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LISTEN: The Princeton Symphony Orchestra performs online, and a little bit outdoors

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Princeton Symphony Orchestra goes hybrid/virtu...



[Princeton Symphony Orchestra goes hybrid/virtual for Fall 2020 season amid coronavirus pandemic](#)

By [Michael Mancuso | NJ Advance Media for NJ.com](#)

For the multitudes wearing masks for the first time, the past six months have been a challenge, especially when it comes to communicating.

For Nell Flanders, a conductor with the [Princeton Symphony Orchestra](#), it can be especially tricky.

"As a conductor, I express a lot of what I'm feeling in the music through my face and so it's odd to suddenly be conducting behind a mask," she said.

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The [Princeton Symphony Orchestra \(PSO\)](#) has launched a new fall series, [Virtual Concerts: Your Orchestra, Your Home](#), offering the opportunity to hear works rarely performed in the concert hall. The series replaces the orchestra's original fall subscription concerts.

While the concerts will be watched from home, the rehearsals and recording for the series are taking place in the Stockton Education Center at [Morven Museum & Garden](#), in Princeton.

[NJ.com](#) was there on Sept. 18, to catch one.



Conductor Nell Flanders leads the The Princeton Symphony Orchestra (PSO) rehearsing at the Stockton Education Center at Morven Museum & Garden, in Princeton. Michael Mancuso | NJ Advance Media for NJ.com

With the doors of the space flung wide open, and aided by loudspeakers, the sound of music flows from inside the building into the garden where a limited number of guests using their own chairs or blankets can enjoy the live music experience, from a socially-distant seating arrangement on the lawn.

The Virtual Concerts will be recorded live, then the orchestral components and the guest artist's solo performance and some talk elements will be brought together in a professionally edited and produced video, broadcast on the published concert date.

Inside the Stockton Education Center, members of the pared down orchestra are seated 6 feet apart and that brings its own challenges for the musicians.

First violinist Basia Danilew says, "Normally we'd be in a much tighter configuration, with more unity of sound." But under the current conditions she says there can sometimes be a little bit of a delay between what one is hearing and what one is seeing. "It's some kind of an adjustment so you anticipate a little more."

The series opened Sunday, Oct. 4 with a 4 p.m. performance of George Walker's Lyric for Strings, written while the composer was a graduate student at the Curtis Institute of Music. Walker was the first African-American to win the Pulitzer Prize for Music.

The PSO's Edward T. Cone Music Director [Rossen Milanov](#) conducted the performance of this work, and Mozart's Divertimento in D Major.

PSO Executive Director Marc Uys points out, "We are all experiencing a very challenging time, each of us in our own unique situation. The Princeton Symphony Orchestra is committed to the creative exploration of ways to continue to make music accessible to everyone, especially whenever a live experience is possible, all the time keeping the safety of our patrons and musicians as our highest priority.

"It is our hope that these virtual concerts will open up new avenues for sharing, so that we might become a greater resource for an ever-widening community."



