



Teacher Resource Guide



“CONVERSATIONS”

“Music can name the un-nameable and communicate the unknowable.”

Leonard Bernstein

“Ah, music,” he said, wiping his eyes. “A magic beyond all we do here”.

Albus Dumbledore (from Harry Potter and the Sorcerer’s Stone)

This resource guide was created to help you prepare your students for North State Symphony's virtual Youth Concerts, where maestro Scott Seaton and musicians from the orchestra will converse with each other and with you as they explore the special language of classical music through solos, duets, trios, and a unique quartet and octet performed by a single player. Although a regular symphonic concert with full orchestra in a large auditorium isn't possible due to restrictions on large gatherings, this small ensemble format gives us an opportunity to share classical music with you on a more intimate level, with all-new video performances, introductions by the performers, and short instrument demos. We invite you to open your minds, hearts, and ears, and join us in **Conversations!**

Included in this guide are learning activities and background information on the performance repertoire, composers, and musicians. For those teachers with time and interest to teach about the full orchestra, we have included at the end of the material our “Meet the Orchestra” module from previous resource guides.

Many of the lessons utilize internet resources. All links provided in this document were valid as of March 1, 2021. Online resource materials supplemental to the lessons have also been provided at the end of the guide. We hope you enjoy the activities, and look forward to “seeing” you at the concert!

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LEARNING ACTIVITIES

The following activities are designed to enhance your students' enjoyment and understanding of the upcoming concert.

Materials needed:

All activities in this Guide assume a computer with internet access. Many of the sessions will benefit by the ability to break into smaller groups (in-class, or virtually). For schools utilizing the concert videos in a classroom setting, it would be ideal to project the concert onto a large screen so that the entire classes' attention is collectively directed towards the front of the room while viewing the performance.

Many of these exercises suggest breaking out into smaller groups and then coming back together and having each group report-out to the larger class to see which ideas were common/frequent, and which were perhaps more unusual. Alternatively, the exercises can also be done in a full classroom setting if desired.

Links to the composers and the pieces performed are included in the introduction to each session in Activity #3, in case you would like to explore the repertoire in more depth or obtain the music for your students.

Occasionally the exercises refer back to earlier pieces performed in the concert to compare and contrast ideas. The concert will be available for replay on the North State Symphony YouTube Channel if you wish to jump back to a particular referenced section.

ACTIVITY #1 – BEFORE THE CONCERT: WHAT IS A CONVERSATION?

Lesson overview:

This lesson considers the official definition of the word “Conversations”, and asks students to think about that word in the context of a musical performance.

Session 1

Let's start by considering the definition of the word “conversation”.

Conversation

(noun) (känvər'sāSH(ə)n/ /, kanvər'seɪʃ(ə)n/). *A talk, especially an informal one, between two or more people, in which news and ideas are exchanged. Based on the verb “converse”, from Late Middle English (in the sense ‘live among, be familiar with’): from Old French converser, from Latin conversari ‘keep company (with)’, from con- ‘with’ + versare- ‘to turn’.* Source: [Oxford Lexico](#)

Exercises

- Read or display the definition to your students.
- Have your students break out into smaller groups of 2-5 people. Have each group offer their ideas on what a conversation is to them. Ask them to give specific examples of a conversation that they had recently, considering such questions as:
 - How many people were there?
 - What was the topic?
 - Did everyone speak? Did some people talk more than others?
 - Did anyone in the group not talk, but just listened? Is listening as important to a conversation as talking?
 - Was there a beginning, middle and end to the conversation? How did it end, was there some kind of “resolution”, or did people say good bye before leaving?
 - What's the difference between a lecture and a conversation?

Session 2

Now broaden the context of a conversation. Ask your students to think about ideas like spoken words, “body language” such as body stance/movement, arm/hand gestures, facial expressions, etc. Ask them to think about sign language – is signing a form of conversation? Ask them to think about written words, videos, pictures, etc. – are those parts of a conversation? Are they different in some way than the words themselves, for example, are they things that just facilitate or enhance a conversation but are not actually “conversation”?

