

# NATIONAL ASSOCIATION OF MEDICAL ORCHESTRAS

- The Quarterly NAMO E-Newsletter -

*Dear NAMO Members,*

I am thrilled to further my involvement with NAMO by joining the Board of Directors. Being part of a group of similarly passionate medical orchestras is truly a treat for me. While I have been deeply involved in the orchestra world for most of my life, the unique combination of music and medicine is new to me since starting as Executive Director of Longwood Symphony Orchestra in 2019. With LSO's nearly 40-year history of healing the community through music, we are still constantly learning, growing, and adapting to the evolving needs of Greater Boston. Sharing experiences, resources, struggles, and successes among medical orchestra colleagues will lead all of our organizations to brighter futures. Fellow board members Matthew Brooks, Matt Lordo, and Nicoletta Moss, along with founding members Mary Perkinson and Gabriella Rizzo, have worked hard to build the foundation for NAMO and I am proud to be part of continuing that work together. I look forward to learning from you and your orchestras!

Sincerely,

**Bridget Brazeau**

*Executive Director,*

*Longwood Symphony Orchestra (Boston)*

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# ORCHESTRATING CHANGE:

## AN AWARD-WINNING DOCUMENTARY ABOUT AN ORCHESTRA ERASING MENTAL HEALTH STIGMA

By Margie Friedman

Two psychiatrists, two physicians, a medical student, a laboratory worker, and a nursing assistant are tuning-up their instruments—but this is not a medical orchestra. They are members of the only orchestra in the world created by and for people living with mental illness and their supporters. About half of the musicians in Me2/Orchestra have been diagnosed with mental illnesses including bipolar disorder, schizophrenia, borderline personality disorder, anxiety, depression, and addiction. The mission of Me2/Orchestra is to erase mental health stigma one concert at a time. Its transformative model is truly changing the lives of the musicians and challenging audiences to reconsider their misconceptions about mental illness.

*Orchestrating Change* is an award-winning documentary that tells the inspiring story of this groundbreaking orchestra. Seen across the country on public television stations, the film was the 2021 winner of the Austen Riggs Erikson Prize for Excellence in Mental Health Media. Video Librarian named it one of the best documentaries of 2021.



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## ORCHESTRATING CHANGE: AN AWARD-WINNING DOCUMENTARY ABOUT AN ORCHESTRA ERASING MENTAL HEALTH STIGMA (CONTINUED)

Me2/Orchestra is the realization of Music Director and conductor Ronald Braunstein's ambition to create an orchestra for "people like me." A graduate of Juilliard, Braunstein was the first American to win the prestigious Herbert von Karajan International Conducting Competition. Soon after he was conducting the Berlin Philharmonic, the San Francisco Symphony, among many others. Shunned by the classical music community after he made his diagnosis of bipolar disorder public, his once meteoric career plummeted. Nearly destitute and fearing he would never conduct professionally again, Braunstein, along with his new wife, Caroline Whiddon, an orchestra administrator, founded Me2/Orchestra

in 2011 in Burlington, Vermont. They soon started a second orchestra in Boston. Me2/Orchestra has no auditions, anyone can join. Their seriously



enforced "No Stigma Zone" starts with a sign stating just that on the rehearsal room door. People with and without diagnoses are breaking down barriers by creating music together in an environment where acceptance is the norm. It's a transformative model for any community orchestra or group.

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# ORCHESTRATING CHANGE: AN AWARD-WINNING DOCUMENTARY ABOUT AN ORCHESTRA ERASING MENTAL HEALTH STIGMA (CONTINUED)

With compelling characters, striking animation, beautiful music, even humor, Orchestrating Change addresses many of the myths, perpetuated by the media, about mental illness by showing what living with a mental illness is really like. The film, too, challenges audiences to reconsider their preconceived notions. For those living with a diagnosis, it is empowering.

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***This film is a beautifully told, heartwarming story that gives us all hope, at the deepest human level, for our future as a loving, connected species.***

Jamie Bernstein, Author, Daughter of Leonard Bernstein

***"As a person who listens for lessons in recovery, this film was music to my ears."***

Ken Duckworth MD, Chief Medical Officer, National Alliance on Mental Illness

***"Orchestrating Change highlights the beauty, resilience, and solidarity found among individuals living with mental illness and in those who share a passion for music. I remain in awe of Ronald's courage and perseverance."***

Xiaoduo Fan, MD, MPH, MSc, Professor of Psychiatry, Director of UMass MIND Program

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Orchestrating Change is available for virtual and in-person screenings along with Zoom panel discussions. DVD's can also be purchased for home use.