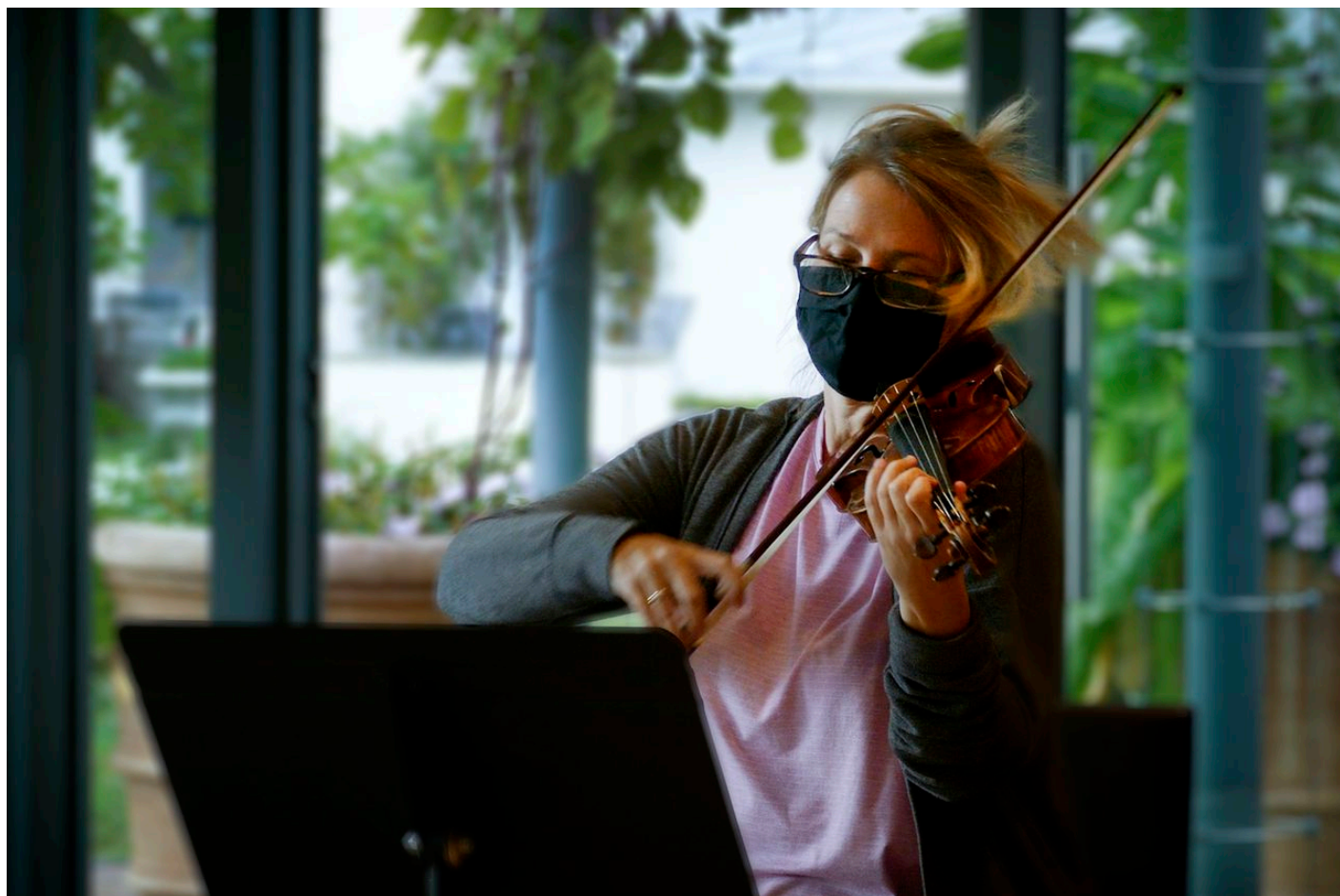
Musicians are masked and seated 6 feet apart, following COVID-19 social distancing guidelines. Michael Mancuso | NJ Advance Media for NJ.com