Exercises

- Have your students break out into the same small groups as before. Have each group list as many non-verbal aspects or things that facilitate or enhance a conversation as they can think of. Regroup and have each group report their list to the larger group.

Session 3

Broaden the context one more time. Tell your students about the concert title, “Conversations”. Ask if any of them play an instrument or sing in a choir, watch music videos, or listen to music or sing informally just for fun. This can be any kind of music that they enjoy.

Exercises

- Have your students brainstorm thoughts and ideas about music as a kind of conversation, considering such questions as:
 - Do they think music is a kind of conversation. Why or why not? Ask them for specific examples and points to support their opinions on this question. There are no right or wrong answers. We'll be coming back to this topic in much more detail in the next few sessions, so this exercise is just to whet their thinking.
 - When they listen to music, do they feel like they are actually participating in a conversation? Why or why not? What if they sing along - then are they part of the conversation?

ACTIVITY #2 – BEFORE THE CONCERT: CHAMBER MUSIC

Lesson overview:

Our Youth Concerts usually take place in large auditoriums or concert halls with hundreds of people in the audience and a full symphonic orchestra on the stage. This year our concerts are scaled back to protect both our audience members and our musicians. The repertoire (pieces) we'll perform are written for much smaller ensembles, known in the classical music world as "chamber music". This lesson contrasts what it's like for both the audience and the musicians to converse in a traditional large-hall symphonic concert compared to a smaller chamber music format.

Session 1

A large symphonic orchestra can have anywhere from 50-150 or more musicians on stage. Chamber music is written for smaller ensembles of typically 2-8 people, with the string quartet being the most common ensemble make-up. Although it's now often performed in large concert halls for big audiences, it was originally written to be performed in smaller rooms, or "chambers", within the castles and homes of royalty and nobles, which is where the word "chamber" was first used to describe it.

Chamber Music

A form of classical music composed for a *small group of instruments*—traditionally a group that could fit in a palace chamber or a large room. Because of its *intimate nature*, chamber music has been described as "*the music of friends*".

Chamber Music vs. Orchestra Music

The primary difference between orchestra and chamber music is the number of players. In chamber music, there is generally one player per part while a full orchestra doubles up sections to add volume and depth (especially in the string sections).

Exercises

- Break into small groups of 2-5 people. Have each group write down 2 columns on paper, their computers, or a white board labeled "symphonic orchestra" and "chamber music ensemble". Have them list what they think the characteristics of a chamber music ensemble are compared to a large symphonic orchestra, considering such questions as:
 - How many musicians are in the ensemble?
 - How many different types of instruments are represented?

- How many players per type of instrument?
- Do either of these ensembles have a conductor? If not, why might a conductor be required for one ensemble compared to the other, and what might his or her role be?

Session 2

Regroup with your entire class. Ask everyone to think back to the discussion from Activity #1, "What is a conversation"?

Exercises

- Have your students brainstorm thoughts and ideas about what it might be like to have a musical conversation in a small chamber ensemble compared to a large symphonic orchestra, considering such questions as:
 - Do they think it's easier for the musicians to hear each other in a chamber ensemble or in an orchestra?
 - Is having more types of instruments like having more personalities involved in a verbal conversation?
 - Is there a point where a group becomes so large that when they're all talking, it's not a conversation, but something else? Is it possible for a large group to have a conversation?
 - What are possible differences in how musicians work out conversing about their musical ideas in a small versus a large group?
 - Is a small chamber ensemble "more democratic" than a symphonic orchestra? Why?
 - How does a conductor's role facilitate or change the conversation – either in terms of communicating ideas about the music (how loud should we play, how fast, etc.) or in terms of becoming part of the musical conversation while the music is being played? Musically speaking, does the conductor join in the musical conversation while the musicians are playing? How?

