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**Eighteen U.S. Orchestras and Youth Orchestras  
Receive \$30,000 Grants from the League of American Orchestras  
*American Orchestras' Futures Fund*  
to Advance Innovation**

New York, NY (August 13, 2020) – Eighteen orchestras and youth orchestras have received grants of \$30,000 each to spark a culture of innovation and learning in U.S. orchestras. Created by the League of American Orchestras to support a variety of forward-thinking and experimental projects, the two-year *American Orchestras' Futures Fund* grants, made possible by the generous support of the Ann and Gordon Getty Foundation, focus on artistic vibrancy, civic engagement, and organizational vitality.

Reflecting the potential of new ways of thinking and flexibility during this time of tremendous challenge and uncertainty, the funded programs' areas of focus vary greatly. Projects include a travelling music float in Kentucky permitting residents to social-distance while enjoying music from their front lawns; an alternative medical program in Georgia utilizing mindfulness-based music therapy; a commissioning program for composers of color in Maryland aiming to diversify the pool of composers who write for youth orchestras; an intensive after-school music and social program for students in communities in El Paso, near the Texas- Mexico border; and a New Jersey partnership with Nokia Labs creating new chamber music works using C4C technology to turn audiences' phones into speakers at live concerts. All the initiatives demonstrate the innovative measures orchestras are taking to grow their audiences and increase their relevance during the pandemic.

"The Futures Fund represents an important part of the incentive and fuel to support orchestras as they pivot and adapt to a dramatically changed environment," said Jesse Rosen, the League's President and CEO. "We are grateful to the Ann and Gordon Getty Foundation for their continued ongoing support and flexibility during this time when it is so urgently needed."

"The Foundation is pleased to fund these projects that contribute to the long-term sustainability of the art form," said Lisa Delan, Director of the Ann and Gordon Getty Foundation. "Our support of the League—indeed, the unity of the field itself—is critical as we search for ways not only to endure but to emerge stronger than ever. We are at a crossroads and our only way forward is

arm in arm.”

Recognizing the devastating impact of the global pandemic on orchestra musicians and staff, the League—with the encouragement and approval of the Ann and Gordon Getty Foundation—offered grantees flexible alternative options for using their Futures Fund grant.

This is the fourth round of the League’s \$6 million Futures Fund program; previous grants were announced in [2017](#), [2018](#), and [2019](#). Smaller-budget U.S.-based orchestras and youth orchestras that are members of the League were eligible to apply in this round. An independent review panel selected the orchestras based on criteria including evidence of organizational readiness and the project’s potential for long-term impact. Each proposal was required to address at least one of three categories: Artistic Vibrancy (e.g., innovative approaches to performance and programming); Organizational Vitality (e.g., work addressing new organizational models that explore alternatives to traditional operating models and leadership structures and which redefine relationships among organizational stakeholders); and Civic Engagement (e.g., programs on or off the stage that are responsive to and reflective of their communities and the key issues the communities face). In order to facilitate field-wide learning, grant applicants were encouraged to focus on ways their orchestras could develop, share, and document new ways of working both locally and across the field.

**2020 grant recipients include:**

**American Composers Orchestra (NY)—ACO Pathways**

*ACO Pathways* was created in response to research revealing that many composers from underrepresented groups and/or from other musical traditions have an interest in writing for orchestras but have not had opportunities. The four-year fellowship provides training, mentorship, and a sequence of commissions for composers who have not had orchestral training. *Pathways* is a partnership between ACO, International Contemporary Ensemble (ICE), and the Gabriela Lena Frank Academy for Musicians (GLFAM).

**Augusta Symphony (GA)—Mindfulness-Based Music Therapy Program**

Augusta Symphony is expanding its free music therapy program to include a mindfulness-based music therapy initiative. Symphony musicians and university students will provide live music for group therapy sessions, facilitated by Augusta Symphony’s music therapist, that focus on guided relaxation, imagery, and mindfulness practices to positively impact the lives of participants such as those suffering chronic illnesses as well as community members interested in self-care and wellness.

