



**Podcasters**

# Tuning In

Curtis alumni connect with new audiences through the world of podcasts. **BY RYAN LATHAN**

→ **FOR THE PAST DECADE**, prominent academic journals, arts and culture magazines, influential bloggers, and media figureheads have touted the idea we are living in “the Golden Age of podcasting.” From true crime confessions and insightful political commentary to multimedia music programs such as NPR’s popular *All Songs Considered*, the digital medium—which has its roots in the episodic radio broadcasts of the 1930s and ‘40s—has seen a meteoric rise since the early 2000s. Until recent years, the classical music world had yet to embrace the format fully, but that trend is shifting, and three Curtis alumni are carving out a formidable presence in the competitive podcast landscape.

Following her time at Curtis, prize-winning Indian American pianist Pallavi Mahidhara (Piano ‘10) served as artistic advisor of the young artist program at the Escuela Superior de Música Reina Sofía in Madrid for several years. There, she created a two-week summer intensive, including workshops on wellbeing, performance anxiety, and mindfulness for musicians. In the fall of 2021, a colleague asked, “Why don’t you do a podcast?” Within two weeks, she had planned around 35 episodes worth of content. Providing Ms. Mahidhara with an invaluable source of inner healing, *The Conscious Artist* has become a way to reconnect with Curtis colleagues, dispel mental health myths, and discuss salient topics such as discrimination, motherhood, navigating grief and depression, overcoming imposter syndrome, and battling cancer. Now in its

fifth season, the podcast features guests—from classical musicians to writers, actors, singer-songwriters, dancers, doctors, and scientists—with Ms. Mahidhara serving as executive producer, writer, and host. In becoming a conduit for change, she has created a pathway to help others on their own healing journeys.

Curtis alumni often find their paths entwined both on and off the stage. Close friends and colleagues Joseph Conyers (Double Bass ‘04) and Yumi Kendall (Cello ‘04) of The Philadelphia Orchestra have sculpted careers as citizen artists and educators, guided by a belief in the transformative power of music. Eager to discuss their industry and its challenges, they launched *Tacet No More* this past summer. Together as hosts and writers, they enlisted the talents of “thought partners” and fellow musicians—producer Lindsay Sheridan and master audio engineer-producer Andrew Mellor—with a shared vision to “create a trusted space for positive discussions about classical music.” Having covered issues such as discrimination in the opera world and the divides between orchestras and their communities, Ms. Kendall and Mr. Conyers say they will continue to draw on the opinions of both artists and outside thought leaders as they plan their second season.



**The Conscious Artist**

Each season features twelve episodes and is recorded in Zencastr. Ms. Mahidhara then spends five to six hours editing and mixing in GarageBand, adds a pre-recorded intro and outro, along with her self-performed theme, Johannes Brahms’s *Variations and Fugue on a Theme by Handel*, Op. 24, and downloads the file. With Buzzsprout as her podcast hosting platform, she publishes episodes on Mondays. Her listeners span six continents. Follow Ms. Mahidhara on Instagram @consciousartistpodcast.

**Tacet No More**

The team recently beta-tested their first six-episode season and records in a private recording studio in Philadelphia where guests join them via Zoom. Mr. Mellor edits using Pyramix software and begins each episode with Igor Stravinsky’s *Firebird* Suite, chosen for its theme of rebirth. Using Captivate as the hosting platform, each episode is published on Tuesday mornings. To date, they have had over 2,500 unique listeners from 64 countries. Follow Mr. Conyers and Ms. Kendall on Instagram @tacetnomore.

**HOW THEY DO IT**

PETE CHECCHIA (KENDALL AND CONYERS)