ACTIVITY #3 – DURING THE CONCERT: PERFORMANCE REPERTOIRE, COMPOSERS AND MUSICIANS

Lesson overview:

In the concert, North State Symphony musicians will perform excerpts for you from the following pieces. The exercises are designed to continue our exploration of what a conversation is, specifically in the context of music. Hyperlinks to each composer and work performed are included below in the event you wish to explore more details on those aspects of the performances.

Session 1 - Anthony PLOG Concert Duets for Trumpet (Ian Cochran & Ayako Nakamura, trumpet)

[Anthony Plog](#) is an American Composer, Conductor, and Teacher. [Concert Duets for Trumpet](#) is a collection of 10 duets for advanced players. Ian & Ayako are colleagues and professional musicians who perform with the North State Symphony, other large orchestras, and chamber music ensembles

Exercises

- Have your students brainstorm thoughts and ideas about the musical conversation they just observed and heard, considering such questions as:
 - What did you think of the musical communication between the two players, although they weren't in the same physical place? Did you notice how "together" they were during the performance, especially some of the faster sections? Do you think that was harder to do virtually than it would have been if they were in the same room? Why or why not?
 - What did you think of their Zoom conversation before they started playing. They talked quite a bit about how long they've played together in the orchestra, and how used to playing with each

- other they are. Do you think their positive and collegiate relationship contributes to how much fun they have when they play together, and do you think that made a difference in how good their performance was? As an audience, do you think your knowledge of their relationship made a difference in your enjoyment of their performance?
- Did you notice any non-musical language or dialog taking place? (Probe for how they moved their instruments up and down, for how they used silences and pauses, and for their/Ayako's body language / eye contact cues with her camera / the audience during the slow movement and also at the end of the fast (1st or 3rd) movement.)
 - The role of technology
 - Ask your students to recall the definition of Chamber Music from the second session in Activity #2 above. There are 4 italicized portions of the definition. Go through each of the italicized portions and ask your students if this performance seems to meet the definition of Chamber Music. At the time Chamber Music was invented, there was no Internet, no Zoom, and no computers. How do they think the idea of "fitting into a palace chamber or large room" relate to today's virtual world?

Session 2 - Heitor VILLA-LOBOS The Jet Whistle, II & III (Ruth Polcari, flute & Anthoni Polcari, cello)

Heitor Villa-Lobos was a Brazilian composer. [The Jet Whistle](#) is a fun and playful piece to listen to, but challenging to perform. Ruth and Anthoni Polcari are mother and son and are professional musicians who perform with the North State Symphony, other large orchestras, and chamber music ensembles.

Exercises

- Have your students brainstorm thoughts and ideas about the musical conversation they just observed and heard, considering such questions as:
 - If you play an instrument or sing, do you have a family member that you sometimes play or sing with? Are there things you like about playing them compared to playing with a classmate or friend?
 - Ruth mentioned that she and Anthoni have played together in the symphony for 17 years, and Anthoni mentioned a "rekindling of musical ideas". Do you think when you've played together with someone for a long time, it's easier to get your parts to mesh together when you do a new piece with them? Do you talk about your musical ideas that you have (for example, how fast or slow, loud or soft to play certain passages, or whether the music reminds you of a person, place, or thing) and discuss how to express those ideas when you're performing the piece?
 - This performance was a bit different from Ian and Ayako's performance because Ruth and Anthoni were in the same room, sitting side by side. Did you notice any differences in how their body language or non-verbal communication? Was there more of it? Do you think they used their body movements to communicate in subtle ways about tempo or other aspects of the performance? What do you think they were "saying" to each other at the end when they finished playing and looked at each other (what did their expressions say)? (Probe for: satisfaction, happiness, etc.).
 - Did you hear the Jet Whistle sound at the end of the piece? Which of the two instruments (flute or cello) do you think made that sound? In spoken language and in the verbal communications we have with each other, we sometimes make sounds that aren't a word, but are mimicking a sound not in our spoken language. Does anyone remember what the word to describe this is? It is "Onomatopoeia" - the process of creating a word that phonetically imitates, resembles, or suggests the sound that it describes. Do you think the Jet Whistle sound at the end of this piece is the musical equivalent of "Onomatopoeia"?

