



Contacts:

League of American Orchestras  
Rachelle Schlosser  
Director of Media Relations  
and Communications  
[rschlosser@americanorchestras.org](mailto:rschlosser@americanorchestras.org)  
646 822 4027

Ford Motor Company Fund  
Todd Nissen  
Director of Communications  
[tnissen@ford.com](mailto:tnissen@ford.com)  
313 322 4898

**Five Orchestra Musicians to Receive  
Ford Musician Awards for Excellence in Community Service from  
League of American Orchestras**

**Recipients to Present at the  
League's 73<sup>rd</sup> National Conference in Chicago, June 13-15**

New York, NY (**May 17, 2018**) – Five orchestra musicians will receive **Ford Musician Awards for Excellence in Community Service** from the League of American Orchestras at the [League's 73<sup>rd</sup> National Conference in Chicago, June 13-15, 2018](#). Recognizing the transformative power of music, the Awards honor those in the orchestra field who employ music for the benefit of the greater community.

The awardees' impact has been deep and life-changing; in partnership with their orchestras and organizations, the musicians have used music to engage, inspire, and heal multiple populations: Latino children and teens, rural communities with limited access to quality music education, cancer patients and their families, the homeless and housing insecure, and visual and performing artists united in support of sheltered animals.

"These five musicians are committed leaders and advocates who inspire their colleagues around the country with their skill and expertise in community settings," said League of American Orchestras President and CEO Jesse Rosen. "We are grateful to Ford Motor Company Fund for supporting this vital work and helping us honor these role models."

“We’re proud to recognize the generous service of these talented musicians, who go above and beyond to help make people’s lives better,” said Yisel Cabrera, Manager, Government and Community Relations, Ford Motor Company Fund. “Music and the arts bring people together and strengthen our communities, and that’s a benefit we can all share and enjoy.”

The musicians will receive their awards at the League of American Orchestras’ [Conference Luncheon](#), June 14 at 12:30 p.m., and discuss their work at [Social Impact Beyond the Concert Hall: A Musicians’ Panel](#), an elective session for Conference delegates on June 14 at 8:45 a.m.

The five award recipients and their orchestras are:



**[Jeffrey Barker](#), Associate Principal Flute, Seattle Symphony:**

*Lullaby Project, Sensory Friendly Concerts, Simple Gifts Initiative, among others*

Jeffrey has collaborated on developing Sensory-Friendly Concerts, coached sectionals for side-by-side performances with local high schools, and actively supported the Seattle Symphony’s Lullaby Project and Simple Gifts initiatives, which empower individuals experiencing homelessness to connect with their creativity. Jeffrey has immersed himself in addressing homelessness in Seattle. In addition to his work with the Seattle Symphony, he also advocates on issues of homelessness by speaking publicly, and helping partner organization Mary’s Place raise money for shelters.



**John R. Beck, Principal Percussion,  
Winston-Salem Symphony:**

*HealthRHYTHMS drumming with cancer  
and pediatric behavioral health patients;  
collaborative research study with  
physicians on the benefits of interactive  
group drumming*

John's work has had a broad reach, covering hospitals, schools, and senior centers, serving both children and adults. His current efforts are focused on adult stem cell transplant recipients: both the patients and their families experience the therapeutic benefits of drumming as an aid in healing and to mitigate stress, anxiety, and pain. His work has a clinical component: collaborating with an oncologist who is a symphony board member to study the psychological and physiological impact of participation in group drumming. With the support of the orchestra, a concert series was devoted to cancer awareness featuring commissioned music dedicated to and performed by people living with cancer.



**Jody Chaffee, Flute II and Piccolo  
Chair, Community Engagement  
Director, Personnel Manager,  
Librarian, Firelands Symphony  
Orchestra and Chorale (OH):**

*Providing in-school access to quality  
music programs for students in rural  
communities*

"Miss Jody," as she's known to her students, is a licensed music education instructor who has been working with students in "music deprived" communities in the Firelands area since 2012. Personally providing over 5,000 children in mainly rural communities access to music in this year alone, she has created engaging educational programs for pre-k through third grade students, introductory year band and orchestra students, and band students in grades 5-12. These programs are designed to instill

a desire for life-long learning of music and the arts, and to create a new generation of music lovers.



