

NIHCO CLEF NOTES

The Newsletter of the NIH Community Orchestra | nihco.org



From Our Music Director: What's Your Inspiration?

Ed. Note: In light of the COVID-19 cancellation of the rest of our 2019-2020 season, the Board is grateful for Richard's willingness to remain with NIHCO as we transition to a new Music Director.

Dear friends,



I hope this finds you safe and well. The last few months have been difficult for all of us, and while music-making may seem like the least of our concerns during this time, to be without it is for many of us a crisis in and of itself. I feel its absence in the purpose it brings me each morning, and I miss the many people - my musical families - that I'm accustomed to seeing on stage and in rehearsal.

One of the good things to come from staying at home is the chance to move slower and take in all that is around us. A moment of inspiration came suddenly and unexpectedly when I was looking for short readings to provide to my students at the National Orchestral Institute. I pulled off my shelf Liz Lerman's book, *Hiking the Horizontal*. You may know Liz and her work from the Dance Exchange in Takoma Park. Her work creating dance with cross-racial, cross-generational, and cross-class dancers garnered her a MacArthur Genius Grant. Thankfully, I worked with her several times, such as when she created this beautiful project for an orchestra playing and dancing Copland's *Appalachian Spring*.

One of her book chapters, "The Roosevelt, Dancing," chronicles Lerman's first residency at a senior living home in DC where she was leading dance classes. Within moments of reading it, I was overcome with emotion: She approached every challenge not with fear, but with child-like curiosity and human empathy. What looked at first like a challenge was suddenly the centerpiece of newfound creativity. Lerman's work leading dance classes at The Roosevelt, for which she was first laughed at by the staff, ended up bringing purpose, joy, and health to the residents. It created a new reason for gathering, and opportunities for conversations that would never have happened otherwise. In the end, it strengthened the community at The Roosevelt in ways that had nothing to do with dance at all. Her book is a treasure trove of short essays and insights into a creative process unlike anything in the "normal" dance world... and it feels so relevant for where we are right now.

So my request of you during this time when we'd otherwise be in rehearsal is to look for that spark of inspiration. Is it an old recording? A family recipe your Mom made? Time in your garden? The bird that keeps returning to your feeder? Or words on a page? Share with us what you find! Our community will be better because of it.

Be well,

Richard Scerbo

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Stay-At-Home Stories

**Nancy Jakubowski,
CELLO:**

Usually, I spend a lot of my time making pottery and sculptures and selling my creations at fairs. Not only are all the fairs cancelled, but I don't have access to the place where my work is fired. So, I have started playing around with concrete. Here is one of my recent efforts. Hope everyone is staying healthy and safe. Looking forward to the day we are all making music together again! If you are interested in seeing more of my work, check out: [Facebook.com/handstoheartpottery](https://www.facebook.com/handstoheartpottery)



**Camille Jones,
CONCERTMASTER:**

I look forward to pursuing my Master's in Violin Performance at the University of Michigan this Fall. I'm also very excited to continue arts administrative projects, like curating my student-led concert series, *Voices Unheard*, at the University of Maryland.



Ed. Note: We thank Camille for her effervescent spirit and impassioned musicianship for two seasons, starting in 2018!

**Jerry Danoff,
TRUMPET:**

I've been practicing almost every night after dinner to keep up my lip strength. Since the weather got nicer, I've played outside on the driveway (wearing my official NIHCO t-shirt), but as you can see in the photo, it's really tough getting any volume!



**Tom Zebovitz,
CELLO:**

Since being sheltered in place sometime in the past, I am not sure I remember when, I have been playing my cello, and composing. On mild, sunny days, I give neighborhood concerts on my back deck, occasionally garnering a standing O, from an appropriate social distance.



Stay-At-Home Stories

**Undine Nash,
VIOLA (Former Member):**

From the NIHCO Archives!

A May 16, 2020 *New York Times* article about solo musicians performing in the Stuttgart, Germany airport reminded me of NIHCO's Dec. 2008 holiday concerts at the Baltimore airport: Kids being proud of getting bells to join us; troops coming home from, or flying out to, Afghanistan, sitting on their duffle bags with tears in their eyes.

I miss those days, and I miss you folks. Hope all of you are well and hanging in there.



**John Warshawsky,
VIOLA:**

As a Baltimore resident, I've been taking advantage of the lockdown order by enjoying long walks throughout the city, particularly across the Johns Hopkins University campus. One day, I came upon of this sculpture of Johns Hopkins, doing his imitation of Vice President Pence at the Mayo Clinic; and a woman figure who represents healing (and properly wears a face mask to protect all near her).



