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

**Recipients to Share their Award-Winning Work at the  
League's 74<sup>th</sup> National Conference in Nashville, June 3-5**

New York, NY (May 9, 2019) – Five orchestra musicians will receive **Ford Musician Awards for Excellence in Community Service** from the League of American Orchestras at the [League's 74th National Conference in Nashville, June 3-5, 2019](#).

The awards, supported by Ford Motor Company Fund, celebrate professional orchestra musicians who provide exemplary service in their communities and make a significant impact through education and community engagement.

This year's awardees work with children of all ages in a variety of initiatives, introducing young children to orchestral instruments through story, live music, and movement; teaching hearing and speech-impaired children new skills; providing music education and engagement to students from underserved communities; connecting with children and families in outlying communities through creative programming; and facilitating the creation of new compositions by high school students.

"These musicians' artistry and commitment drives compelling work that touches the lives of so many in their communities," said Jesse Rosen, the League's President and CEO. "Ford Motor Company Fund's ongoing generosity has helped us share the inspiring work of these trailblazing mentors and leaders with the entire orchestra field and beyond."

NEWS

“We’re proud to recognize these five musicians, whose contributions to their communities will create a lasting positive impact,” said Yisel Cabrera, Manager, Government and Community Relations, Ford Motor Company Fund. “Music and the arts have the ability to transcend boundaries and bring people together, which is why the generous service these musicians are providing is so important.”

The musicians will receive their awards at the League of American Orchestras’ [Conference Luncheon](#), June 4 at 12:45 p.m., and discuss their work at [Musicians Transforming Communities](#), an elective session for Conference delegates on June 4 at 9:00 a.m. Videos of the musicians in action will be posted on the League’s website after the Conference.

The five award recipients and their orchestras are:



**Victoria Griswold, Violin**  
**Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra**

*Teddy Bear Series, introducing young children to orchestral instruments through story, live music, and movement*

Since 2015, Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra Violinist Victoria Griswold has written the programs for the ISO’s Teddy Bear Series, which provides thousands of young children access to free music programs at local libraries, hospitals, and preschools. Two of her Teddy Bear programs have been turned into children’s books through the

Macy’s Gives program. The program integrates live music, storytelling, and age-appropriate movement for children ages 3-6, but typical audiences include infants through age 8.

*“It is magical to see a room full of children hearing musical instruments for the first time and it feels wonderful that these programs are reaching the general public in a way that is welcoming and inclusive.” – Victoria Griswold*



**Jeff Handley, Principal Percussion  
Chicago Sinfonietta**

*Audience Matters and SEED, in-school  
residency programs for students from  
underserved communities*

Principal Percussionist and  
Education/Outreach Program Director with  
Chicago Sinfonietta and Fulcrum Point New  
Music Project, Jeff Handley created two  
programs with the goals of exposing students  
to classical music. Both programs model  
diversity through the musicians sent to the  
classrooms, with the goal of preparing young  
musicians to move forward to college and

auditions. Audience Matters is a six-week, in-school residency program for 4-6  
grades that provides music education and engagement to students in underserved  
communities; SEED provides intense small group instruction by Chicago Sinfonietta  
musicians for high school student musicians in chamber-sized ensembles.

*“If we can help these students overcome some of the incredible challenges they face  
by helping them to see what they are capable of, who could ask for more rewarding  
work?” – Jeff Handley*



**Rebecca Patterson, Principal Cello  
New Haven Symphony Orchestra**

*NHSO Harmony Fellowship Quartet / Recording  
Composition Class, for students from  
underrepresented communities*

Rebecca Patterson is one of two New Haven  
Symphony Orchestra musicians and two student  
Fellows from underrepresented communities in  
the NHSO Harmony Quartet. The Quartet  
implemented the Recording Composition Class,  
working with a high school music class for a  
complete school year to facilitate the creation of

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new works merging classical and hip-hop traditions. The students put their own poems and lyrics to songs performed by the string quartet, and which were then recorded. This program created a lasting positive impact on the students well beyond the initial work in the classroom, influencing their self-esteem, social circles, mental focus and studies, and direction in life.

*“If creating music has planted the seeds of imagination, perseverance, and the belief in oneself that is needed to overcome the many hurdles and extreme challenges encountered in life, then who knows what positive ripples may ensue down the road.”*  
– Rebecca Patterson



**Donna Parkes, Principal Trombone  
Louisville Orchestra**

*Teaching children at the Heuser Hearing Institute with hearing and speech impairment skills such as singing, clapping with rhythm, and dancing.*

Introducing the wonder of sound and music to hearing- and speech-impaired children, and working with a team that includes hearing specialists, teachers, musicians, and administrators, Donna Parkes has been bringing the joy of music to dozens of youngsters and their families for eleven seasons. Taken from the National Standards of Music Education for pre-school and early Childhood, the program’s goals include singing and playing instruments; creating music; responding to music; and understanding music.

*“Through our music, we have this incredible tool to share our art with anyone. We can form relationships that cross many barriers, and this gives me the chance to share my music with a true purpose.”* – Donna Parkes



**Rebecca Young, Associate Principal Viola  
New York Philharmonic**  
*Very Young People's Concerts*

Rebecca Young was first introduced to music at the age of two when her parents took her to the New York Philharmonic's Young People's Concerts led by Leonard Bernstein. Today, she is the host of the Philharmonic's popular Very Young Peoples Concerts, intimate chamber music concerts where she has tap-danced, played drums, ridden a scooter around the stage, and even sung Gilbert & Sullivan. She has expanded the program's reach to touch

outlying areas, including the New York's outer boroughs and even overseas.

*"To share classical music with young children, people with special needs, and countless others is both a gift we give and something from which we receive so much." - Rebecca Young*

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

Now in its fourth 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 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:**

[2018 award recipients](#) included Jeffrey Barker, associate principal flute, Seattle Symphony; John R. Beck, principal percussionist, Winston Salem Symphony; Jody

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Chaffee, Community Engagement Director, Flute, Firelands Symphony Orchestra; Erin Hannigan, Principal Oboe, Dallas Symphony Orchestra; and Juan R. Ramírez Hernández, Violin, Atlanta Symphony Orchestra. [Videos of the 2018 awardees can be found here.](#)

[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.

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## **About Ford Motor Company Fund**

As the philanthropic arm of Ford Motor Company, Ford Fund's mission is to strengthen communities and help make people's lives better. Working with dealers and nonprofit partners in 63 countries, Ford Fund provides access to opportunities and resources that help people reach their full potential. Since 1949, Ford Fund has invested more than \$2 billion in programs that support education, promote safe driving, enrich community life and encourage employee volunteering. For more information, visit [www.fordfund.org](http://www.fordfund.org) or join us at @FordFund on [Facebook](#) and [Twitter](#).

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

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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).

*Photo credits: Victoria Griswold (Greg Whitaker); Jeff Handley (Chicago Sinfonietta); Rebecca Patterson (Lisa-Marie Mazzucco); Donna Parkes (Sam English); Rebecca Young (Chris Lee)*

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