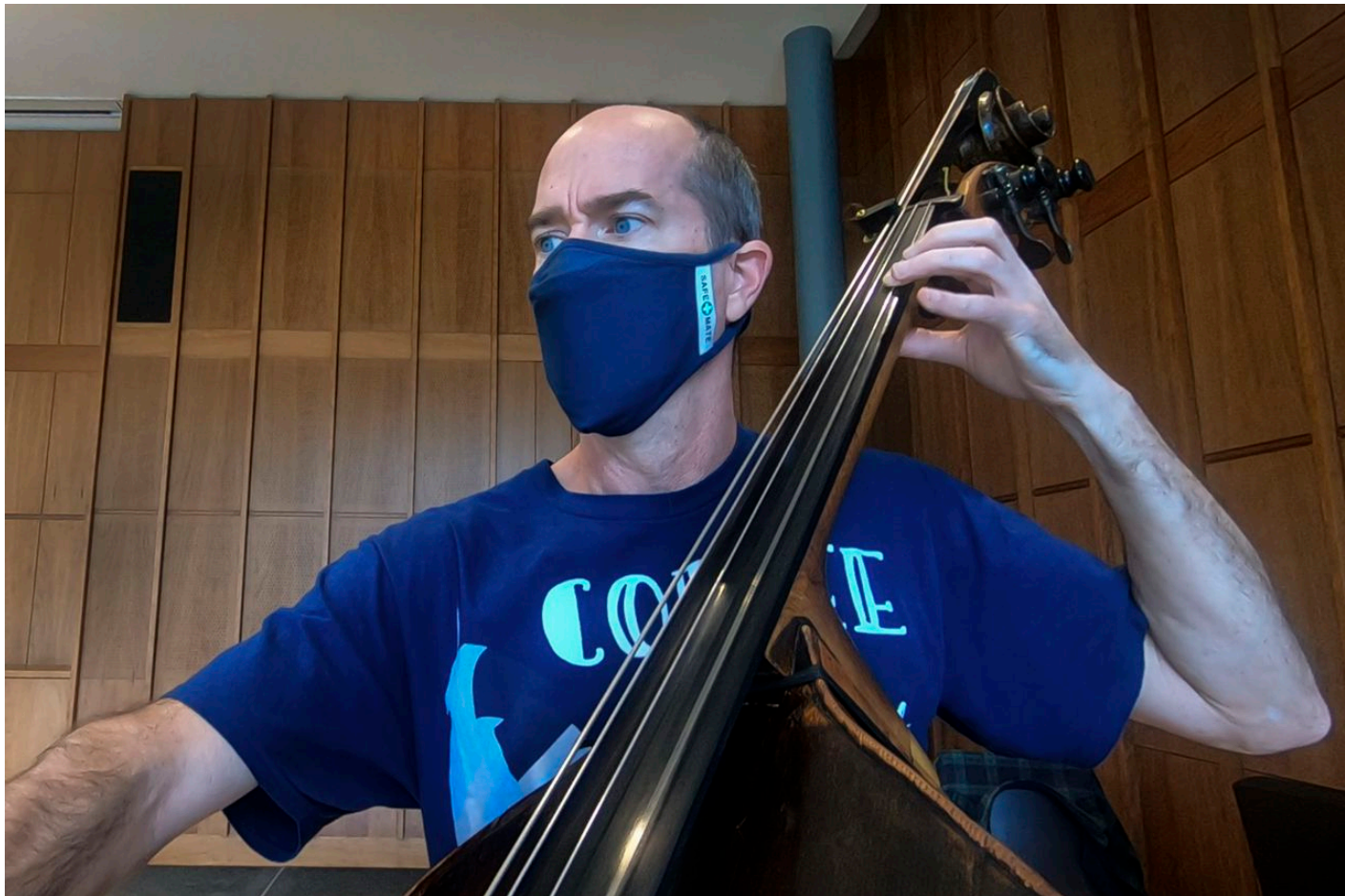
Lawrence and Helen Curtis, of Skillman sit outside the Stockton Education Center at Morven Museum & Garden listening to a rehearsal of The Princeton Symphony Orchestra (PSO). Michael Mancuso | NJ Advance Media for NJ.com



Flowers in the Gardens of Annis Boudinot Stockton & Harriet Maria Potter Stockton. Michael Mancuso | NJ Advance Media for NJ.com

