

## Culture / Staff Blog

---

# Building a Symphony and a Future from Broken Instruments

Posted by Brian Lauritzen · 12/8/2017 12:00:50 PM



*All Photos by Karl Seifert, Courtesy of Symphony for a Broken Orchestra*

We've all been in this situation. Maybe the transmission goes out on your car. Maybe you drop your phone and the screen shatters. Maybe a pipe bursts and floods your kitchen. A repair is necessary and so you have to dip into your emergency fund.

But what if you're all tapped out?

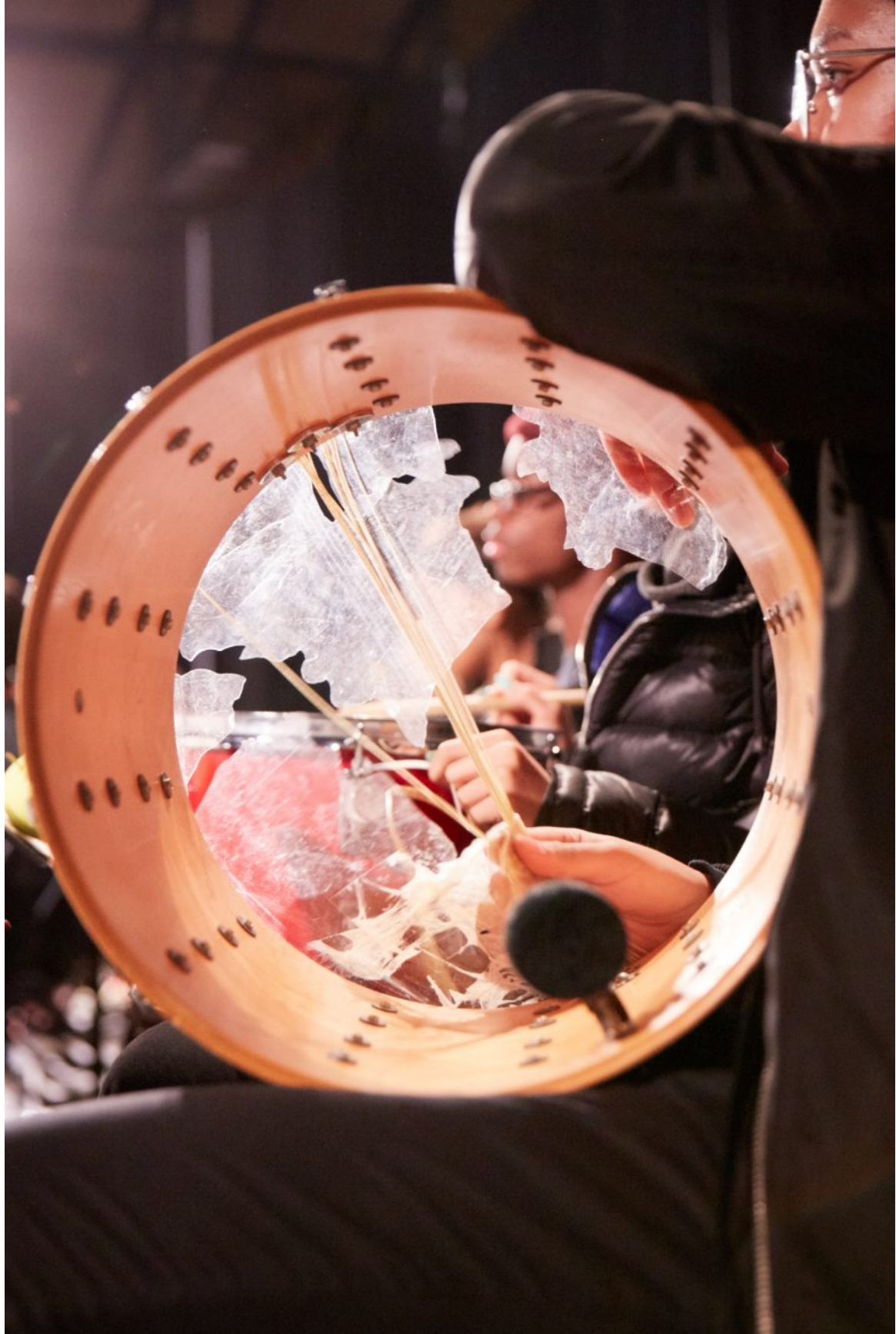
In The School District of Philadelphia, there are more than 1,000 musical instruments that have fallen into such a state of disrepair they are completely

unplayable. There is no budget to fix them. Political arguments about fiscal policy and priorities aside, the money is not there presently and it's not coming from any of the city's coffers.

Enter [Temple Contemporary](#): an art gallery connected to the Tyler School of Art at Temple University. They partnered with the School District, the Philadelphia Orchestra, The Boyer College of Music & Dance, the Curtis Institute and numerous professional and amateur musicians throughout the city to present [Symphony for a Broken Orchestra](#), a composition by David Lang for these instruments in their current state which has raised money for their eventual repair.







The [performance took place](#) this past weekend. Organizers say they'll repair all of the instruments they can and return them to Philadelphia public school students by the beginning of the 2018-19 school year. Additionally, they plan to install instrument repair kits in every single Philadelphia public school and even bring music classes back to as many of the schools as possible.

It's an inspiring story: making music can create the conditions for more music-making. The eventual repair of these instruments is certainly something to look forward to. But it's also a testament to the power of creativity: a composer can take something that is considered useless, broken, and forge something new and beautiful from the pieces.

You can view highlights from the performance below:

[Watch the video on YouTube](#)