**Boise Philharmonic (ID)—In Roads Program**

The *In Roads Program* creates opportunities to deliver on the Boise Phil's mission through several initiatives that take its work out of the concert halls and into communities to benefit populations including homeless and low-income families, youth suffering from mental illness, Parkinson's patients, refugee families, the elderly and infirm, U.S. veterans, the incarcerated, at-risk youth, and the blind and visually impaired, as well as the general population.

**Boston Landmarks Orchestra (MA)—Building Bridges to Accessibility for the Deaf/Hearing Impaired Community**

The orchestra will use technology to allow deaf/hearing impaired individuals to experience concerts through sound vibrations. A device, SUBPAC, is a high-fidelity physical sound system that directly transfers low frequencies to the body, providing the physical dimension to sound. Ten devices will be purchased in the first year, allowing eighty individuals to participate. If successful, twenty additional units will be purchased in year two. The Orchestra's *Breaking Down Barriers Accessibility Initiative* is now in its ninth year.

**Boulder Philharmonic (CO)—Hearing Boulder**

*Hearing Boulder* is a new initiative with two primary goals: to make music with neighbors who rarely attend formal concerts, particularly Boulder County's Latinx population; and to use innovative techniques to connect and create artistic work with people in the community. *Hearing Boulder* began this year as a series of events featuring ensembles playing in a brew pub, Google's offices, and a mobile home park. The orchestra also began two pilot programs: one with Head Start, and a mentorship program for teens composing for the Phil.

**El Paso Symphony Orchestra (TX)—Tocando**

The El Paso Symphony Orchestra's (EPSO) after school music project, *Tocando*, is in its eighth year of reaching students in areas in and around the city, such as El Segundo Barrio and Tornillo, Texas. Providing free instruments, instruction, and performance opportunities, *Tocando* uses music education as a vehicle for students to acquire valuable tools of teamwork, self-confidence, leadership, and academic success.

**Inner City Youth Orchestra of LA (CA)—Los Angeles Orchestra Fellowship Program and South Side Chicago Youth Orchestra**

The Los Angeles Orchestra Fellowship (LAOF) prepares persons from historically underrepresented communities to take and win auditions with American orchestras. The program is operated in collaboration with Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra and the Thornton School at the University of Southern California. The South Side Chicago Youth Orchestra (SSCYO) is a pathways project for young people in the predominantly African-American community on Chicago's south side, offering opportunities for youngsters to learn and perform orchestra repertoire and prepare for potential opportunities in American orchestras.

**Lexington Philharmonic (KY)—Neighborhood Concerts on Parade!**

*Neighborhood Concerts on Parade!* will involve small ensemble performances presented from a “music float.” The music float will travel to different neighborhoods where residents can gather on their front lawns, at public parks, or open public spaces to enjoy the concert. This concept will allow musicians and audiences to appropriately social-distance, provide music-making opportunities to LexPhil musicians, build bridges to other music genres, and bring people together for a joyful, communal experience.

**National Orchestral Institute + Festival (NOI+F) at the University of Maryland (MD)— The K12 New Music Project**

*The K12 New Music Project* seeks to diversify the pool of composers who write for young players by commissioning works by composers of color to write music for elementary, middle, high school, and regional youth orchestras. These composers will work directly with instrumental teachers and students at secondary schools in Prince George's County, Maryland and with the DC Youth Orchestra Program and Hawaii Youth Symphony. Ultimately, schools across the nation will have easy access to these new works through an online portal.

**National Repertory Orchestra (CO)—Education and Community Engagement Program**

The *Education and Community Engagement Program* is a series of family-friendly music performances that are easily accessible, interactive, and educational for both the NRO fellows and the audience. Through project-based classes focusing on community partnerships that sustain both artistic and social values, the NRO educates and inspires the next generation of musicians to become great leaders in their communities by engaging music enthusiasts of all ages and backgrounds to act on their curiosity of classical music.

