Did you have a background in the arts before working with the North Carolina Symphony?
Patrick: I went to University of North Carolina at Greensboro and University of North Carolina School of the Arts for filmmaking. [Patrick, who names Star Wars: The Empire Strikes Back as his favorite movie, has been known to do video work for the Symphony on occasion!]

Josh: Before I came to NCS, I was employed as a theater stage technician by the City of Raleigh, mostly as a carpenter, assembling and deconstructing sets for the various shows in Memorial Auditorium. I also enjoy drawing, sculpting, metal casting, and other visual art forms.

Can you describe a typical work day for the Symphony's stage crew?
Josh: A typical work day doesn’t really exist for us. One day might consist of preparing for and running a single education concert. Another might include two services [rehearsals or concerts] and six hours of travel.

Are there aspects of the job that have been surprising to you?
Bo: After many years of doing this, it feels weird to go to a show as an audience member and have nothing to do — I’d rather be backstage doing something!

What is life like on the road in the Symphony truck?
Patrick: The Symphony truck’s radio hosts an eclectic blend of genres. We listen to a wide array of things consisting of — but not limited to — podcasts, audio books, 80s music, Wu-Tang Clan, and Sam Cooke. Josh: When we’re touring, we stop at as many different BBQ spots around the state as possible. I’ve been told that eastern-style North Carolina BBQ has always been the official food of the NCS stage crew, and it’s definitely my favorite.

What is the most challenging part of your work?
Patrick: I would say the hours that are needed to set up and monitor stage artists for success — literally, setting up and breaking down the stage for hundreds upon hundreds of rehearsals and concerts each year. “We take care of all of the logistical needs for the orchestra, both on-stage and backstage,” explains longtime Stage Manager Bo Osborne. And with the Symphony traveling more than 18,000 miles annually, Bo and his colleagues just might be the hardest-working symphony stage crew in the country.

Each traveling NCS concert or education program means loading up the Symphony truck with chairs, music stands, instruments, program books, and more, as well as accounting for the unique properties of different stages and venues. For any given performance — whether at the Symphony’s state headquarters venue, Meymandi Concert Hall, or in an elementary school gymnasium in a far-reaching corner of the state — the crew’s work begins hours before show time and ends long after the final note has been played.

Bo, Patrick, and Assistant Stage Manager Joshua Fisher shared a bit about their behind-the-scenes work with the Symphony — and what moves them.