



American National Orchestra

Dear Friends,

Welcome to American National Orchestra! For years we've asked the question: why can't we have a repertoire of symphonic music that really reflects who we are as Americans and is meaningful to our people on a deep and universal level? Searching for answers, as audiences continue to shrink, orchestras go out of business and musicians are forced to seek other ways to earning a living, we began to take a serious look at the nature of classical symphonic music, the effect of the internet on our lives, and the interface between the two.

We approached our exploration with some questions. Why is new music so difficult and can't it be written in a way to delight audiences without sacrificing artistic merit? Why isn't orchestral music more accessible to all audiences and why isn't it better disseminated to community orchestras – the best source of developing an audience for new music. Why can't great music be American in all our diversity, using the most unique body of populist literature ever created? Why aren't we representing who we are musically to the rest of the world, with no cynicism nor undue focus on the bottom line? Our answer: create something that would address all these issues. And so, American National Orchestra was born.

Our plan developed with three central issues: 1) Our concept of ensemble is updated – call it “rebalanced” – to reflect a combination of the performance practice of American populist music and the European symphonic aesthetic. 2) Commissioning is central to the plan, following some guidelines of accessibility, meaningfulness and high artistic standards, building a new, uniquely American repertoire. 3) Outreach is crucial to our eventual success. Accessibility on several levels is the bedrock upon which American National Orchestra will be built..

We are living in a unique time. The possibilities for the arts seem to have expanded of late, even while the old order is finding itself having to reinvent or die. We come into this project with a great deal of excitement and love seeing the light go on in the eyes of people in the artistic and business sectors alike. Therefore, it is our hope that we can spread some of this enthusiasm to you.

*Lucinda Ellert, Artistic Director
Judy Braude, Production Director*