke, noting as well the links between the Foundation's past and its expansive future.

Betsy Campbell, the other co-president, was unable to attend the gathering.

Michael Seltzer, a member of LAFF's executive committee and head of its New York City chapter, led a tour of the building, highlighted by the Foundation's new first-floor art gallery, "committed to exploring issues of justice and injustice". The gallery, as well as the re-created garden, is open to the public.

Walker had earlier described the pivotal role of art in the re-imagined Foundation: "Arts and creative expressions have played an indelible role in building social justice movements. We're thrilled to open the doors of this special space, a forum for artists to experiment and create a vibrant and necessary dialogue with the public."

The current exhibit in the 1,500-square-foot space, titled *Perilous Bodies*, illustrates the direction of the Foundation by exploring "the inhumanity and injustice created by divisions of gender, race, class and ethnicity. The artists in the exhibition offer a raw and honest look at the issues we must address heads-on to ensure dignity for all."

Photographs of the gathering in this newsletter were taken by LAFF members **Haskell Ward**, **Jon Funabiki**, **Bird Runningwater** and **Nellie Toma**. More are available on the Facebook pages of LAFF and Haskell Ward. ■

Among those enjoying the renovated Ford Foundation building, with its re-created garden: Michael Seltzer, left in the top photo, who is head of LAFF's New York chapter and a member of its executive committee, with Haskell Ward; Margaret Black, Michelle Sylvain and Nedra Gathers, a current Foundation staff member; and Suzanne Siskel, on the left, Shep Forman and Sheila Gordon, a member of LAFF's executive committee.



Michael Seltzer, in the photo to the left, led the tour of the newly named Ford Foundation Center for Social Justice, which includes a more open arrangement for offices and rooms named for human rights leaders. The gathering brought friends together, including Anita Achkhanian, left, and Norma Jimenez; Eugenia Chinsman, left, Linda Charles and Sheila Nelson; and Bird Runningwater and Audrey Simon.



Touring the building and mingling with friends.





Among the installations at the Foundation's inaugural exhibit in its new, public art gallery.



The LAFF Society

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Ginger Floyd re-connects with Bird Runningwater; Margaret Black is in deep discussion with Michael Seltzer; and Michael and Darren Walker greet the members as they explore the exhibit, *Perilous Bodies*, in the gallery described as "a special place, a forum for artists to experiment and create a vibrant and necessary dialogue with the public".

SYRIAN FAMILY COMES HOME TO TOWN RAVAGED BY WAR

By Christopher Reardon

The author, who worked for Ford Foundation's Office of Communications from 1992 to 2006, is Chief of Content for UNHCR, the United Nations Refugee Agency. This article, and the photos, published March 7 on the agency's website and reprinted here with permission, is an especially poignant description of the human toll of eight full years of war in Syria. It is just one of many that Reardon has written and edited on the plight of Syrian refugees, all of which, with graphic photographs and videos, are available on the UNHCR website.

Life as a refugee was never easy for Zahida, 35, who has been raising five children on her own ever since her husband went missing a few years into the war in Syria. In Lebanon, she said, jobs were scarce and rents were high. But coming home has brought new struggles.

"The destruction was indescribable, and at first I didn't recognize my town," she said. Her two-story home was reduced to rubble, and though relatives took them in, the windows and doors in their borrowed rooms were missing.

"There was no water, no electricity," she added. "We felt that we were in the stone age. But little by little, we made things better."

Zahida shared her family's story with United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees Filippo Grandi, who visited Syria in March to assess the massive humanitarian needs people are facing.

"This decision to come back is a difficult one, and we must respect that not all refugees and not all [internally] displaced people will make that decision quickly," Grandi said. "But for those who make that decision and voluntarily come back here, we must provide them with help—at least for their basic needs and their initial reintegration in their community."

Here in Souran, a dozen miles north of Hama in western Syria, the High Commissioner spent time with several families who have voluntarily returned after being displaced, often multiple times, for months or years. He also met with a newly formed women's group, visited a primary school that reopened in October and toured a bakery that opened in January—all with support from UNHCR, the UN Refugee Agency, and its partners.

Before the conflict, Souran was home to some 47,000 people, many of them farmers,



Filippo Grandi, United Nations High Commissioner for Refugees, walks through the wreckage of Souran with a child from the bombed-out village, and visits Zahida and her family after they and others returned "to our homes, to our land". ©UNHCR/Andrew McConnell

merchants and laborers. When armed groups overran the town in August 2016, it emptied overnight. Some residents sought refuge in Turkey or Lebanon; the rest fled to nearby Hama city or other parts of Syria.