Session 3 - Harold OWEN Chamber Music for 4 Clarinets (Bruce Belton, clarinet)

Harold Owen is an American composer and retired professor of music at the University of Oregon.

Chamber Music for 4 Clarinets was written for 4 B-flat clarinets. Bruce is a professional musician who performs with the North State Symphony, other large orchestras, and chamber music ensembles.

Exercises

- Have your students brainstorm thoughts and ideas about the musical conversation they just observed and heard, considering such questions as:
 - Do you think there's such a thing as having a conversation with, or talking to, yourself? What did you think of the clarinet player (Bruce) in this piece? Even though he is only one person, was he still having a musical conversation?
 - Think of the screens that Bruce used to display different images while he was playing. Do you think those contributed to or were part of the conversation that was happening during his playing?
 - Have you ever accompanied yourself by recording one sound track and then playing or singing to it live, or have you ever done Karaoke? What is this experience like, compared to when you are playing one instrument or singing and the other person/people are each playing or singing their own part? Is it more or less satisfying? Does it feel like a conversation to you when you're "accompanying yourself"?
- The role of technology
 - Ask your students how big a role they think technology has in a musical performance of this nature. Do they feel like the technology actually becomes part of the conversation in some way? For example, are the screens and images actually part of the conversation? Or do they just enable or enhance it?
 - Ask your students to recall the definition of Chamber Music from the second session in Activity #2 above. Do they think maybe this kind of performance changes the definition or stretches the boundaries of Chamber music?

Session 4 - Aram KHACHATURIAN Sabre Dance (Bruce Belton, clarinet)

Aram Khachaturian was a Russian Composer. **Sabre Dance** is a movement from Khachaturian's ballet "Gayane".

Exercises

- Have your students brainstorm thoughts and ideas about the musical conversation they just observed and heard, considering such questions as:
 - Imagine the Tom and Jerry cartoon, but without the "soundtrack" of the clarinet playing. Do you think the music contributes to the "physical conversation" (cat and mouse) game that the characters are playing? How and why?
 - Do you think instrumental music is its own language, capable of communicating emotions, thoughts, and ideas - even though there are no words? If there were no video/pictures, do you think your imagination would build images just from what your ears hear?
- The role of listening
 - "Sabre Dance" has been used as background music in several movie soundtracks over the years. Ask your students:
 - Do any of them think they've heard this music before? If yes, do they remember where they heard it?
 - Classical music originally written to be performed by a live orchestra for staged ballet productions has frequently been adapted for use in cartoons or movie soundtracks. Ask your students to pay close attention to the soundtrack next time they watch a favorite movie. Ask them to think about whether they may have heard this music at a live concert.

Session 5 - Friedrich von FLOTOW Selections from Martha (Nathan Bastuscheck, tuba & Julia Bastuscheck, viola)

Friedrich von Flotow was a German composer. [Selections from Martha](#) is a set of duets adapted for instruments to play from aria melodies (opera solos) from the [romantic comic opera Martha](#). Nathan and Julia Bastuscheck are married and are professional musicians who perform with the North State Symphony, other large orchestras, and chamber music ensembles.

Exercises

- Have your students brainstorm thoughts and ideas about the musical conversation they just observed and heard, considering such questions as:
 - In this performance, what did you think one of the keys to the musical conversation was? (Hint, watch how much the viola moves – it's almost as if she's conducting the piece). Do you believe that the tuba player could see her movements out of the corner of his eye, even though he wasn't looking directly at her?
 - At the beginning of the second duet, pay attention to how the players looked at each other and smiled before they began. How important do you think it is to acknowledge someone in this way when you are having a conversation? What does that non-verbal communication say, or how does it set the stage, for the coming conversation?
 - In the 3rd duet, what do you think the players were saying to each other – and to you! – through their facial expressions and body language when they slowed down and paused for the tuba to take time for a page turn? Was that fun to watch? Do you think they were enjoying the moment?

