



An inventive charitable effort turns broken musical instruments into something beautiful, and then into repaired instruments useable by schoolchildren.

Make a Joyful Noise

These instruments had seen better days. A Jupiter trumpet with a bent second valve. A Safran violin with a dislocated soundboard. A Bundy clarinet missing corks. They'd been living in basements and closets of various Philadelphia public schools, waiting for repair or spring cleaning.

Then people got creative. Dozens of instruments were pulled out for use on stage in *Symphony for a Broken Orchestra*, a brand-new composition by Pulitzer-prize-winning composer David Lang. Challenged to create

beautiful music out of broken vessels, Lang studied the sounds of various malformed tools and crafted a composition for performance by a colorful mix of Philadelphians: students, classical impresarios from the Curtis Institute of Music and Philadelphia Orchestra, hip-hop artists, musicians from the traditional "Mummers" parade, and people completely new to music. Each instrument used in the endeavor will be ushered afterward to a repair shop and returned to public schools in good shape to further music-education programs.

It all started in 2015, when Rob Blackson at Temple Contemporary (a Temple University art gallery) found out that there were well over 1,000 broken instruments owned by the Philadelphia school district, with no plan or funds to repair them. He approached several musical groups—the Philadelphia Orchestra, the Curtis Institute, Orchestra 2001—and asked if they would be interested in a scheme to fix the instruments. With partners in hand, including the school district, Blackson went looking for funding. The Pew Center for Arts & Heritage and the Barra Foundation gave cornerstone grants, and the project was off and running.

With a budget of \$480,000, Temple Contemporary will host two performances in early December, repair 800 or more instruments, pay for repair kits that will go to schools for future fixes, and train teachers on how to use them. Training sessions will be recorded and uploaded to TeacherTube, so instructors can replace that pesky saxophone pad years down the road when the in-person training has perished from memory.

Temple Contemporary has set up a website, SymphonyForABrokenOrchestra.org, where individual donors can adopt an instrument and pay for its repair. These givers will receive a free ticket to the concert, and a note from the student who will use the revived instrument during the school year. A portion of all money raised will also go into a legacy fund at the school district for future instrument repair.