Abdelkarim is among those who went to Hama, where, he told Grandi, frequent rent hikes forced his family to move from place to place for more than a year. Upon returning to Souran, he found his house filled with wreckage and stripped of anything of value. "There were no doors, no faucets," he said. "Even the nails were taken out."

With rats and insects keeping the family up at night, Abdelkarim set to work rehabilitating the house. He erected new interior walls and, with support from UNHCR, installed doors and windows that provide greater security.

Altogether, some 33,000 people have returned to Souran, mainly those who had

fled to nearby areas in Syria. At least a third of the town's former residents are still living elsewhere.

In 2018, an estimated 1.4 million Syrians who were displaced inside their own country have returned home, often trading one set of staggering hardships for another. Even so, they are a minority. After eight years of violence and destruction, millions remain internally displaced, with another 5.6 million refugees still living in neighboring countries and over 1 million Syrians dispersed to other parts of the world.

Zahida told Grandi she came home to Souran because life in exile was taking a heavy toll on her children. At age 14, her son dropped out of school to help support the family by working in a barbershop. But the money he earned was not enough to cover

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LEARNING NOT TO HATE: LESSONS FROM AUNT LUCY

By Sally Kohn

This article is adapted from Sally Kohn's book *The Opposite of Hate: A Field Guide to Repairing Our Humanity*. A similar version appeared in the April 10, 2018, issue of *Time* magazine.

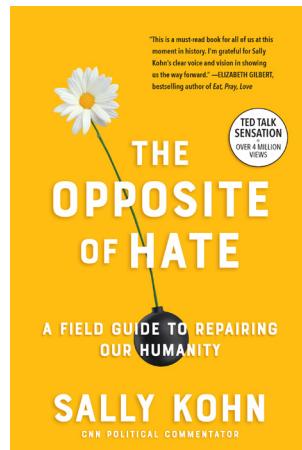
For the first 15 years of my career, I worked as a community organizer and activist to promote social and economic justice in the United States and worldwide, including from 2002 to 2004 as a Program Associate at the Ford Foundation in what was then the Governance and Civil Society program.

But working as an on-air commentator at Fox News, the bastion of ideological conservatism, may have taught me most about my values and progressivism as a whole.

During my time at the network I came to realize how condescending I'd been in my views about not only the people who worked at Fox News but the people watching at home. And condescension is just a snooty form of prejudice: we are condescending only to those we feel are inherently beneath us.

The more I got out of my own liberal bubble, the more I met other conservatives who were neither stupid nor hateful, or at least no more deliberately hateful than I was. Those experiences really challenged my biases and assumptions.

I'm not saying that Sean Hannity is the nicest person on the planet; his political views are certainly not anywhere near what I would reasonably call nice. What I am saying is that I realized that the person I'd thought of as entirely cruel, as the caricature of a horrific right-wing monster, is actually caring and kind, and a good dad and a supportive friend.



Much more complicated than the caricature in my mind.

Yet, at the same time I was getting to know and even like many conservatives I was also getting more and more hate mail from conservatives. Which presented a choice: Was I going to believe that most conservatives were like the ones I'd worked with at Fox News, or was I going to assume that most conservatives were like the ones sending me hateful messages online? Which was the exception, and which was the rule?

Honestly, I probably could have made a case either way. This was a decision that tested my core principles. I could choose either to hate most conservatives or not. I found my answer in my Aunt Lucy.

Aunt Lucy has a deep love for her friends and family, a great sense of humor and a laugh that feels like a tickle. Aunt Lucy (not her real name, by the way) lives in the middle of the country and is a conservative Republican. She also loves me and my partner and our daughter and welcomes us with open arms at every family occasion we manage to attend.

The few times we've cautiously talked politics, Aunt Lucy has been curious and kind. Aunt Lucy watches Fox News, and eventually it dawned on me that most Fox viewers are probably just like her—decent, curious about the news, intending to learn and do something good with the information.

I started to picture my Aunt Lucy when I would go on Fox, and then when I would go on CNN, and even when I would respond to people on Twitter. It made it easier for me to think and talk and act from a place of kindness, not hate, to not stereotype the invisible people on the other side of those screens but instead to imagine my aunt Lucy, someone I love and respect.

