

2026 National Conference Agenda—General Managers and Operations Personnel

All times below are Eastern Time. Agenda content subject to change.

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The following agenda describes sessions specifically designed for the above-mentioned constituents. For a full listing of Conference events and larger sessions, please visit <https://leagueconference.org/full-schedule>.

Monday, June 1, 2026

1:00pm-2:30pm Constituency Meeting Block 1

1:00pm-1:45pm Welcome and Icebreaker

Join your colleagues for an icebreaker session where everyone shares their biggest success/biggest challenges of the past year. Come ready to celebrate, commiserate, lend your ears, and support.

*Welcome by: **Agnieszka Rakhmatullaev**, Senior Vice President & Chief Operating Officer, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra*

*Icebreaker Moderators: **Kelly Woodhouse Boston**, Director of Operations, Seattle Symphony; **Agnieszka Rakhmatullaev**, Senior Vice President & Chief Operating Officer, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra*

1:45pm-2:30pm Advocacy and IMA/EMA Updates

*Speakers: **Heather Noonan**, Vice President of Advocacy, League of American Orchestras; **Joseph Kluger**, Principal, WolfBrown*

5:45pm-6:30pm Tour of Joseph Meyerhoff Symphony Hall (at the conclusion of the Opening Session)

The Joseph Meyerhoff Symphony Hall is an architectural and cultural landmark in the heart of Baltimore's historic Mount Vernon neighborhood. Built as the home of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra and opened on September 16, 1982, the hall was named for Joseph Meyerhoff, a Ukrainian-born Baltimore businessman, philanthropist, and arts patron who served as president of the Baltimore Symphony Orchestra from 1965 until his death in 1985, and

whose personal generosity made the hall a reality. The Meyerhoff is celebrated for its distinctive oval form—its cylindrical walls rising the full height of the building—and for its exceptional acoustics, achieved through a signature system of convex curves designed to eliminate flat surfaces and right angles within the auditorium.

Following the Opening Session, meet in the lobby of Meyerhoff Symphony Hall.

*Tour led by: **Marshall Mentz**, Director of Operations, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra*

Tour sponsored by Threshold Acoustics

Tuesday, June 2, 2026

3:00pm-5:00pm Constituency Meeting Block 2

3:00pm-4:15pm Bringing People In: How Operations Leaders Shape the New Employee Experience

Onboarding gets people through the door. Integration is what makes them want to stay.

This facilitated discussion brings together general managers and operations personnel to do something we rarely make time for—talk honestly about what it's actually like to be a new hire, and what we as operations leaders can do to make that experience better. Through a series of small group conversations and full-room report-backs, we'll dig into the unwritten rules of our organizational cultures, the moments where new musicians and staff tend to feel most like outsiders, and the practical steps we can take to close those gaps.

You'll leave with real ideas from peers across the field, a clearer sense of where your organization's integration process is strongest (and where it isn't), and at least one concrete thing you can bring back and try.

*Moderator: **Pratichi Shah**, President & CEO, Flourish Talent Management Solutions*

4:15pm-5:00pm Mix and Mingle (Toast to Tom Gaitens, Fine Arts Software)

Wednesday, June 3, 2026

11:15am-12:45pm Constituency Meeting Block 3

11:15am-12:15pm Aligning Artistic and Operations Teams

Join this collaborative session designed to strengthen coordination between artistic administrators, operations/production staff, and orchestra management. Through guided conversation participants will explore each team's priorities, pressures, and constraints—including but not limited to calendar usage, resource management, vision vs.

reality, and service utilization. This session will focus on improving communication while aligning artistic vision with operational realities.

*Speakers: **Alison Bolton**, Vice President & General Manager, Jacksonville Symphony; **Sonja Thoms**, Director of Operations & Personnel, Chattanooga Symphony & Opera*

12:15pm-12:45pm **Final Reflection and Staying Connected**

As we leave Conference, what will we choose to take with us? How do we stay connected and energized by what we've learned? We will identify strategies to keep the momentum on our path and deepen relationships that will fulfill us as we return home.

*Moderator: **Rebecca Cain**, VP of Orchestra Operations, Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra*

GMs and Operations Constituency Meetings have been generously sponsored by Kirkegaard

Notice: It is important to keep in mind antitrust rules governing competition that apply to this group discussion. While the agenda for this group includes discussion of a variety of issues that are crucial to orchestras' planning and strategies, the goal is not to agree on a single approach to these issues. With the benefit of analysis and discussion, each orchestra will be able to decide independently what course of action is best for its own organization. We ask you to avoid comments that relate to your orchestra's current or future plans for ticket or event pricing (actual ticket prices, discount amounts), bargaining (including collective bargaining agreements or with vendors), or compensation. Please consult the [League one-page Antitrust Overview](#) for more information, available at www.americanorchestras.org.