**To learn more and find out how to have a screening event visit <https://orchestratingchangethefilm.com> or email [orchestratingdoc@gmail.com](mailto:orchestratingdoc@gmail.com).**

**A 30 second promotional video is available [here](#).**

**To contact Me2/ visit <https://me2music.org>**





# ORCHESTRATINGchange

a film about

THE WORLD'S  
**ONLY ORCHESTRA**  
for people living  
with mental illness



a film by

MARGIE FRIEDMAN & BARBARA MULTER-WELLIN

edited by  
RALPH HERMAN

original music by  
BRONWEN JONES

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[www.orchestratingchangethefilm.com](http://www.orchestratingchangethefilm.com)

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# MUSICALLY TALENTED HEALTH CARE WORKERS FORM ADVENTHEALTH'S FIRST-EVER ORCHESTRA

**By AdventHealth News**

Health care workers are accustomed to hearing a lot of sounds: beeping monitors, humming machines, overhead pages, rolling patient beds. Now there's a new project offering AdventHealth health care workers the opportunity to make their own sounds: the sounds of music.

The project is the AdventHealth Orchestra and it's bringing together the best of AdventHealth's musically talented team members and physicians, beginning with those who are located in the Greater Orlando area.

The first iteration of the orchestra has been the string section, which includes the violin, viola, cello and double bass. The plan is to expand soon to percussion, brass and woodwind instruments.

The first of its kind at AdventHealth, the musical group is being directed by Richard Hickam, director of music and the arts for AdventHealth.



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# MUSICALLY TALENTED HEALTH CARE WORKERS FORM ADVENTHEALTH'S FIRST-EVER ORCHESTRA (CONTINUED)

For their first performance, the AdventHealth Orchestra played Samuel Barber's "The Adagio" to honor team members who've served on the front lines of the COVID-19 pandemic, as well as those who've lost their lives to the virus. Some of the orchestra members themselves have felt the pressure of the front lines.



*Crews set up for the taping at the Dr. Phillips Center.*

"This particular piece was chosen because it has become a piece that has been recognized during times of national mourning," Hickam said. "It's that dark minor [key] that gives this piece this really rich, heavy feeling, but it's worth it for the story that we're telling."

The performance was taped in July 2021 at the Dr. Phillips Center for the



*The AdventHealth Orchestra rehearses for its first performance.*

Performing Arts in Downtown Orlando, and debuted during AdventHealth's Conference on Mission, an annual event where executive leaders and stakeholders explore how the organization is living out its mission of Extending the Healing Ministry of Christ.



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## MUSICALLY TALENTED HEALTH CARE WORKERS FORM ADVENTHEALTH'S FIRST-EVER ORCHESTRA (CONTINUED)

"This is a great opportunity. I really can't describe this feeling – to be together with colleagues that worked alongside you during this pandemic," said Vincent Hsu, MD, executive director of infection prevention and violinist in the orchestra. "It just goes beyond words."



*Vincent Hsu, MD, an infectious disease specialist who's helped lead AdventHealth's COVID-19 response, is a violinist in the AdventHealth Orchestra.*

Members of the AdventHealth Orchestra will dedicate free time to about two concerts a

year at AdventHealth or community events with the ultimate goal of helping people feel whole through music. Oftentimes, the people feeling whole will include the musicians themselves.

"Being able to play in the orchestra is a good opportunity for us to pause from our daily duties and responsibilities to reflect and take care of ourselves," said Grace Lai, director of safety and high reliability at AdventHealth Orlando, also a violinist. "This is a good exercise to rebuild our own resilience."

**To learn more about the AdventHealth Orchestra, visit [AdventHealth.com/AdventHealth-Orchestra](https://www.adventhealth.com/adventhealth-orchestra).**



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# GREETINGS FROM THE MEDICAL COLLEGE OF WISCONSIN ORCHESTRA!

**By Danica F. Vendiola**

The Medical College of Wisconsin (MCW) Orchestra was first established in January 2019 by MCW post-doctoral fellow and conductor emeritus Paul McCusker. In just three years, we have rapidly established a full ensemble of strings, winds, and percussion; all composed of MCW/Froedtert/Children's students, faculty and staff. Our orchestra is led by our wonderful conductor, Dr. Alexander Mandl of the Wisconsin Conservatory of Music since the Spring of 2020.



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## GREETINGS FROM THE MEDICAL COLLEGE OF WISCONSIN ORCHESTRA! (CONTINUED)

In the summer of 2021, the MCW Orchestra launched a Summer Virtual Chamber Concert Series posted on our Facebook page. During the months of July to September 2021, a new chamber performance was virtually uploaded on Fridays to showcase every section's talent as well as form a sense of camaraderie while we navigated COVID guidelines safely. We were pleased to have held our outdoor concert "Back to the Stage!" on September 29th 2021, at Hart Park, with the theme of POPs and Americana featuring patriotic classics such as Stars and Stripes Forever and musicals West Side Story. It was invigorating to perform amongst a live audience, seeing a sea of excited listeners who had also generously donated a total of \$504 for the Rotary Club of Wauwatosa, as our charity of choice. In the month of December, we virtually presented some holiday classics with select movements from The Nutcracker; with half of all donations supporting the victims of the Waukesha holiday parade tragedy.

Presently, the MCW Orchestra has rehearsals every Monday from 6:30 pm – 9:00 pm in preparation for our May 1st concert! The Orchestra continues to look towards a brighter future as we continue to seek out and recruit more enthusiastic new members of all and any musical ability to join!