For me, it's infinitely more encouraging, not to mention more effective, to treat conservatives as a bunch of Aunt Lucys instead of a cache of trolls or a "basket of deplorables". Nobody is going to engage in a constructive dialogue with me if they think I believe they're a bridge-dwelling gnome or a totable pile of rot.

People often ask me how they can talk to their conservative relatives at family gatherings like Thanksgiving. I actually have a handy tool, taught to me by Matt Kohut and John Neffinger, authors of the book *Compelling People*, as well as their colleague Seth Pendleton, with whom I've worked leading media trainings and public-speaking workshops.

Imagine my Aunt Lucy says something about how she doesn't mean to be anti-immigrant or anything, but the economy is just really bad right now and we don't have enough jobs for the people who are already here. Now, my natural instinct is to argue:

Continued on next page

Syria *Continued from page 5*

the school fees for his sisters, who were falling behind in their education.

Their house here stood on a prime corner lot, but today lies in ruin. A concrete staircase dangles from the wreckage like a pendulum, tethered by a few strands of rebar.

"When I saw it, it was one of the saddest moments in my life," she said.

Now Zahida's oldest daughter attends catch-up classes at the new community center, and the three younger ones are enrolled at Al-Shuhada primary school, which reopened in November with UNHCR support. It is one

of five schools serving the community; 15 others remain closed, mainly due to structural damage. Because so many children have missed months or years of schooling, the crowded classrooms serve students whose ages differ by two or three years.

Grandi also paid a visit to Souran's only bakery, which opened in January with support from UNHCR. Previously the town had to get its bread from a supplier nearly a dozen miles away, but the new one here created 45 jobs and lowered the price of bread by 75 per cent. The bakery has since hired a second shift and goes through 10 tons of flour per day, helping to feed more than 12,000 people.

The High Commissioner met with a local

women's group that has helped some of those returning to Souran regain a sense of community and belonging.

"We wanted to come back to our homes, to our land," one woman told the High Commissioner. "And we wanted to recover our dignity. Outside of our country, it's not the same."

"We are starting from scratch," she added. "We hope we have enough strength to rebuild our lives, but we will need help from others."

UNHCR's policy is to help those who are displaced, both inside Syria and abroad, and to help ensure that Syrians who are voluntarily returning home and settling back into their communities receive the humanitarian support they urgently need. ■

"No, you're wrong, and let me explain the three reasons why!"

But what we know from neuroscience is that while we all need to use our frontal lobes to engage in a reasoned discussion—and to be open to persuasion—when we perceive an argument coming, our frontal lobes shut down and the fight-or-flight part of our brain turns on (the part of the brain, as we'll see later, that also holds our biases and stereotypes). If we want to keep the possibility of persuasion open, we have to stay conversational.

Also, in her statement, my Aunt Lucy isn't expressing cold hard facts so much as she's expressing a *feeling* about the facts as she understands them. And as every good couples counselor I've ever been to has told me, you can't argue with feelings. If my partner says I hurt her feelings, I can't say, "No, I didn't!" They're *her* feelings, and they're inherently valid by virtue of her feeling them.

So, instead of arguing, here's a tip, which uses the shorthand ABC.

The A stands for "affirm". First, you find a feeling that you can genuinely affirm. In this hypothetical conversation with my Aunt Lucy, I might say, "I'm also really worried about the economy right now." Or, "I completely agree it's important that everyone has access to a good job." It's important that I'm not making it up. It's not some act or gesture. I mean it. I can really, authentically agree with that part of what

Aunt Lucy is saying. So I start with that.

Next is B, for "bridge". It does not stand for "but". It also doesn't stand for "however", which is the Harvard of "buts". It's a bridge, a way of saying "and". You can actually just say "and"—or "that's why" or "actually" or "the thing is" or even "the good news is". Anything but "but". "But" basically invalidates whatever came before it. Like when I say to my partner, "I'm sorry, *but....*" According to those same couple's counselors, that means I'm not at all sorry. Apparently, that's what my partner thinks it means, too.

Then comes C: "convince". This is where I put whatever I was inclined to spit out in the first place, about how comprehensive immigration reform actually raises wages and working standards for immigrant *and* citizen workers, or whatever point I wanted to make.

In my experience, ABCing is hard to do in the moment but incredibly effective when done right. It's a powerful tool for what I call "connection-speech", which not only lets you make your point but helps you make it in a friendly, respectful way that can be heard.

