



National Alliance for Audition Support

Alianza Nacional para el apoyo de la audición

AuditionAlliance.org



New World Symphony
America's Orchestral Academy
Mabul Tzvi Thaler, Artistic Director



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Three National Organizations Join Forces to Increase Diversity in American Orchestras

The Sphinx Organization, New World Symphony,
and League of American Orchestras Form the
National Alliance for Audition Support (NAAS)
with a Grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

Unprecedented Approach Will Offer a Customized Combination of Mentoring, Audition Preparation, Financial Support, and Audition Preview Showcases for Black and Latinx Musicians

New York, NY (April 18, 2018) – Three national organizations – The Sphinx Organization, New World Symphony, and the League of American Orchestras – have partnered to create the National Alliance for Audition Support (NAAS), a field-wide initiative with the long-term goal of increasing diversity in American orchestras.

Supported by a four-year, \$1.8 million grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, along with additional financial and programmatic contributions from America's orchestras, the Alliance will offer a holistic and personalized array of support to Black and Latinx musicians to develop their audition skills, increase their participation in auditions, and ultimately, increase their representation in orchestras.

"This is a critical time for all of us to act with renewed commitment and drive to help our orchestras to be more reflective of their communities and to represent perspectives and talents from Black and Latinx musicians," said Sphinx President and Artistic Director **Afa S. Dworkin**. "We are honored to join forces with key industry leaders, humbled to receive and incorporate extensive insight directly from artists, and incredibly grateful to The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation for prioritizing this vital work."

“New World Symphony envisions a strong and secure future for classical music,” said NWS President **Howard Herring**. “We believe that is possible only if the orchestras of this country are representative of their communities. New World is committed to diversifying its Fellowship with the support of our alumni, who have won positions in orchestras and ensembles around the world. We are honored now to partner with Sphinx and the League in forming this new Alliance dedicated to making equity and inclusion part of the future for American orchestras.”

“This unprecedented collective action on the part of America’s orchestras addresses some of the main barriers to advancing diversity, equity, and inclusion in orchestras,” said **Jesse Rosen**, President and CEO, League of American Orchestras. “The unique and coordinated network of support is informed by research and extensive discussions with many Black and Latinx musicians as well as many other individuals in orchestras and higher education. We are especially grateful to the American Federation of Musicians, the International Conference of Symphony and Opera Musicians, and the Regional Orchestra Players Association for their participation and support.”

“I’m grateful that Sphinx, New World Symphony, and the League are collaborating to offer this special initiative,” said **Anthony McGill**, Principal Clarinet, New York Philharmonic and a member of the League’s Board of Directors. “We need a national, comprehensive approach to overcoming the barriers that face Black and Latinx orchestral musicians. I know that these are the kinds of resources that can make a real difference.”

The customized array of support to be offered through the NAAS will include:

Mentoring: the Alliance will match participants with appropriate mentors in the orchestral field.

Audition preparation through initiatives such as a three-day audition preparation intensive offered by the New World Symphony.

Financial support in the form of stipends for audition travel and other professional development expenses.

Audition previews through showcases offered by The Sphinx Organization, enabling orchestras to familiarize themselves with the talent pool.

The Sphinx Organization, heralded for its role in transforming lives through the power of diversity in the arts, is the lead program administrator and exercises fiscal oversight for the NAAS. The New World Symphony, America’s Orchestral Academy, will provide expertise and access to its renowned workshops, artist development resources, and online assets, as well as help recruit musicians for the program. The League of American Orchestras will convene and mobilize its 700 member orchestras, which will provide funding, mentoring, and guidance for the musicians. The League will also serve as the communications lead for the project, and collect and disseminate research and data.

The Alliance will be advised by an Artists’ Council of Black and Latinx orchestral musicians, orchestra administrators, and representatives from higher education. NAAS musicians participating in the audition training programs or receiving financial support for audition activities will be selected through an open competitive process. The first NAAS Audition Intensive takes place June 6-8, 2018, hosted by the New World Symphony in Miami. The Sphinx Orchestral Partners Auditions (SOPA) take place in Detroit during the annual Sphinx Connect conference in February 2019. The mentoring program is in development.

The National Alliance for Audition Support (NAAS) is an unprecedented national initiative to increase diversity in American orchestras. It will do so by offering Black and Latinx musicians a customized combination of mentoring, audition preparation, financial support, and audition previews. The NAAS is made up of [The Sphinx Organization](#), the lead program and fiscal administrator for the Alliance; the [New World Symphony, America's Orchestral Academy](#); and the [League of American Orchestras](#), representing 700 orchestras. A group of Black and Latinx professional musicians will be thought leaders, guides, and advisors for the Alliance. The NAAS is supported by a four-year grant of \$1.8M from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation as well as contributions from orchestras across the U.S. Learn more at www.auditionalliance.org.

The Sphinx Organization is a Detroit-based, national organization dedicated to transforming lives through the power of diversity in the arts. Sphinx programs reach more than 100,000 students, as well as live and broadcast audiences of more than two million annually. Sphinx works to create positive change in the arts field and in communities across the country through a variety of programs organized into four main principles: Education and Access, Artist Development, Performing Artists and Arts Leadership. Read more about Sphinx's programs at www.SphinxMusic.org.

The New World Symphony, America's Orchestral Academy (NWS), prepares graduates of music programs for leadership roles in professional orchestras and ensembles. In the 30 years since its co-founding by Artistic Director Michael Tilson Thomas and Lin and Ted Arison, NWS has helped launch the careers of more than 1,000 alumni worldwide. A laboratory for the way music is taught, presented and experienced, the New World Symphony consists of 87 young musicians who are granted fellowships lasting up to three years. The fellowship program offers in-depth exposure to traditional and modern repertoire, professional development training and personalized experiences working with leading guest conductors, soloists and visiting faculty. Relationships with these artists are extended through NWS' extensive distance learning via the internet. NWS Fellows take advantage of the innovative performance facilities and state-of-the art practice and ensemble rooms of the Frank Gehry-designed New World Center, the campus of the New World Symphony. Learn more about the New World Symphony at nws.edu.

The League of American Orchestras leads, supports, and champions America's orchestras and the vitality of the music they perform. Its diverse membership of more than 2,000 organizations and individuals across North America runs the gamut from world-renowned symphonies to community groups, from summer festivals to student and youth ensembles, from conservatories to libraries, from businesses serving orchestras to individuals who love symphonic music. The only national organization dedicated solely to the orchestral experience, the League is a nexus of knowledge and innovation, advocacy, and leadership advancement. Its conferences and events, award-winning *Symphony* magazine, website, and other publications inform people around the world about orchestral activity and developments. Founded in 1942 and chartered by Congress in 1962, the League links a national network of thousands of instrumentalists, conductors, managers and administrators, board members, volunteers, and business partners. Visit americanorchestras.org.

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