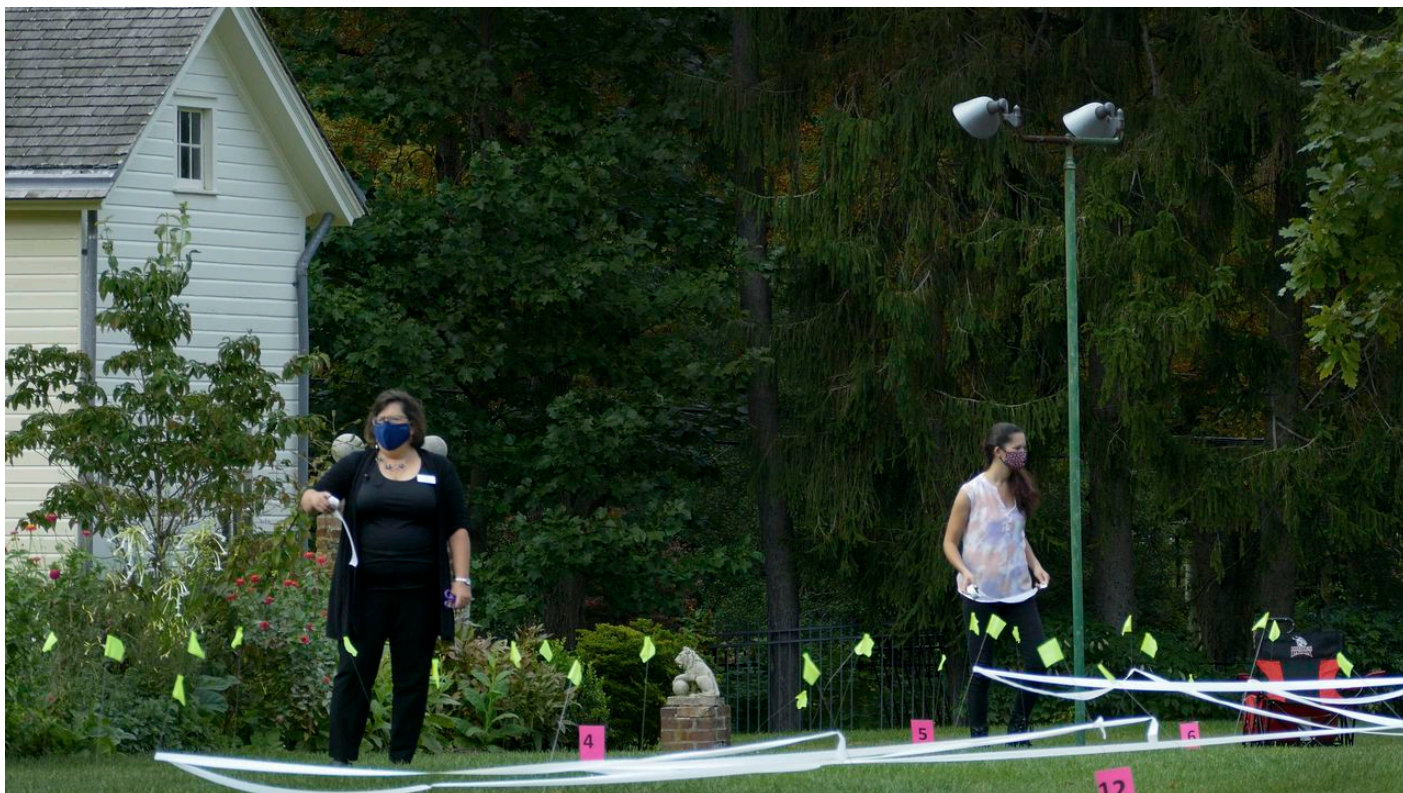


Musician Basia Danilew plays motion and emotion during rehearsal. Michael Mancuso | NJ Advance Media for NJ.com