But beyond the ABC tool, when people ask how to talk to their own Aunt Lucys about politics, I often ask how they talk with their family members about topics other than politics. Do they yell and scream at their aunt if she loves some movie they think is stupid? Of course not. Maybe they get heated and say things like, "Seriously? You don't think *Dirty Dancing* is the greatest love story of all time?"

But the conversation stays civil, and any outrage is secondary to the overwhelming spirit of love. I'm not going to disown Aunt Lucy for not liking *Dirty Dancing*.

Obviously, political issues are far more important. But still, I love Aunt Lucy infinitely more than I dislike Donald Trump. Remembering that helps. And, frankly, I have plenty of good friends and colleagues I don't see 100 percent eye to eye with but generally think are "on my side". What if I only agree with them on 90 percent of issues? Or 60 percent? Or 40 percent? Where do I draw the line between accepting we just "agree to disagree" and defining them as monstrous enemies? The thing is, I give "my people" on "my side" the benefit of the doubt. Why don't I do that for Aunt Lucy?

Connection-speech offers a ray of hope in the dark storm cloud of vitriol spreading in politics, the internet and our culture in general. We say we don't like hate, that we want less of it in our politics and culture, and then we cheer it on and spew it ourselves—because we feel "justified" since the other side is doing it worse.

And even those of us who make our careers fighting against otherizing and injustice still sometimes hate, whether we mean to or not. Sometimes that hate manifests simply by being unwilling to talk, let alone listen, to those with whom we disagree.

But if we don't, how will anything ever change? ■

THE PRESIDENTS' MESSAGE

We are delighted to serve as new co-presidents of LAFF. Just like you, we are involved in multiple activities in our family, professional and volunteer lives, yet we are deeply committed to LAFF.

Our years at the Ford Foundation were among the most meaningful and productive of our lives and we feel privileged to be part of the global Ford network. Nearly everywhere we travel in the world we find friends, colleagues and partners who worked with the Foundation. So, at what seems like one of the most divisive times in our lives, this network is more important than ever as a way of remaining connected personally and professionally across generations and geographies.

For many years, LAFF has enabled members to be in touch through its website, newsletter and in-person gatherings. We will sustain these fora, and welcome your suggestions about how we can enhance their scope and value. We also will be delighted to hear from you about other ways in which LAFF can help members remain in touch and how you would like to be connected to this extraordinary network.

At the LAFF gathering on March 21, which is featured in this issue of the newsletter, we were thrilled that so many of you were able to visit the Foundation's newly renovated headquarters and to join our host, Ford President Darren Walker, in paying tribute to our outgoing LAFF president, Shep Forman. It was an honor to salute his steadfast leadership and dedication to LAFF over many years and to share this occasion with his family and colleagues who had worked closely with him.

The March event also was an opportunity to encourage new and ongoing members of LAFF to become more active in planning and hosting events, writing for the newsletter, assisting our devoted secretary-treasurer, Nellie Toma, in her myriad responsibilities and other ways in which you might want to be involved.

We look forward to opportunities to engage with you virtually and in person as we embark on our leadership of this unique organization.

Warmest regards to all,
Betsy Campbell and Suzanne Siskel



THE NEW AMERICAN ORCHESTRAS: ENGINES OF FRESH ENERGY, IDEAS

By George Gelles

When the League of American Orchestras hosts its 74th annual conclave early this June in Nashville, Tenn., the organization and its constituents have much to celebrate and some worrying trends to consider.

Orchestras remain “the king-pin of the international music industry”, as the eminent composer-critic Virgil Thomson wrote in *The State of Music* in 1939, and American orchestras, 1,200 strong in all 50 states, can take pride in their artistic accomplishments.

Riffing on a performance given by the Boston Symphony, the invaluable Alex Ross noted qualities that the concert-goer often finds: the “conjoining of power and precision (which) is awesome to witness, and...occasions justifiable professional pride”.

A measure of the success of this country’s orchestras can justifiably be attributed to the work of **W. MacNeil Lowry**, universally known as Mac. A man whose modest demeanor belied a passion for the performing arts, Mac came to the Ford Foundation in 1953 as head of its education program, became director of the arts and humanities program in 1957 and was named a vice president in 1964, from which position he retired a decade later.

Lincoln Kirstein, co-founder with George Balanchine of the New York City Ballet, called him “the single most influential patron of the performing arts that the American democratic system has produced”.

I was privileged to be among his colleagues in the Office of the Arts as his work and that of others at the Foundation grew into such a singular influential force.

