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Simon Woods
Appointed President and CEO
of the League of American Orchestras

New York, NY (April 3, 2020)—The League of American Orchestras announced today that **Simon Woods**, a highly experienced and forward-looking leader in the orchestral field, has been named President and CEO of the League, effective September 1, 2020. Woods will guide the League in fulfilling its mission: to advance the experience of orchestral music, support the people and organizations that create it, and champion the contributions they make to the health and vibrancy of communities.

He succeeds **Jesse Rosen**, who has served as President and CEO since 2008. Rosen announced his retirement from the League in June of 2019, and a Recruitment and Selection Committee of the League's Board began a national search in the fall of 2019. The League plans to recognize Rosen's successful tenure with events that will be scheduled after the COVID-19 pandemic passes.

Woods will work closely with the League's staff and board to sustain and grow the organization's programmatic excellence, its support for its members, and the prominent role it occupies in national arts advocacy. He will be a leading voice for the League's 1,700 institutional and individual members—including orchestras across the 50 states and around

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the world—ensuring that the League empowers them with knowledge, perspective, and resources to navigate a rapidly changing environment.

“We are thrilled that Simon will become our President and CEO, given his passion for orchestral music, his track record of advancing the League’s mission, and his vision for change as orchestras pursue deeper engagement with their communities,” said **Douglas Hagerman**, Board Chair of the League. “In this time of pandemic and all of its challenges, Simon brings to the table not only strong, steady leadership, but also personal qualities that will nurture our organization and its members—qualities such as listening, integrity, and humanity. Simon will extend and embolden the critical work that Jesse Rosen has started.”

“I am truly humbled to take on this critical leadership role,” said Woods. “Orchestras have been at the center of my life since I first played clarinet in my local youth orchestra many years ago. They have given me my career, many of my friendships, and an undying sense of wonder about the magic that happens on stage when great musicians come together as one. We are deep into one of the most challenging periods that our world has ever experienced, but I have tremendous faith in our long-term prospects as we re-invent our art form, build authentic relationships with our communities, and reflect the vibrant cultural mix of the country on our stages and in our halls. Our field has never been more dynamic than it is today, and my pledge is to champion that dynamism and tirelessly support the amazing people—onstage and off—who make it possible.”

Woods brings 32 years of experience in the field of orchestral music to the League. He is currently Interim Director of the Grand Teton Music Festival, having served as CEO of the Los Angeles Philharmonic Association (2018-2019), President and CEO of the Seattle Symphony Orchestra (2011-2017), Chief Executive of the Royal Scottish National Orchestra (2005-2011), and President and CEO of the New Jersey Symphony Orchestra (2004-2005). He was Vice President, Artistic Planning and Operations for the Philadelphia Orchestra from 2002 to 2004, having joined the orchestra in 1997 after almost a decade as a classical CD producer at EMI Classics in London. Woods has a Bachelor of Arts in music (musicology, conducting, composition) from the University of Cambridge, Clare College and a Postgraduate Diploma in Conducting from the Guildhall School of Music, London.

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A long-time champion of new music, Woods has been responsible for dozens of commissions of new works that have gone on to win prestigious awards. He has championed diversity and equity and has worked to create systemic change from the inside of the organizations he has run. A strong believer in the importance of community relationships, Woods has led programs focusing on access for young people, homelessness, prisons, and native tribe partnerships. Passionately committed to the professional development of the orchestra leaders of the future, Woods has for two decades contributed to the League's professional development programs. He is director of the League's signature annual immersive training program, Essentials of Orchestra Management.

League Board Member **Aaron Flagg** is Co-Chair of the League's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee; a Stamford (CT) Symphony board member; and Chair and Associate Director, Jazz Studies, The Juilliard School in New York. He said, "As the orchestra field acknowledges the full impact of its heritage and creates a future where all historically marginalized communities feel they belong and are embraced, we need proactive leadership that prioritizes this work. Simon will do that with approachability, humility, integrity, and courage. We believe he can build upon the good work of Jesse Rosen in this critical area for all American orchestras and their communities."

League Board Member **Bob Wagner**, Co-Chair of the League's Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Committee and Principal Bassoon, New Jersey Symphony Orchestra, commented, "His commitment to the music and the art form is absolutely genuine. He understands the importance of a strong, transparent working relationship between all the members of our organizations—musicians, board, and management."

League Board Member **Heather Clarke**, Executive Director of the Idaho State-Civic Symphony, said, "Simon's passion for the orchestra field, coupled with his vast knowledge of the industry, encourages each of us to become more creative—collaboratively. It is this shared sense of ownership that reaches all sizes of orchestras. He is a compelling communicator and an intuitive motivator and teacher. I know we will raise our artistic excellence under his leadership and vision."

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Hagerman said the search for Rosen’s successor was highly competitive. Hagerman chaired the League’s Recruitment and Selection Committee, which was assisted by the recruiting firm, the Aspen Leadership Group. Committee members are **Alberta Arthurs**, a cultural consultant and commentator in New York; **Heather Clarke**, Executive Director of the Idaho State-Civic Symphony; **Aaron Flagg**, a Stamford (CT) Symphony Board Member and Chair and Associate Director, Juilliard Jazz Studies Department, The Juilliard School, New York; **Gary Ginstling**, Executive Director, National Symphony Orchestra in Washington D.C.; **Alfred Moore**, Retired President, Fiserv Health (now UMR division, United Healthcare), from St. Paul, MN; **Pratichi Shah**, President & CEO, Flourish Talent Management Solutions in Washington D.C.; and **Robert Wagner**, Principal Bassoon, New Jersey Symphony Orchestra.

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.

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