

Symphony in an Airport

70-piece Hollywood Scoring Orchestra plays once-in-a-lifetime gig at new LAX Tom Bradley International Terminal

BY LINDA A. RAPKA

In what marked possibly the first world premiere of a symphonic poem ever to take place at an airport, the Hollywood Scoring Orchestra provided a once-in-a-lifetime musical experience at Los Angeles International Airport June 20 with the debut of "Portale — A Symphonic Poem," especially composed by Emmanuel Fratianni and Laurie Robinson.

Dedicated to the peoples of Los Angeles, the piece celebrated the new 150,000 square-foot Tom Bradley International Terminal at LAX, set to officially open later this year.

The performing ensemble of 70 featured special performances by the International Children's Choir, multi-ethnic percussionists, and world-renowned soloists. Grammy Award-winner David Foster performed with special guests. The piece was commissioned by Westfield Corporation, corporate sponsor of the event. A framed copy of the score was gifted to L.A. Mayor Antonio Villaraigosa (recently succeeded by Eric Garcetti) by Westfield CEO Peter Lowy.

"We were profoundly appreciative of the great job the Local 47 orchestra did," composer Robinson said. "It was no small feat to get an orchestra and all of their instruments past TSA, over the tarmac, into restricted airspace and into a working terminal to premier a symphony. To witness the hard work and more importantly the good will that all of the musician's brought to this project was very moving, because it was not an easy job!"

To make the event happen, the production team had to deal with not only the logistical challenges of working in a functioning airport — one of the busiest, at that — but also in an unfinished space.

"That the musicians brought not just their talent, but the sincerity and desire for the project to succeed against a lot of obstacles, was profoundly touching," Robinson said. "It must be said that the project would not have succeeded without their professionalism — a lesser orchestra could not pull it off and stay on budget."

It was an unusual commingling of populations at the airport with 1,000 gala guests arriving in gowns on a red carpet, flanked by illuminated pillars meant to mimic the airport's signature feature, that stretched right through the existing terminal, where travelers trudged along with bags and boarding passes.



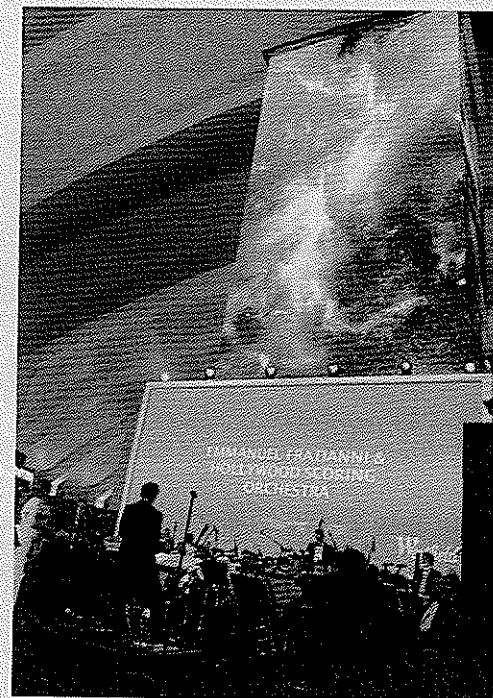
Photos courtesy of Laurie Robinson

Emmanuel Fratianni conducts the 70-piece Hollywood Scoring Orchestra at the preview opening gala of the new Tom Bradley International Terminal at LAX on June 20.

"Bravo to every one of the great players and thinkers, who helped us solve the unforeseen dilemmas which plagued us only because of this unusual performance environment," Robinson said. "Special thank you to Ross DeRoche, who contracted a knockout orchestra; Peter Kent, concertmaster; Jason Goodman, who solved an impossible cartage problem single-handedly; Bob O'Donnell, who never failed to get me yet another revised LAOLA budget, because our timeline from the client changed every single day; and the fantastic players who nailed the piece, after only two or three play downs.

"Vic Sagerquist of Paramount Music Library, who turned the score around in record time, deserves special thanks," Robinson said. "A special shoutout must go to Damon Tedesco, our top scoring engineer, who came off the scoring stage for this live project, to make the orchestra, soloists and David Foster sound amazing in this acoustic wildcard of modern architecture."

The new Tom Bradley terminal is considered the crown jewel of the \$4.1 billion LAX Capital Improvements Program, the largest public works project in the history of the City of Los Angeles. The New TBIT Project is creating nearly 4,000 construction-



related jobs during the project's five-year schedule and nearly 2,000 permanent concession jobs when the terminal begins operations.

The facilities previewed are expected to become operational later this year. The new terminal is expected to help LAX retain its competitiveness as the premier U.S. West Coast international gateway, especially to the fast-growing Asia-Pacific region.