Mac advocated and won support for a broad swath of the performing arts. Among the earliest music grants made by the Foundation at his behest was \$210,000 in 1957, almost \$2 million in today’s money, to enable symphonies nationwide to commission works by American composers.

Praiseworthy though this program was, his most consequential initiative was the Program for Symphony Orchestras, implemented in 1966 and correctly characterized in a recent Rockefeller Archive Center Research Report as “(t)he largest single act of arts philanthropy in the history of the United



“The Nutcracker Dance Party”: Experiential Orchestra performing at The DiMenna Center for Classical Music. Photo by Allison Stock.

States....a broad attempt to professionalize U.S. orchestras and legitimize orchestral performance as a serious career path”.

It was, said the report, “a ten year, eighty million dollar program for American symphony orchestras. Through a combination of matched endowment fund contributions and unconditionally distributed expendable funds, the Ford Foundation dramatically altered the condition of the professional orchestral community in the United States by encouraging longer seasons, more concerts, higher pay for musicians, and an improved artistic product.

“Considered quantitatively, the Ford Foundation’s Program for Symphony Orchestras—including the matching funds raised by the orchestras themselves—resulted in an outlay of more than \$160 million for symphony orchestras. Adjusted for inflation, that amount would be worth roughly one billion dollars in 2016, or more than six times the 2016 congressional appropriation for the National Endowment for the Arts.”

Yet, despite Mac’s farsightedness and the Foundation’s largesse, today’s traditional orchestras share existential concerns. The broad gains won through the Program for Symphony Orchestras have partially eroded.

In 2015, the League of American Orchestras commissioned an ambitious study, titled

“Reimagining the Orchestra Subscription Model”, that makes for sober reading. Its most worrisome finding is that in the decade preceding the study, “overall ticket sale volumes...declined at an annual rate of 2.8%” and “subscription sales...declined by nearly 2% per year. Unfortunately, the situation is worse than it may initially appear, because subscriptions are closely tied to another critical source of income—individual donations.”

During the decade reviewed, 88 percent of these donations came from subscribers, and should they leave, their donations might follow.

For generations, subscription revenues have been an orchestra’s mother’s milk, nurturing growth and sustaining health. Yet, selling subscriptions is proving to be ever more difficult as once-loyal subscribers prefer to attend fewer performances of particular interest rather than commit to an entire season that the symphony has planned, or “curated” to use the word du jour.

Like all organisms, orchestras evolve, adapting to changing fashions in musical styles, fads in orchestration and foibles in the marketplace. In the instruments they employed or ignored and in their place and purpose in society, Monteverdi’s orchestra was not Mozart’s, and Bach’s was not Beethoven’s.

Beethoven’s, however, is very much the

traditional orchestra of today, though ours is larger, louder and, of course, more varied in its repertoire.

We attend orchestral performances in concert halls that, with few exceptions, might have been built in the nineteenth century, as indeed some storied ones were. And we accord the musicians a reverence recalling an earlier day. They are arrayed on stage hierarchically to perform for our pleasure, and a formality exists for expected attire: the audience dresses as if for a special occasion, and the musicians often appear in formal wear that recalls the servants' livery in "Downton Abbey".

The ossification of the symphonic experience is not something that Mac—that anyone—could have foreseen. Over the past half century, societal changes and waves of cultural renewal have created a different world, with different expectations and different challenges.

In a phenomenon of which Mac would surely have approved, a new breed of orchestra has emerged, providing an antidote to the perceived symphonic stuffiness that might partially explain audience attrition. These ensembles turn the conventional concert experience on its head: programs reflect contemporary sensibilities; venues are often in alternative spaces—art galleries, bars, armories—rather than concert halls; and informal interactions are actively cultivated between musicians and their audiences.

Springing up nationwide over the past several decades, and finding audiences and broad recognition through live performance and recordings, you'll find these groups in, among other places, New York City (the Knights, the Experiential Orchestra, Alarm Will Sound and NewOrch), in Boston (A Far Cry, the Unitas Ensemble and the Boston Modern Orchestra Project), in Portland, Ore. (Third Angle) and in Miami (the NuDeco Ensemble).

The ethos they share is articulated by the newest and perhaps spunkiest of the lot, the Brooklyn-based NewOrch: "...an evening with NewOrch is not an evening with your parents' symphony orchestra. Our concerts are different. Shorter programs, boozy after-party, swanky locations, user-friendly experience."