**New Jersey Youth Symphony (NJ)—Experimenting with Art and Technology: Exploring New Dynamics between Performers and Audiences**

New Jersey Youth Symphony (NJYS) will partner with Nokia Bell Labs to use C4C, a technology that turns audiences' phones into speakers, enabling the audience to become part of the performance. The performers can activate sounds on the phones throughout the audience in synchrony with the main performance. Three to five new chamber ensemble works will be commissioned with flexible instrumentation to be performed using C4C technology. A core group of NJYS students will work directly with the engineers at Nokia Bell Labs.

**New York Youth Symphony (NY)—Pipeline to Success**

*Pipeline to Success'* goal is to increase access to NYYS's programs to diversify the field of music. The program begins at age 7, continues through age 22, and extends to pre-professional NYYS alumni. Components include NYYS access through music exposure, education, and peer-to-peer mentoring; scholarships, fellowships, and audition prep for participation in NYYS; training and mentoring for musicians who wish to prepare for college; and post-baccalaureate fellowship/internship opportunities for alumni.

**Orchestra 2001 (PA)— JOURNEYS: Classical Movements from the African Diaspora**

Orchestra 2001 will present a series of performances highlighting composers of the African diaspora with concerts aimed at reaching Black audiences and eliminating barriers to attendance. Programs will feature music by prominent African-American composers, an Afro-Brazilian composer-in-residence, a Miles Davis classic, a George Crumb masterpiece, and composers from across the African continent. The Futures Fund grant will assist in community outreach and new formats to reach local Black communities using experimental strategies.

**Project 440 (PA)—Doing Good II**

*Doing Good* is an after-school program focused on developing creative youths' entrepreneurship and leadership skills through the lens of music. Workshops teach students the basics of social entrepreneurship, leadership, and community engagement, culminating in a "Shark Tank" style event where students pitch community-based project ideas to a panel of mentors. Students then implement their project ideas under the guidance of P440 teaching artists, ending with a public presentation. DGII will allow students to continue to grow their projects with P440 support.

**Symphony Tacoma (WA)—Tacoma: Speaking Our Truth**

Symphony Tacoma is dedicated to programming regionally impactful music that sheds light on often uncomfortable issues, past and present. The Symphony will master a recording of the 2017 World Premiere of Daniel Ott's *Fire-Mountain*, a work inspired by the plight of the receding glaciers due to climate change at nearby Mount Rainier National Park. This recording will be shared across digital platforms and in a traveling educational exhibit, which will include environmental content backed by science and images of Mount Rainier.

**Youth Orchestra of San Antonio (TX)—YOSA Rising Stars Fellows**

*YOSA Rising Star Fellows* provides intensive support to promising young African-American, Hispanic, and Native American musicians who attend Title I schools in San Antonio. Fellows receive direct support throughout their high school career, including tuition for YOSA programs, national summer music camps or festivals, weekly private lessons, and incidental expenses, such as instrument maintenance, transportation costs, concert attire, and travel to college auditions. Fellows are mentored by professional musicians of similar backgrounds.

The following orchestras have elected to apply their Futures Fund grants toward a wide range of ongoing activity:

**Boston Youth Symphony Orchestras (MA)**

The mission of BYSO is to encourage musical excellence in a professional and supportive environment by providing the highest quality orchestra training and performance opportunities to qualified musicians, grades K-12, and making exceptional classical music experiences

# League of American Orchestras

accessible to youth from all Boston communities. BYSO serves over 500 students annually across a robust array of programs that includes three full symphonic orchestras, two string training orchestras, a preparatory wind ensemble, a chamber music program, and the Intensive Community Program.

## **San Diego Youth Orchestra and Conservatory**

Celebrating 75 years, San Diego Youth Symphony and Conservatory is the 6th oldest continuously operating youth symphony in the United States, serving close to 700 beginning through pre-professional student musicians annually in 13 full orchestras and ensembles. Through SDYS' flagship ensemble program in Balboa Park, its neighborhood engagement projects, and its early childhood music curriculum, SDYS is San Diego's most comprehensive provider of 'cradle through college' music education programs and a national leader in innovative community engagement, serving thousands of young musicians each year.

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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 1,700 organizations and individuals across North America runs the gamut from world-renowned orchestras 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](http://americanorchestras.org).

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