

What has been lost in the arts because of Covid-19?

Stephanie—Well, the biggest loss from the pandemic situation is live audiences. Definitely, hands down, biggest lost. And, you know, at the NAC, we've been doing these live streamed concerts, and that's really nice because we know there are people watching at the same time as we're playing. And we've been able to have like a few, small, invited audiences for some of the concerts, but it's just not the same as when you have a hall full of people, you know, and everyone is experiencing it at the same time and they experienced it with the musicians and you get this back and forth, so I think we all miss that a lot.

Yeah, the online thing is, I think it's really good that orchestras are getting involved with that. It's kind of forcing us to come into the 21st century, in some ways, but at the same time, a live streamed concert is never the same as a concert in person. You just can't get the same feeling from it.

How have orchestras adapted during Covid-19?

Yeah, definitely. I think that a big—like, something that's very difficult for us, especially in the classical music industry, is that it [classical music] is something that doesn't widely appeal to everyone. You know, it's not like, pop stars [who] don't have to worry that much about like getting audiences in, you know. So, there's this fear for a lot of classical organizations that if they change things, then they're going to lose their audience that they already have. So, if they try something new, and it doesn't work, then they could alienate people who liked what they were doing. So, there's this whole pressure to stick to the tried and true—you know, a Beethoven symphony, and a concert is this long, and there's an intermission. And you know, all the stuff that people expect from an orchestra concert.

So, this has been a way of—you know, we can't do that. That's just not, we can't do the stuff that we've done for, you know, hundreds of years. So, it's a good opportunity to try new things, like at the NAC, normally, soloists that you have coming in, you get soloists from around the world—internationally recognized people. And they're fantastic and that's great. But right now, since travel is not so easy, they've been having a lot of local people like young Canadian talent. And that's great in a different way. So, I think it's forcing us to be more flexible, and to try out new things.

Also, a lot of orchestras, including the NAC, are doing little online videos that the musicians put together. Like at the NAC, the lunchbreak videos, and we were doing similar things at ESO (Edmonton Symphony Orchestra) as well. And, you know, you would normally never talk or hear a musician talk, especially not a section musician, maybe you'd hear the concert master or a soloist or something. But we don't really get to know the musicians in the orchestra, so that's something cool that's come out of this. They can see us in our living room, and not all like dressed up in black and playing.