Engines of fresh energy and ideas, these ensembles offer a new paradigm, boozy after-parties aside, for orchestral concerts going forward.

We might date the growth of these groups to a provocative call-to-arms issued by Ernest Fleischmann, the long-time visionary executive director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic. In a commencement address at

the Cleveland Institute of Music in 1987, he trumpeted that "The Orchestra is Dead: Long Live the Community of Musicians".

Ever polemical, he pinpointed a perceived incompatibility between cutting-edge creativity and conventional traditions of symphonic performance. Matching his words with action in the year of his exhortation, Fleischmann started the Green Umbrella concerts, a new-music initiative under the aegis of his Los Angeles orchestra.

Yet, however successful and seductive these groups might be, they are overshadowed in number and in the public eye by traditional orchestras, whose perilous health cannot be ignored. "Should corrective measures not be taken," we read in the League of American Orchestras' report, "the situation can be expected to worsen."

Further, as one of the study's authors told The Wall Street Journal, this moment presents "a classic innovator's dilemma. You know the old product isn't working that well. But if you change, you lose revenue in the short term. You want to change when you've got a little leeway, not when you're in a panic situation and you have already lost your audience. Now is the time to create a new model...."

In a phenomenon of which Mac would surely have approved, a new breed of orchestra has emerged, providing an antidote to the perceived symphonic stuffiness that might partially explain audience attrition.

Norman Lebrecht, the Cassandra among critics and the industry's most insightful and irritating gadfly, nailed a possible source of the problem from his perch in London. After assessing the various rationales used to explain a shrinking audience—avoiding the issue of soporific programs and dismissing the notion of abbreviated attention spans—Lebrecht focused on a graying audience and ways in which it is catered to, fruitlessly, by many orchestras.

He suggested that "the concert hall atmosphere is about as lively as a cruise liner, its intellectual magnetism as potent as a pension plan", and asked, "Why would any red-blooded post-modern person want to spend an evening in God's waiting room....?"

Lebrecht's tart observation echoes a finding in "A Decade of Arts Engagement", a 2015 study issued by the National Endowment for the Arts. More politely, it states that "Older adults are the only demographic subgroup

to show an increase in performing arts attendance over a decade ago. Their rates of attendance at classical music, opera, musicals and non-musicals were significantly higher in 2012 than in 2002."

Can our traditional symphonies regain traction? Of course they can, and I believe that the newer ensembles offer useful suggestions:

Make concert halls hubs of civic activity, and not just shrines where concerts are heard. Invite and involve community organizations of all stripes, to utilize, as schedules allow, its lobby, its rehearsal rooms, its stage.

Embrace fresh repertory. Traditional symphonic music spans a wider gamut than you might imagine, and warhorses, while justly beloved, have too often outworn their welcome. Just ask any empty seat.

Open the repertory to companies of color—of all colors and ethnicities—and not predominantly to those who represent the European mainstream. And embrace women composers, too long consciously ignored. Among my current favorites are Unsuk Chin, Korean-born and Berlin-based; Pulitzer Prize winner Jennifer Higdon; and Missy Mazzoli, whose music conjures a world of passion and intellect. Widely recorded, their compositions soar and, along with works of their peers, should be a core of contemporary programs.

Rethink the conventional schedule, with an occasional shorter midday performance on a weekend, and freshen the atmosphere, with performers dressed more like normal people and less like hired help.

Other approaches will emerge, and a knee-jerk "impossible" will likely greet such suggestions. Most institutions say "no" by default.

But, at a time when traditional orchestras are dealing with issues of artistic and fiscal health, it is imperative that they rethink and refine their profiles and priorities.

Mac Lowry said it best. In "The Arts and Philanthropy", a speech given at Brandeis University in 1962, he reminded his audience that, "At its most basic level, art is not about money, or facilities, or social acceptance. It is about the surge of artistic drive and moral determination. It is about the individual professional or artistic director."

To recapture this sense of creative excitement is our traditional orchestras' paramount job. ■

George Gelles, who worked in the Foundation's Office of the Arts from 1977 to 1981, writes extensively on music and dance, including for this newsletter. His most recent article was "Where Are All the American Orchestra Conductors?" in the Fall 2018 issue.

IN MEMORIAM

Donald Stewart, who had a long and varied career in higher education and philanthropy, died of a heart attack April 7 in Chicago, where he most recently had been chief executive officer of the Chicago Community Trust. He was 80.

