

Certain large organizations don't lend themselves to democracy: national banks, NFL teams, North Korea. Someone at the top must hand down decisions to the multitudes to preserve order. # Symphony orchestras function pretty much that way. Members of string quartets may debate from first bar to last, but groups of more than a dozen musicians need somebody to wave a baton before their obedient faces. # Except Orpheus. # For 46 years, through six dozen albums and three Grammy nominations -- including a 2000 win for a recording of Stravinsky miniatures -- the conductor-less Orpheus Chamber Orchestra has played music from four centuries with assurance, insight and skill. Digital Access for only \$0.99 # You can hear these 30 musicians Jan. 9 at Halton Theater, in the kind of varied program they enjoy: the second performance ever of a work by James Matheson (" Still Life "), Dennis Russell Davies' re-orchestration of Anton? n Dvor? k's heart-melting Five Bagatelles, and Mozart's Symphony No. 33 and Piano Concerto No. 27, featuring Javier Perianes. (The Spaniard was named Artist of the Year for 2019 by the International Classical Music Awards.) # Charlotte Concerts brings in Spanish pianist Javier Perianes. # Josep Molina Josep Molina # This will be Orpheus' fourth appearance in 23 years for Charlotte Concerts. Though membership changes, the philosophy never has. As violinist Miho Saegusa says, " People consider us a leaderless orchestra. We're not.