Please be on the lookout for our new upcoming website that is presently under works. For now, visit our [Facebook](#) and Instagram pages (search Medical College of Wisconsin Orchestra) for the latest updates.

**Please contact us via email ([orchestra@mcw.edu](mailto:orchestra@mcw.edu)) for any interest, questions, or inquiries.**

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# UTAH MEDICAL ORCHESTRA

**By Heather Smith**

**Vice President of UMO, cellist, and 2nd year medical student**

The Utah Medical Orchestra (UMO) was founded in 2021 by a small group of medical students at the University of Utah School of Medicine. Composed of members of the Salt Lake City healthcare community, including doctors, nurses, students, research scientists, and hospital staff, the UMO has caught the attention of the U of U School of Medicine Alumni Association, the Utah Symphony, and the CEO of U of U Health, who featured the orchestra's efforts in an email to the healthcare community, praising the orchestra for “a beautiful performance” which served as “a reminder of how great it is to be part of this incredible organization.”

Under the baton of music director Dr. Matthew Mainella, DMA, the UMO held its inaugural concert in November 2021 at the U of U's Libby Gardner Hall. The concert was free and open to the public, with a live audience of nearly 300, as well as a virtual audience. The concert featured Grieg's Holberg Suite, Barber's Adagio for Strings, Bartok's Romanian Folk Dances, and performances from several small wind and string chamber ensembles. The recording of the performance can be viewed [here](#).



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## UTAH MEDICAL ORCHESTRA (CONTINUED)

There have been several unique challenges to starting an orchestra in the midst of a global pandemic. The UMO has been fortunate to be able to rehearse in person in the Eccles Health Sciences Education Building on campus. Due to COVID masking requirements, we decided to limit involvement in the orchestra to strings only at this time. Winds and brass have been able to participate in smaller chamber ensembles, where they are permitted to rehearse socially-distanced without masks. The UMO receives financial support from the Associated Students of the University of Utah due to its status as a student interest group.

One of our aims in founding the Utah Medical Orchestra was to provide a flexible creative outlet for healthcare professionals, and to break down barriers of hierarchy within the hospital. We look forward to a bright future of continuing these goals while bringing music to the community. We plan to incorporate winds, brass, and percussion into the orchestra as soon as the COVID situation allows. Other future initiatives include volunteer performances at the University of Utah Hospital, bringing interactive music sessions to Primary Children's Hospital, and collaborations with the Utah Symphony.

**For the latest updates and information about upcoming events, visit our website ([tinyurl.com/utahmedicalorchestra](https://tinyurl.com/utahmedicalorchestra)) or follow us on Facebook and Instagram (@utahmedicalorchestra).**

**You can watch the recording of our November concert [here](#).**



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# WORLD DOCTORS ORCHESTRA USA

**By Dr. Thomas DaSilva**

**President WDO USA**

The World Doctors Orchestra (WDO) is a group of approximately 700 medical musicians from around the world. The WDO gathers 3 or 4 times a year for a week at a time in various locations around the world, with recent performances in Amsterdam, Anguilla, and Frankfurt. Concert weeks typically involve rehearsals for 3-4 days followed by 2 performances before group members head back to their respective countries. The WDO is led by Dr. Stephan Willich, an accomplished cardiologist, epidemiologist, and conductor as well as the former director of the Academy of Music Hanns Eisler Berlin. The WDO has been fortunate to play in many great halls around the world. Please check out our website for more information: [https://www.world-doctors-orchestra.org/wdo\\_usa](https://www.world-doctors-orchestra.org/wdo_usa)

The World Doctors USA helps to facilitate one or two WDO concerts per year in the USA. We have performed in Washington DC, San Francisco, Seattle, Houston and Cleveland. Later this year we will perform in Boston alongside the Longwood Symphony Orchestra, performing Mahler 10 and Firebird. The concert is scheduled for September 18, 2022 in Boston Symphony Hall. For any of you in the northeast, please come and hear us perform!

We are planning future USA concerts in Dallas in 2023, Phoenix and New York in 2024 and Chicago in 2025. All of our proceeds from each concert are donated to local medical charities. We welcome inquiries into performing other combined concerts with medical orchestras in the USA. If any are interested, please contact me directly at [thomasdasilva@hotmail.com](mailto:thomasdasilva@hotmail.com).

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# JOIN OUR COMMUNITY!

**[CLICK HERE](#) to join our NAMO Community Facebook Group**

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# TAKE OUR SURVEY!

**[CLICK HERE](#) to take our brief membership survey.**

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# JOIN NOW!

## Become a member today for free!

*For a limited time, there is no membership fee for new members.*

Membership is open to medical orchestra musicians, conductors, executive/artistic directors, board members, orchestra staff, passionate advocates, and individuals looking to start a medical orchestra in the U.S.

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- 1) If you are interested in becoming a member of NAMO, click "**Join Now**" and fill out the Google Form.

JOIN NOW!

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## WE'D LOVE TO HEAR FROM YOU!

To submit to The NAMO quarterly newsletter please click here to fill out an interest form.

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