Early in his career, from 1962 to 1969, he was a program officer for the Ford Foundation's Overseas Development Division, working primarily in Nigeria, Egypt and Tunisia.

He had earned a bachelor's degree in political science from Grinnell College and a master's degree from Yale University, and studied for two years at the Graduate Institute of International and Development Studies in Geneva, before going to work for Ford.

When he left the Foundation, he earned another master's degree and a doctorate, both in public administration, from Harvard's John F. Kennedy School of Government. While pursuing his doctoral studies, he was associate dean of the Faculty of Arts and Sciences at the University of Pennsylvania, director of its College of General Studies,

an assistant professor in the Department of City and Regional Planning, and counselor to the provost of the university.

He was named president of Spelman College, an historically black women's institution in Atlanta, in 1976, though the announcement of his hiring sparked protests at the campus by students who wanted an African-American woman to head the school. But he remained in the post for a decade, spearheading drives that raised the college's endowment from \$9 million to \$41 million.

He left Spelman in 1986 to become president of the College Entrance Examination Board, and during his 12 years there developed initiatives that helped improve the academic preparation of high school students of color and those facing financial hardships.

He spent a year after leaving the College Board working at the Carnegie Corporation of New York, where he was a senior program officer and special adviser to the president for grant-making in higher education and teacher education.

In 2000, he became head of the Chicago Community Trust, one of the oldest and, with \$1.2 billion in trust funds and annual grants of \$50 million, largest charitable community trusts in the country. As its CEO, he focused on fund-raising and diversity.

After he retired in 2004, he was a visiting professor at the University of Chicago, a

visiting scholar at the Erikson Institute and a member of the boards of The New York Times Company, the Campbell Soup Company and Grinnell College.

President Barack Obama named him to the Commission on Presidential Scholars in 2010.

He is survived by his wife, Isabel Carter Stewart, former executive director of the Chicago Foundation for Women; two sons; and eight grandchildren.

Marion Pendleton, who worked at the Foundation for 22 years as a secretary and administrative assistant, primarily in the Human Rights and International Cooperation unit, died April 3 in a hospice. The cause was cancer.

"Marion was not especially extroverted," said a colleague, **Mayra Peters-Quintero**, "but had a quiet strength and exuded grace. Those on her team know that she was funny and kind, and fiercely loyal. She knew how everything worked and who to reach for anything. If you had a problem, Marion would solve it."

She started at Ford in 1994 as a secretary in the International Affairs Program and joined the Human Rights unit five years later as an administrative assistant. She then was successively promoted to Senior Administrative Assistant, Administrative Coordinator and, in 2013, Department Coordinator.

She retired in 2016. ■



Louis Bickford recording a "recollection", as he will be doing for members attending the fall event of LAFF's New York chapter.

Coming Events In New York City

LAFF's New York chapter has scheduled two events later this year, including the annual holiday party in December. Both will be held at the Ford Foundation Center for Social Justice and include refreshments.

The first, scheduled for Wednesday, September 18, is titled "The Foundation's Program Assistants: Where Are They Today?" and will feature a panel discussion. It will be from 6 to 7:30 in the evening in the Susan V. Berresford Room.

The holiday party will be on Wednesday, December 11, from 5 to 7, also in the Berresford room.

Something new will be added at the program event this year, initiating what LAFF intends as a regular feature in its efforts to reach out to members to record their

experiences and reminiscences in a process linking them to the Foundation's history.

Louis Bickford, who worked in the Foundation's Democracy Rights and Justice program from 2012 to 2017, will be asking members who attend the event to record "a favorite Ford recollection".

He will make brief audio recordings, usually fewer than five minutes, that, along with photos, will be posted on LAFF's website. He'll be available in a separate room to record the recollections of members.

Bickford has created a company called Memria that works with corporations, educational institutions, political organizations and non-governmental organizations to enable them to "hear the voices of people they might not otherwise be able to hear".

Those clients, states the company, "need to reflect the voices and experiences of their communities in order to achieve societal change". ■

LAFFing Parade

Emmett Carson has been hired as the chief operating officer of the Lucas Museum of Narrative Art, still under construction in Los Angeles and expected to be completed by 2021.

The museum has been founded by the filmmaker George Lucas, known especially for the Star Wars and Indiana Jones film series, and its construction, endowment and collections are being funded totally by the Lucas family.

When completed, the \$1 billion project will include 300,000 square feet of building space surrounded by 11 acres of new park land and gardens.

