

Creating the Greatest Impact

The League of American Orchestras' 2018 National Conference asks: how can the orchestral experience create the greatest impact in today's world? Here's a look at just some of what's on the slate.

America is brimming with extraordinary musicians and ensembles as unique as the communities they serve. Each year, over a thousand orchestras across the United States contribute \$1.8 billion to the U.S. economy and reach a total audience of nearly 25 million, according to the League's research. The artistry and creativity of musicians, composers, conductors, soloists, music educators, and teaching artists are flourishing as ever. The talent and enthusiasm of student musicians in youth orchestras and music schools point to an artistic vibrancy that will thrive into the future.

At the same time, cultural shifts, economic challenges, and changes in the external environment have inspired orchestras to innovate over the years, redefining their missions and reimagining their roles in society. Today, continuous change and transformation are simply ways of life. As complex societal issues constantly challenge our values, beliefs, and traditions, we ask anew, why does culture matter? What is the greater purpose of the arts? How should orchestras envision their roles in contemporary society, and how should they evolve?

The League invites you to the [2018 National Conference in Chicago](#) to

debate and discuss these critical questions. Hosted by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra, the 2018 Conference will give you an entire year's worth of inspiration, knowledge, and insight to bring back home. What's more, by participating in the conversations and weighing in with your ideas, you can help shape the future of orchestras.

Here are just a few highlights that you can expect this June.

Musicians, Conductors, Composers, and More

A stellar line-up of musical artists will appear throughout the Conference. They will address some of today's most pressing issues—and many will perform as well.

- The Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Music Director Riccardo Muti
- Cellist Yo-Yo Ma, Chicago Symphony Orchestra's Creative Consultant and recipient of the League's 2018 Gold Baton Award

- Los Angeles Philharmonic violinist and Street Symphony founder Vijay Gupta
- Violinist Jennifer Koh
- Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestras led by CYSO Music Director Allen Tinkham will join forces with New York Philharmonic Principal Clarinet Anthony McGill and Seattle Symphony Principal Flute Demarre McGill for the world premiere of a double concerto by Michael Abels, who composed the acclaimed score for the film *Get Out*.
- Grant Park Orchestra and Chorus with Artistic Director Carlos Kalmar and Chorus Director Christopher Bell
- Participants in the League's Women Composers Readings and Commissions Program and leading women composers based in the greater Chicago area
- Chicago Sinfonietta's Project Inclusion fellows and alumni
- Awardees of the League's Ford Musician Awards for Excellence in Community Service

Conference 2018

The League of American Orchestras' 73rd National Conference, "Creating the Greatest Impact," happens June 13-15, 2018 in Chicago. The Conference is hosted by the Chicago Symphony Orchestra. Come early for Pre-Conference Seminars on June 13. At the Palmer House – A Hilton Hotel. Visit <http://americanorchestras.org/conference2018> for complete information and to register.



The League's 2018 National Conference takes place in Chicago, which *Conde Nast Traveler* dubs "the best city in the U.S. now."

- Members of the Civic Orchestra of Chicago, the CSO's training ensemble for the emerging professional musicians
- Student musicians of the CSO's Percussion Scholarship Program

Musicians' Voices at the Forefront

The plenary sessions, the Conference's anchor events for the thematic ideas throughout the week, raise the voices of musicians who are concerned about making music of the highest quality as well as their impact in the world around them. Musicians will speak—and perform musical selections—at plenary sessions, and musicians will speak at elective sessions as well. While each musician brings different experiences and perspectives to the table, they have one thing in common: each is an extraordinary musician who is ready and willing to collaborate, partner, and think together with administrative leaders and industry stakeholders to find solutions to the most challenging issues of the orchestra field.

Opening Keynote: Vijay Gupta

The Conference will launch with a keynote address by Vijay Gupta, a violinist in the Los Angeles Philharmonic and founder of Street Symphony, which is composed of professional musicians in

The League continues to place top priority on diversity, equity, and inclusion, with heightened responsiveness and an action-oriented focus. That work permeates this year's Conference.

Los Angeles—including members of the LA Phil—who work with communities experiencing homelessness, mental illness, and incarceration. As a committed advocate for artistic voices at the center of social justice, Gupta believes in the capacity of musicians and musical institutions to engage with the world as change-makers through performance, music pedagogy,

and social justice. In the opening session, Gupta will share the inspirations that shape his artistry and public service, and speak about how active civic engagement makes him a better musician.

Luncheon Featuring Jennifer Koh

The League's Annual Meeting and Luncheon will feature a performance and remarks by the adventurous violinist Jennifer Koh. Born in Chicago of Korean immigrant parents, Koh's music-making intertwines her multicultural experiences with her desire to connect beyond cultures, styles, and eras. Koh works to expand the definition of American identity in classical music, advocating for voices underrepresented—and sometimes misrepresented—on concert stages and encouraging the field to draw upon America's cultural richness. At the luncheon, Koh will engage in a discussion that examines the nature of America today and explores how musicians and musical institutions can work together to achieve true representation of

our country on stage, in our organizations, and in our audiences.