Session 6 - Daniel LEVITAN Variations on a Ghanaian Theme (Matthew Timman, Brian Simpson, Eric Whitmer, percussion)

Daniel Levitan is an American composer. [Variations on a Ghanaian Theme](#) is one of his many popular compositions for percussion ensemble. Matt, Brian and Eric are professional musicians who perform with the North State Symphony, other large orchestras, and chamber music ensembles.

Exercises

- Have your students brainstorm thoughts and ideas about the musical conversation they just observed and heard, considering such questions as:
 - These three musicians collaborated from their homes in Tucson, AZ; Vacaville, CA, and Nashville, TN. Like Ian and Ayako, they were physically far apart, but performed together through the magic of technology. Do you think it makes any difference at all, when collaborating on something like this through technology, if the other people are in the same city or thousands of miles apart?
- The role of listening
 - This piece is based on a short motif found in Ghanaian drumming. Each player develops a theme over steady patterns held by the other two players. Ask your students what aspects of a verbal conversation this reminds them of? For example, perhaps the two players holding their steady patterns are more like listeners, while the player developing the theme is more like the person talking?

Session 7 - Nikolai KAPUSTIN Duo for Alto Saxophone and Cello, Op. 99, I (Anthoni Polcari, cello & Scott Seaton, alto saxophone)

Nikolai Kapustin was a Ukrainian composer. [Duo for Alto Saxophone and Cello](#), like many of his compositions, was a fusion of jazz and classical forms; it is quite advanced and difficult to perform.

Besides playing saxophone professionally, Maestro Seaton is the conductor of the North State Symphony and other symphonic orchestras.

Exercises

- Remember back to Session 2 in this Activity #3 and The Jet Whistle, where Ruth and Anthoni were able to play together and record in the same room at home.
- In this performance, Scott and Anthoni collaborated remotely, recording their parts individually. Did you notice any similarities or differences in the amount of body language, expressions, or non-musical communication in this piece compared to Jet Whistle?
- If you didn't know that Scott and Anthoni weren't playing together in person, and you closed your eyes, do you think you would have been able to tell the difference at all?
- What did you think of the end of the piece? What kind of communication was there? Do you think it would have been very different if they had been playing together in person? Try to recall, or re-play, the ending of Jet Whistle. Was there a very similar feeling at the end of this piece to the end of Jet Whistle, even though Scott and Anthoni weren't in the same room?

ACTIVITY #4 – AFTER THE CONCERT: WHAT IS A CONVERSATION?

Lesson overview:

Before the concert, we talked about what a conversation is. After watching and listening to the North State Symphony musicians talk to you and with each other about the pieces they played, and after hearing those pieces performed, we want to reconsider the question: "What is a Conversation"?

Session 1

Ask your students to consider what kinds of communication they heard or saw during the concert. Probe for: Verbal, body language, eye contact, conversation facilitators or aids, etc.

Exercise

You may wish to have students break into smaller groups, then come back together with each group writing on the board any types of communication they saw. Ask your students to consider these questions:

- Do you feel like music is more enjoyable, as an audience member or if you play an instrument, in person compared to virtually? Why or why not?
- What might some advantages and disadvantages of in-person compared to remote/virtual communication be?
- Are there times when you'd rather have a remote/virtual conversation with someone? Have you ever had a remote/virtual conversation even though the person you were talking to was in the same house or even in the same room? Why did you do this?
- What is the role of the listener? What are some ways that the role of the listener might be different for a recorded/virtual concert compared to a live concert?
- What do you think the role of technology is in a conversation?

