



Oregon Symphony

Actors and musicians shared the stage in the Oregon Symphony's world premiere of *Azaan*, a commissioned work combining Chris Rogerson's score and Dipika Guha's play about immigration.

Home Concerns

The Oregon Symphony in Portland is tackling some of today's most pressing issues with Sounds of Home, a three-part concert series exploring immigration, the environment, and homelessness. In November, Music Director Carlos Kalmar, whose parents fled Nazi Germany, led the world premiere of *Azaan*, a commissioned work examining immigration that combines a score by Chris Rogerson and a new theatrical work by playwright Dipika Guha. In January, a commissioned multimedia presentation by artist Matthew Haber evoked changing perceptions of the environment alongside a performance of Stravinsky's *Rite of Spring*. In May, a commissioned score by Gabriel Kahane exploring the theme of homelessness and featuring soprano Measha Brueggergosman, gets its world premiere. The focus on topical issues isn't only onstage: the orchestra is collaborating with local social-service agencies, community leaders, and other arts groups on free events, public discussions, and art-making projects. In addition, Oregon Symphony musicians, staff, and board members volunteer at social-service partners.

Mars Attacks!

The infamous Orson Welles fake-news radio broadcast *The War of the Worlds* got a modern twist in November, when the Los Angeles Philharmonic premiered Annie Gosfield's new opera version, which moved the action from the 1930s East Coast to modern-day L.A. Christopher

Rountree conducted the musicians of the Philharmonic's New Music Group, and the director was Yuval Sharon, the Philharmonic's artist-collaborator in residence. Yuval has also directed earlier immersive opera stagings in L.A. with his company The Industry, including *Invisible Cities* (2014) in Union Station and *Hopscotch* (2016), performed in cars driving around the city. The new *War of the Worlds*—a co-production of the Philharmonic, The Industry, and the public art organization NowArt LA—took place inside and outside Disney Hall, with actress Sigourney Weaver as emcee/narrator. Refurbished air-raid sirens played a crucial role, and audience members were asked to participate in the action. Soprano Hila Plitmann performed from inside Disney Hall, while others—mezzo-soprano Suzanna Guzmán and baritone Hadleigh Adams—sang from remote locations. Brave new world, indeed.



Craig T. Mathew/Mathew Imaging

The Los Angeles Philharmonic's November 2017 premiere of Annie Gosfield's opera *The War of the Worlds* took place inside and outside of Disney Hall.

Denver's Women in Music Symposium

In October, Denver was the gathering place for a symposium meant to address what organizers called "the underrepresented role of women in the classical music industry." Over two days, the Denver Young Artists Orchestra hosted the Women in Music Symposium in partnership with the Colorado Symphony and the Lamont School of Music at the University of Denver. The symposium was held at the university and included masterclasses, recitals, panel discussions, and lectures about the evolving experience of women in music. At lecture-recitals, university faculty and composers including Hilary Tann and Jennifer Barker discussed their work. Said Kenney, "I didn't understand until I was in college that conducting and composition had been male-dominated throughout history. While there have been strides made in composition, members of major orchestras, and even their music directors, a closer look reveals there's still a long way to go. It's a process of education and it's wonderful the Young Artists Orchestra can contribute." The topic was certainly in the air in the second half of 2017, with the Bangor and Virginia symphony orchestras and Oregon's Chamber Music Northwest among those devoting programs to music by women composers and an increasing number of composition programs for young women.



In October, the Denver Young Artists Orchestra performed Hilary Tann's *The Open Field*, Shostakovich's Symphony No. 5, and Mozart's Horn Concerto No. 4, with Colorado Symphony horn player Carolyn Kunicki as soloist. DYAO Music Director Wes Kenney conducted.