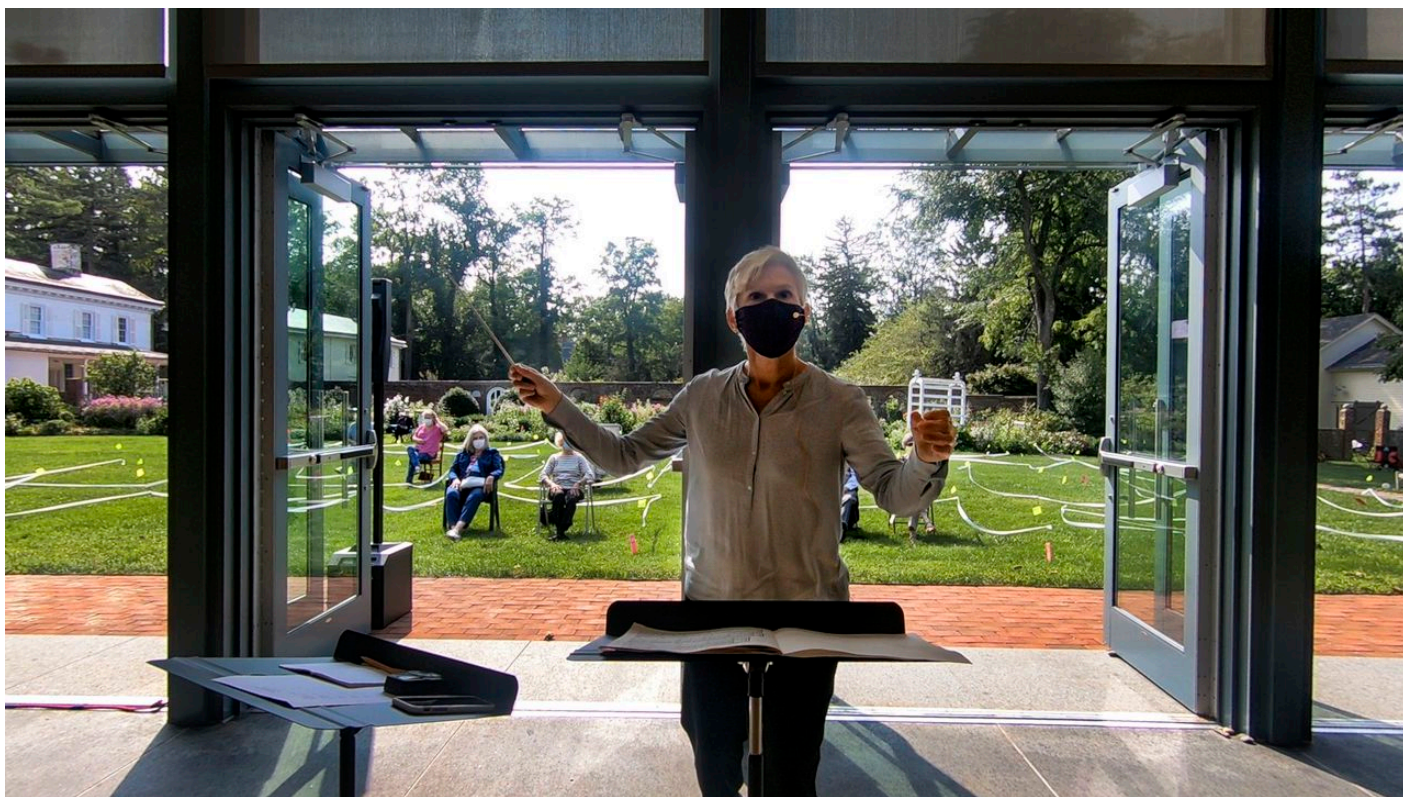


Musician Dan Hudson. Michael Mancuso | NJ Advance Media for NJ.com





Personnel at Morven Museum & Garden section off socially distant seating areas outside the Stockton Education Center. Michael Mancuso | NJ Advance Media for NJ.com



Conductor Nell Flanders leads the The Princeton Symphony Orchestra (PSO) rehearsing at the Stockton Education Center at Morven Museum & Garden. Michael Mancuso | NJ Advance Media for NJ.com