Session 2

Ask your students to consider similarities and differences between a musical conversation and a verbal one.

Exercise

Ask your students to consider these questions:

- Is music a language?
- Is there such a thing as “reading” music? Are musical notes written on a page like words in a book?
- Do you think the sounds made by instruments can take the place of spoken words? In what ways?
- Does listening to music feel like following a story?
- Do verbal and musical conversations both include body language and facial expressions?

CONCLUSION

At the conclusion of these activities and after their concert experience, your students will hopefully have a better understanding that instrumental music has a lot of similarities to verbal conversation, and that a classical chamber music or orchestra performance is a kind of conversation, but just without the spoken word. Instrumental music has its own notation (symbols/characters/words) that are read like a page in a book, and shares body language and facial expressions just like spoken conversations. Chamber music is, in some ways, even more like a conversation than symphonic music - because there are fewer individuals, they all have the opportunity to fully explore their interpretations and ideas with each other before, during and after the performance, each one's voice (or instrument) has an equal importance since they each have their own part to play, and they don't rely on a conductor to coordinate and guide their “musical discussion”. Still, a fascinating aspect of a large orchestra is how the musicians communicate with each other, within their sections, between sections, with the conductor, and of course, with the audience.

We hope you enjoyed the concert and learned some fun and interesting things!

The bonus activities and online resources provided in the next section are general in nature and may be helpful if you wish to explore the orchestra and more music education concepts with your students.

ADDITIONAL RESOURCES

BONUS ACTIVITY - MEET THE ORCHESTRA

Lesson Overview:

The orchestra is made up of four families. Those are strings, woodwinds, brass, and percussion. This lesson introduces you to the four families of the orchestra and the sounds they make. Web links are provided to pictures of the instruments. Links are also provided for examples of musicians performing on the instruments. Wherever possible, the performers in the videos are school age.

Materials needed:

Computer with access to the internet.

Physical instruments, if available. These may be available from a music specialist if your school has one.

Session 1

Begin by asking your students what they know about a symphony orchestra. Do they know about the four instrument families, and some of the instruments in those families? There are four instrument families: Strings, Woodwinds, Brass, and Percussion. Click on the links below to visit websites with pictures that you can display on screen in your classroom. Perhaps some of your students already play an instrument and can share some information with their classmates.

Orchestra seating chart

Click [here](#) for an illustration of a full Orchestra Seating Chart

String Family

Click [here](#) for an illustration of the String Family

Demonstration of strings performing:

Click [here](#) to see the Los Angeles Children's Orchestra flash mob practice. The musicians are all children.

Wind Family

Click [here](#) for an illustration of the Woodwind Family

Demonstrations of winds performing:

Click [here](#) to see Mozart's Wind trio (2 clarinets, one bassoon) played by teenage boys:

Click [here](#) to see a Flute trio performed by college students:

Click [here](#) to see an Oboe trio with piano and cello, played by high school age students:

Click [here](#) to see a Bassoon quartet, all young women:

Brass Family

Click [here](#) for an illustration of the Brass Family

Demonstrations of brass performing:

Click [here](#) *Fanfare for the Common Man*, by Aaron Copland. Tympani, trumpets, French horns and trombones are featured in this classic piece:

Percussion Family

Click [here](#) for an illustration of the Percussion Family

Session 2

Many good resources exist to help familiarize students with the instruments in an orchestra. Use these videos, or if you have an orchestra at your school, ask if you can take your students with you to that class period and see their own school's orchestra in action.

Orchestra Tours

Click [here](#) to watch The Remarkable Farkle McBride on YouTube. This 15-minute story is a humorous and informative tale of one child's exploration of instruments in the orchestra. The story can be played in its entirety, or in sections. As the students are listening to the tale, refer to the orchestra chart if you have one, or to the above links.

Younger students may also enjoy following 6 year old George, [here](#), as he meets members of the Sydney (Australia) Youth Orchestra, and learns about their instruments.