**Philip Espe,
ASSISTANT CONDUCTOR:**

I can't believe it's been over two months since we've been together. I hope you and your families are all well and safe. I've kept busy by developing digital content for the DC Public Library (DCPL), including presenting a weekly story time (most Tuesdays at 10:30 AM at facebook.com/dclibrary) for kids under five. DCPL offers a live virtual story time Mon.-Fri. at 10:30 AM, see archived videos at <https://bit.ly/dcplstorytime>. I'm also developing music education projects for young and old that I hope I can announce soon. Fortunately, I'm spending a lot more time getting reacquainted with the clarinet. For the first time in years, I'm so happy to be practicing my instrument, and not just studying scores! I can't wait to make music with all of you again, as soon as we're able.



Stay-At-Home Stories

Karin Caifa,
CLARINET:

With a job that often entails parachuting into wildfire and hurricane zones or the aftermath of terror attacks, it is strange to cover such a globally devastating and transformative story from my living room. But I am very grateful to be safe at home during this time. At the end of my shift, my home TV studio can quickly convert to my clarinet studio, and so - minus any pressing orchestral or chamber music repertoire to learn - I've been able to tackle some solo pieces that have long been on my list, or that need a refresh. I'm also digging into a reading list, and taking advantage of mild spring weather to keep up training for the marathon I hope to run in October. There has also been a good deal of stress-baking in my kitchen! I miss our music-making, and can't wait to be back with you all as soon as it is safe!



Lee Keiser,
VIOLA:

Around the time of our last rehearsal, I'd been selected for a new, part-time position that would perfectly complement my (volunteer) civic engagement of the past few years. However, my enthusiasm was short-lived, due to later news of a COVID-19 delay in my start date, as everyone switched to virtual offices. Eventually, I was given an e-mail account, but have yet to receive an assignment. When a call for entries for their Virtual Talent Show was issued, I got busy practicing! With my daughter as my technical crew, I performed the two Bourrees from Bach's *Suite III* (for cello). My "stage" nerves subsided by telling myself there's no better time to concertize for my new professional community than when I'm practically unknown, since I have yet to report for duty! The full Talent Show has not been packaged yet, but I'll keep my ears open for chamber music partners, and future orchestra members.



SAVE THE DATE!

Virtual End-of-Season Celebration!

Join us Wednesday, June 10 at 730p to
reconnect via ZOOM with your fellow
NIHCO musicians!

Richard and Philip will host musical trivia,
and we'll have updates on what's ahead for
the group.

Keep an eye out for an email with full
details soon!



More News & Updates

From the Music Director Search Committee

The NIHCO Music Director Search Committee continues to review the credentials of five semi-finalists. Even in our pandemic environment, the candidates remain very interested in seeing this process through. In addition to references, each has submitted conducting videos and answers to written questions regarding programming and organization, ahead of a round of interviews this summer.

The committee is committed to having finalists conduct a NIHCO rehearsal when we can safely gather again, so that all orchestra members can participate in the selection process. The Search Committee consists of NIHCO board members Harold Seifried (horn), Timothy Doerr (viola), and Karin Caifa (clarinet), plus Ellen Ensel (flute), Ed Kaita (clarinet) and Daryl Kaufman (oboe.) We also thank Moyna Daley (violin) for her contributions!

Call for (Virtual!) Musicians!

The Baltimore Symphony Orchestra musicians, plus the D.C. Youth Orchestra, and the U.S. Marine Band, have performed spectacular virtual concerts! The League of American Orchestras maintains a nationwide list, see: <https://symphonyspot.org/>

Are you interested in practicing chamber music via ZOOM (or another platform), this summer; and/or possibly this fall, if we cannot safely reconvene as a full orchestra? Tune in for more details during our end-of-season celebration ZOOM on June 10! If you can't make it, email Karin (kmcaifa@gmail.com) Please remember to provide your name and instrument.

Help Us Stay Connected

Send your ideas, and your stories, to Lee (with "NIHCO Newsletter" in the Subject line): rucker.keiser@gmail.com.

Would you like to suggest another (musical) name for the newsletter? Let us know! For now, we'll keep a "rolling" submission timetable. Some of you requested an upcoming events calendar; this could be added once we establish a publication schedule.

Stay safe, and "see" you on June 10th!

The NIHCO Board of
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