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Aviator in A Minor: Lincoln, Detroit Symphony Bring Orchestral Experience into the Vehicle

- Unique chimes recorded by the Detroit Symphony Orchestra will provide musical alerts for drivers of the all-new Lincoln Aviator; the musicians recorded symphonic chimes for about 25 features in the Aviator
- The six new chimes, selected from hundreds of musical combinations, are a blend of percussion, violin and viola; launching on the all-new Aviator, they will then expand across the Lincoln lineup
- The all-new Lincoln Aviator production model makes its debut Nov. 28 at AutoMobility LA

DEARBORN, Mich., Nov. 5, 2018 – The notes are precise, crystalline and rich with detail, recorded by heralded musicians from the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. And they can only be heard in the all-new Lincoln Aviator, which makes its debut Nov. 28 at AutoMobility LA.

Unique chimes, informing drivers of everything from an open fuel door to an unlatched seat belt, are now symphonic in the all-new Lincoln Aviator. Three levels of informational chimes – non-critical, soft-warning chimes and hard-warning chimes – will provide distinct musical alerts for about 25 features in the vehicle.

“Aviator represents the true vision of the Lincoln brand,” said David Woodhouse, design director, The Lincoln Motor Company. “With a look this striking, we needed to have sounds that matched the beauty of this vehicle.”

The three-row Lincoln Aviator introduces groundbreaking performance and intuitive technology. Lincoln’s vehicle harmony team ensured that an SUV of such distinction in its design and engineering receive equal treatment in terms of its audio evolution.

“This is quite a departure for us – introducing music into the informational chime world,” said Jennifer Prescott, supervisor, vehicle harmony, The Lincoln Motor Company. “But we’re always thinking about luxury, and this was a way to take Lincoln to an even higher level.”

After brainstorming unique sound options with her team, Prescott sent an email to the musicians at the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. “I truly thought they’d think I was crazy,” she recalled, laughing. “But we wanted to make sure every detail in this vehicle was perfect.”

The opportunity to try something so markedly creative was irresistible, said Anne Parsons, president and CEO of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra.

“As the hometown orchestra of the Motor City, we were definitely interested when Lincoln contacted us about work that brought together music, cars and technology,” she said. “The DSO has historically valued the use of technology to increase access to classical music, from radio to recordings to the internet, and we are very excited about this new project.”

Finding the right sound

Through multiple sessions, musicians from the Detroit Symphony Orchestra recorded several iterations of the alerts, exploring and experimenting with notes after Prescott and team explained how the sounds would be incorporated in an upcoming luxury vehicle. With Aviator not yet in production, Prescott had the musicians sit inside a Lincoln Continental to experience the ambiance.

“We told them the flavor of the new vehicle and gave them scenarios of the alerts,” she recalled. We told them, basically, to design their own soundscapes. Then they just went in and started playing. And it was phenomenal.”

Selecting the right mix of sounds was not easy, she admits. The first time, more than 125 options were recorded. After a multitude of internal Lincoln listening clinics, those sounds were narrowed down to a single chime.

At that point, the vehicle harmony group returned to the Detroit Symphony Orchestra with a request to build a suite of embellished chimes around that particular note, and about 100 recordings later, the Lincoln team conducted more listening clinics, striving for – and ultimately finding – the symphonic soundscape that brought the project to life.

A project like no other

The final selection is played by three renowned musicians from the Detroit Symphony Orchestra: They are [Adrienne Rönmark](#), violin; [Eric Nowlin](#), principal viola; and [Joseph Becker](#), principal percussion.

“It was a very stimulating project; sounds and soundscapes are so much a part of our life that we often don’t really notice them – and yet they can provide all these triggers that are so important,” Rönmark said. “As a musician, usually what my job entails is trying to bring to life a piece of music that’s already been written. So to be a part of this process, to create sounds knowing their meaning first, and then create the sound second, was a really, really engaging way to process the sound.”

For Nowlin, the creative freedom just added to the enjoyment.

“It was very open-ended, which was great,” he said. “For us, it was an organic process. We were constantly changing something. We would change a rhythm, or how fast we were playing, or we would change the pitch. Through that process, we were really able to hone our ideas.”

The experience of merging technology and music was amazing, agrees Becker, in that it opened up a world of possibilities.

“One of the really interesting parts of this is we’re changing language into music,” he said. “There’s a list of words that they would like to convey, and we have a bunch of sounds, and we just have to experiment to have those two match up so that the experience is good for the driver.”

The more natural sounds integrate the organic style that many consumers are leaning toward, Becker added.

“I feel like we all have enough technology with our phones and our computers every day,” he said. “People want to get away from that sometimes, so it’s kind of nice to have actual instruments. I think the concept of incorporating it into the car in a different way is very cool.”

About The Lincoln Motor Company

The Lincoln Motor Company is the luxury automotive brand of Ford Motor Company, committed to creating compelling vehicles with an exceptional ownership experience to match. For more information about The Lincoln

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