

## Orchestras at a Glance

January 2020 (reporting on FY2016-17)

### Orchestras are a vital part of America's musical landscape and civic life.

America is brimming with extraordinary musicians, live concerts, and orchestras as unique as the communities they serve. Orchestral musicmaking is flourishing in our country, encouraging creativity and bringing people together to share the experience of live music, as orchestras implement new strategies to diversify participation in the art form. Orchestras fuel local economies, attract new business development, educate young people, and—through the power of music—unite individuals and cultures in times of public celebration and healing.

### Orchestras serve communities large and small.

Orchestras exist in all 50 states, serving virtually every community, with annual budgets ranging from less than \$30,000 to more than \$100 million. Two thirds of all orchestras have budgets under \$300,000.<sup>1</sup>

### Orchestras are 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations.

The impact orchestras create in communities nationwide is supported by a critical combination of public and private support. Orchestras are not supported by ticket sales alone. As part of the nonprofit charitable sector, orchestras depend upon private philanthropy and civic support to fuel programs that serve community needs.

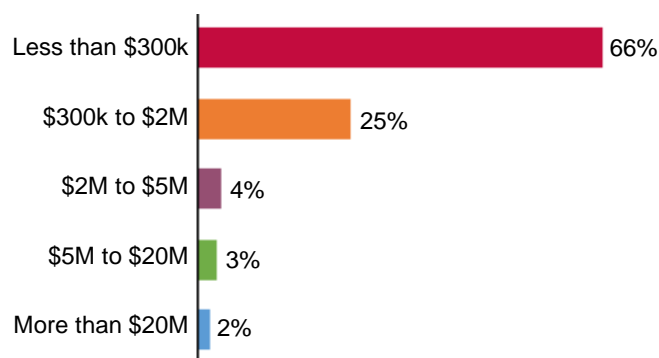
In 2016-17 an estimated 160,000 musicians performed in some 1,600 orchestras across the United States. Adult orchestras alone offered over 25,800 performances - of which 29% were free of charge - and reached over 29 million people.

*Source: Estimates are based on the 138 US orchestras completing the League's Orchestra Statistical Report (OSR) survey for 2017. Note: youth orchestras are included in the numbers of musicians and orchestras.*

### Orchestra expenses totaled more than \$2.1 billion in 2017.<sup>2</sup>

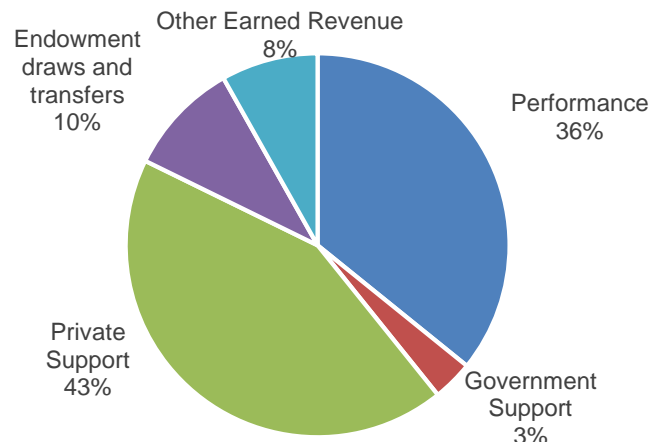
Their economic impact far exceeds that amount as orchestras create jobs, engage in commerce with local businesses, and spur local expenditures on related goods and services (e.g., hotels, restaurants, parking, and more).

#### Orchestras by Budget Category



Source: *Orchestra Facts, 2006 - 2014*

#### Adult Orchestras' Revenues by Source



Source: *The 138 US orchestras completing the OSR survey for 2017.*

<sup>1</sup> League of American Orchestras, *Orchestra Facts: 2006-2014*.

<sup>2</sup> Estimate based on the 138 US orchestras completing the OSR17 survey.

### **Orchestras are active participants in international cultural exchange.**

By inviting international musicians—such as composers, conductors, instrumentalists, and vocalists—to perform and collaborate, orchestras encourage a supportive climate for U.S. orchestras to perform abroad while providing American audiences with the opportunity to experience a diversity of musical talent. The 80 orchestras that reported engaging international artists in the U.S. presented a total of 1,116 concerts featuring international guest artists, with 40 orchestras sponsoring more than 171 visas. **The twelve adult orchestras that reported the results of their 2016-17 international tours performed 97 concerts for an estimated 146,000 attendees.** American youth orchestras also tour internationally, providing young U.S. musicians with the chance of a lifetime: performing in the world's greatest venues and engaging in cultural exchange with young people from diverse countries and cultures.

### **What role do orchestras play in communities?**

Orchestras contribute to healthy societies through their active participation in civic life, as communities with orchestras draw musicians, volunteers, philanthropists, and other civic-minded participants. Orchestras provide lifelong musical experiences and participation in the creative process. They enhance the quality of life in their communities by collaborating with school systems and other local partners to deliver a wide array of community programs. **The 138 U.S. orchestras that participated in a 2016-17 League survey (the OSR) alone offered over 46,000 educational and community engagement concerts, activities, and other related events that year, serving almost 2.3 million participants—64% of whom attended for free.** Orchestras offer a wide variety of programs tailored to meet community needs, including pre-school learning, in-depth residencies in schools, afterschool partnerships in high-poverty communities, educational classes for seniors, and health and wellness programs.

### **How do orchestras increase access to music education for young people?**

Music education is an essential part of life-long learning, and participation in music programs prepares students to succeed in school, work, and life. That's why the great majority of orchestras engage in advocacy on behalf of in-school music education in their communities. Students “play their part” by collaborating with their fellow orchestra musicians to develop skills, self-discipline, and individual expression. There are more than **400 youth orchestras across America**,<sup>3</sup> with new orchestras created each year to help meet the growing demand for music education and positive activities for young people. These orchestras involve over **80,000 young musicians** in the joy of music-making and all its ancillary benefits.

### **Leadership, Service, and Advocacy for America's Orchestras**

*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 orchestras, from summer festivals to student and youth ensembles, from businesses serving orchestras to individuals who love symphonic music. 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](http://americanorchestras.org).*

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<sup>3</sup> This is an estimate based on the League's membership, Form 990 filings, and the IRS Exempt Organization list.