Finally, watch a video of all or portions of "Small Suite No. 2" by composer Igor Stravinsky. We will perform this piece in our concert as a way of featuring many of the different instruments or instrument families in the orchestra.

ONLINE RESOURCES (as of March 2021)

The following websites have lots of music learning activities; click on the links for further exploration.

Carnegie Hall - Music Educator's Toolbox

<https://www.carnegiehall.org/Education/Educators/Music-Educators-Toolbox>

Dallas Symphony Orchestra

<https://www.mydso.com/dso-kids>

Kennedy Center Education

[Kennedy Center Education \(kennedy-center.org\)](https://www.kennedy-center.org)

San Francisco Symphony Education

<http://www.keepingscore.org/education>

Nashville Symphony Education

[QuaverEd - Seriously Fun Education](#)

National Core Arts Standards

<http://www.nationalartsstandards.org/>

ABOUT THE MAESTRO – Meet Scott Seaton

“...if fireworks could conduct, they’d be named Seaton. His movements ranged from as controlled and explosive as a prize fighter to as fluid and delicate as a ballet dancer.”



American conductor **Scott Seaton** has been praised for possessing “finesse, clarity, and precision” by the Luxembourg Times and has left audiences “breathless” according to Entertainment News Northwest. He is in his fourth season as Music Director of the North State Symphony in Northern California where he has garnered acclaim for his dynamic performances, innovative programming, and community and youth outreach. From 2012-2015, he led the Minot Symphony Orchestra to new artistic heights and forged exciting collaborations on the local and state levels. Seaton is also the Principal Conductor of the Veridian Symphony Orchestra. As an artistic leader, he has collaborated with such artists as Project Trio, Alessio Bax, Gabriela Martinez, Charlie Albright, & Sara Davis Buechner.

Since his international debut in 2007 with the Orchestre Philharmonique du Luxembourg, Seaton has conducted orchestras spanning North America, South America, and Europe. Seaton won the 2011 *INTERAKTION* competition and was given the opportunity to conduct an orchestra composed of all of Germany’s top orchestras, including the Berlin Philharmonic, Konzerthaus Orchestra, German Symphony Orchestra, and the Radio Symphony Orchestra Berlin. As a semi-finalist in the 2012 Sir Georg Solti International Conducting Competition (Frankfurt, Germany), he placed in the top ten conductors from a pool of over 400 conductors from 73 countries that were initially considered. He was a finalist in the Chicago Symphony Orchestra’s Sir Georg Solti Conducting Competition as well as a quarter-finalist in the Gustav Mahler International Conducting Competition.

An enthusiastic advocate of contemporary music, Seaton has conducted numerous premieres in the past several years. He has curated programs and championed music by living composers such as Libby Larsen, Mason Bates, Adam Schoenberg, David Hertzberg, Pierre Jalbert, and Maria Grenfell, to name a few.

Originally from Nashville, Tennessee, Seaton has earned degrees from the Université de Montréal, the New England Conservatory, and Vanderbilt University. He has also studied at Tanglewood and the National Conducting Institute sponsored by the National Symphony Orchestra. His mentors include Michael Morgan, Jean-François Rivest, Robin Fountain, Charles Peltz, and Carol Nies. Seaton has undertaken additional studies with Kurt Masur, David Zinman, Stefan Asbury, Gustav Meier, Marin Alsop, Jorma Panula, Larry Rachleff, Kenneth Kiesler, Alexander Mickelthwate, Peter Eötvös, Leonard Slatkin, and Zsolt Nagy, among others.

An avid cyclist and runner, Seaton recently did a solo coast-to-coast cycling expedition from Oregon to Massachusetts. As a marathoner, he has run races in Los Angeles, Calgary, Vancouver, Salt Lake City, Minneapolis, and Fargo, to name a few. He qualified for and ran in the 2018 Boston Marathon.

Visit him online at www.scott-seaton.com.