**Erin Hannigan**, Principal Oboe,  
**Dallas Symphony Orchestra:**  
*Concerts for Kindness, DSO's  
Young Strings program, DSO Teen  
Council*

For six years, Erin's annual Concert for Kindness events have demonstrated the interaction of the arts, education, and civic causes. Supported by the DSO's Principal Grant Program, Concert for

Kindness recognizes the value and talent of high school and college-aged visual artists and musicians, who develop and produce this annual benefit concert raising funds for Operation Kindness, the oldest no-kill animal shelter in North Texas. The event features live music, visual art, and photography, with participation by young musicians and rescue animals. Students from the DSO's Young Strings program and Teen Council are also involved, providing pre-concert musical entertainment and serving as ushers and volunteers.



**Juan R. Ramírez Hernández**,  
**Violin, Atlanta Symphony  
Orchestra:**  
*Musicians in Schools, Musicians in  
Communities, and Talent  
Development Program, among  
others*

Over a 45-year time period, Juan has created a series of music programs and organizations with the aim of connecting with Latino young people and adults. A

committed performer, composer, teacher, mentor, and community leader, he has brought music into the lives of students who might not have access to instruments and training, and has engaged many constituencies on stage, in high schools and libraries, and at



community events, both local and international. He has a long history of working with the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra's education and community engagement programs, and has also formed his own performing arts organizations, teaching, conducting, leading workshops, and performing.

**About the Ford Musician Awards for Excellence in Community Service:**

Now in its third year, the League's Ford Musician Awards program, made possible by the generous support of Ford Motor Company Fund, honors and celebrates professional orchestra musicians who provide exemplary and meaningful service in their communities and make a significant impact through education and community engagement. The Awards shine a spotlight on the work of these musicians with people of low incomes, the homebound elderly, immigrants, veterans, prisoners, students, and all those who may not otherwise have access to—or who are not traditionally served by—orchestras.

The musicians were selected by a panel of peer professionals through a competitive nomination process to receive the awards, which include a \$2,500 grant to each musician, as well as an additional \$2,500 grant to the musician's home orchestra to support professional development focused on community service and engagement for musicians.

**Previous Award Recipients:**

[2017 award recipients](#) included Mark Dix, viola, Phoenix Symphony; Michael Gordon, principal flute, Kansas City Symphony; Diane McElfish Helle, violin, Grand Rapids Symphony; Eunsoon Lee-Coroliss, assistant principal violist, Knoxville Symphony Orchestra; and Peter Zlotnick, education manager/principal timpani, Greensboro Symphony. [Videos of the 2017 awardees can be found here.](#)

[2016 award recipients](#) included Penny Anderson Brill, viola, Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra; Shannon Orme, bass clarinet, Detroit Symphony Orchestra; Jeffrey Paul, Principal Oboe, South Dakota Symphony Orchestra; Brian Prechtel, percussion, Baltimore Symphony Orchestra; and Beth Vandervennet, cello, Oakland Symphony.

This is the League's second partnership project with Ford Motor Company Fund, which was the title sponsor of Ford Made in America, the largest commissioning consortium in the country's history.



### **About Ford Motor Company Fund and Community Services**

Ford Motor Company Fund and Community Services – the philanthropic arm of Ford Motor Company – works with community and global partners to advance driving safety, education and community life. Ford Motor Company Fund has operated for more than 67 years with ongoing funding from Ford Motor Company. Ford Driving Skills for Life is free, interactive, hands-on safety training focused on skill development and driving techniques, while addressing inexperience, distractions and impaired driving. Innovation in education is encouraged through Ford Blue Oval Scholars, Ford Driving Dreams, Ford Next Generation Learning and other innovative programs that enhance high school learning and provide college scholarships and university grants. The Ford Volunteer Corps enlists more than 30,000 Ford employees and retirees each year to work on local projects that strengthen their communities and improve people’s lives in more than 40 countries around the world. For more information, visit <http://community.ford.com>.

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 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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