The museum describes itself as a celebration of the “power of visual storytelling in a setting focused on narrative painting,

illustration, photography, film, animation and digital art....One visit may change not only the way you think about museums but what you think art is.

“You’re already familiar with narrative art, because it’s the art that tells the stories you love. Our collection features the original, artist-made creations, from sketches to storyboards to sets and costumes from movies. And we showcase narrative art in paintings, illustrations, comic art, photography and many other media.”

The museum will feature, in addition to its collections, daily film screenings, film premieres, lectures, workshops, classes and school tours and programs.

Carson worked at the Ford Foundation from 1989 to 1994 in the Governance and Public Policy program. He left Ford to become CEO of the Minneapolis Foundation,

and in 2006 was named the first chief executive of the Silicon Valley Community Foundation, which had been formed by merging two smaller grant makers.

He led Silicon Valley through a period of extraordinary growth, increasing its total assets to \$13.5 billion primarily through donations from such technology leaders as Mark Zuckerberg, co-founder of Facebook; Jack Dorsey, co-founder of Twitter; and the late Paul Allen, co-founder of Microsoft.

His role there ended a year ago, however, when he resigned following accusations by foundation employees that there was a “toxic culture of fear, blame and intimidation” at the institution. A study by the foundation’s board described “inappropriate racial and sexual comments and unacceptable behavior, such as berating and bullying.”

Continued on next page



Shep Forman, LAFF's retiring president, received a gift from the members "with deepest appreciation and affection", presented by the Society's secretary-treasurer Nellie Toma. He is pictured above, left, with two of those members, Jim Himes on the left and Haskell Ward, as LAFFers gathered to mingle and introduce themselves, including Sheila Nelson, a member of LAFF's advisory board. Stopping in the hall are Alex Wilde, on the left, Louis Bickford and Bonnie Shepard.

A parting gift for Shep, a mingling of friends.



The LAFF Society
c/o Nellie Toma
PO Box 701107
East Elmhurst, NY 11370

LAFFing Parade, continued

Though another high-ranking executive was accused directly of such behavior and resigned, Carson was placed on paid leave after staff members, in a letter to the board, said that “inaction” by “senior leadership.... created and reinforced a toxic culture....”

“We have full confidence in Emmett and his abilities,” said a spokesperson for the Lucas museum, “and believe he is an invaluable addition to the museum team and that he will help guide us on a successful path as we build a world-class institution.”

Courtney J. Martin is the new director of the Yale Center for British Art at Yale University. She has been deputy director and chief curator of the Dia Art Foundation.



PHOTO: WINNIE GIER

“An esteemed scholar of historical and contemporary art,” said a statement from the university, “she will use her extensive experience in research, teaching and curation to further infuse the arts into the university’s work and

shape the YCBA’s leadership in the field of British art.”

Martin had worked in the Media, Arts and Culture unit at the Ford Foundation before pursuing a doctorate in the history of art, which she received from Yale in 2009. Her research focused on twentieth century British art. She then conducted research and taught at Vanderbilt University before joining the faculty of Brown University as an assistant professor in the history of art and architecture department.

In 2015 she curated an exhibition of the American painter Robert Ryman at the Dia Art Foundation’s site in the Chelsea section of Manhattan, in New York City. Dia “is committed to initiating, supporting, presenting and preserving extraordinary art projects.”

Dia then hired Martin, in 2017, as deputy director and chief curator in its curatorial department. As an art historian of the “modern and contemporary fields, her scholarship is invested in the ways in which the post-1968 period altered art and artists internationally.”

Kavita Ramdas has been named by Apolitical as one of the 100 most influential people in gender policy, a list that includes former

First Lady Michelle Obama, Supreme Court Justice Ruth Bader Ginsburg and Christine Lagarde, managing director and chairman of the International Monetary Fund.



Ramdas was named director of the Women’s Rights Program at the Open Society Foundations earlier this year after working at the Ford Foundation since 2012, when she became its representative in New Delhi.

While at Ford, she worked on issues of equity, inclusion, economic fairness, freedom of expression, human rights, sexuality and reproductive health and rights, transparency and accountable government, and sustainable development. She was a senior adviser to Ford’s president, Darren Walker, at the time she left, helping “integrate our commitment to justice in all our policies and practices”.

Apolitical is a Canadian-based “peer-to-peer learning platform for government” that created its influential-people list to “celebrate women and men making the world a more equitable place, where they do so through policymaking, research, philanthropy or advocacy”. ■