Inclusive and Equitable Orchestras

What does an inclusive and equitable American orchestral landscape look like? How can professional orchestras, youth orchestras, and music-education organizations work together to support a diverse pipeline and retain emerging talent? In this plenary session at Symphony Center, brothers Anthony McGill (principal clarinet, New York Philharmonic) and Demarre McGill (principal flute, Seattle Symphony) will share the story of their musical training and career development, and the critical network of support that

nizes individuals and institutions whose far-reaching contributions to the field serve to advance the cause of orchestras throughout the country.

Ma needs little introduction, but it's worth repeating that the impact of his work as a leader, advisor, and ambassador for institutions ranging from the Chicago Symphony Orchestra—as the CSO's Judson and Joyce Green Creative Consultant—to the United Nations is broad, deep, and lasting. (He does all of this on top of his busy schedule as arguably the most in-demand concert and recording artist of our time. No big deal.)

In the closing session of the Conference, Ma will discuss why arts and culture

New: Open Track Sessions

The Conference will feature an extensive menu of elective sessions and seminars to further explore big questions, build practical skills, and gain new insights about all aspects of leading and managing an orchestra. There are five tracks of content:

- Artistic Vitality
- Diversity, Equity, Inclusion
- Engagement and Innovation
- Leadership, People, Culture
- Marketing and Development

In each track, sessions are designed to provide the context and know-how to adapt current practices to the changes taking place in and outside orchestras. While the old adage of “if it ain't broke...” still applies to many aspects of our work, for orchestras to remain vital in our communities it is critical for us to evolve with our environment. Some elective sessions will enable you to better understand the shifting cultural, political, and economic land-



Todd Rosenberg

The Chicago Symphony Orchestra and Music Director Riccardo Muti will be featured at the League's Conference in Chicago this June.

Cellist Yo-Yo Ma will discuss why arts and culture matter now more than ever, and what drives his motivation to be more imaginative, to instigate more creativity, and to invite others into his journey.

scape of America, and help you develop strategies to keep your orchestra healthy and vibrant. Other sessions will address developing new ways of concert programming to be more relevant in today's communities, on anticipating the effects of the recent tax reform on philanthropy, and on developing online content and engagement strategies in the digital world, and many more essential matters.

Most important, your voices in these conversations are critical. Experts will help you develop insight into different factors, but the real expert in the orchestra field is you. You are best positioned to grasp the impact of the external environment in your orchestras because you are doing the work on the ground. We hope that you will actively engage with the presenters

they had. They will also perform the world premiere of a double concerto by Michael Abels with the top ensemble of the Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestras—where their orchestra careers began.

Gold Baton Award and Closing Session

This year, the League honors cellist Yo-Yo Ma with its Gold Baton award. The Gold Baton, the League's highest award, recog-

nize matter now more than ever, and what drives his motivation to be more imaginative, to instigate more creativity, and to invite others into his journey. Ma urges us to answer: what role does culture have in our communities? How can artists, arts-lovers, and orchestras help find solutions to society's biggest challenges and build the world we need in the twenty-first century?



In a concert at Orchestra Hall, Seattle Symphony Principal Flute Demarre McGill (left) and New York Philharmonic Principal Clarinet Anthony McGill (center) perform with the Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestras and CYSO Music Director Allen Tinkham. Demarre and Anthony McGill will play the world premiere of a double concerto by Michael Abels with the CYSO at the League's Conference in June.

and with one another in these sessions to shape the future of orchestras.

While the content tracks indicate the thematic focus of each session, you are not required to follow just one track during the Conference. In fact, you can mix and match any of the elective sessions to your own needs and interests.

Diversity, Equity, Inclusion

The League continues to place top priority on diversity, equity, and inclusion (DEI) with heightened responsiveness and an action-oriented focus. For the past two years, the League has convened multiple forums at which about 60 activists in orchestras and music education have reflected on these issues and created initiatives to develop a more diverse, equitable, and inclusive orchestral landscape. That work permeates this year's Conference. A Diversity Forum open to all Conference attendees will engage a wide cross-section of individuals and orchestras committed to hands-on DEI work, and this subject is embedded

in the main Conference program, in the Diversity, Equity, Inclusion track and other tracks, and in a Pre-Conference workshop. In addition to continuing the work on increasing diversity among orchestral musicians, Conference ses-

sions will examine DEI at boards and in governance, and there will be dedicated forums for women composers and for orchestra administrators with African, Latinx, Asian, Arab, and Native American backgrounds.

Pre-Conference Seminars

For those seeking to gain new practical skills or strengthen their knowledge base, several Pre-Conference seminars offer in-depth learning on topics that include recognizing and countering implicit bias; developing compelling social media content; understanding the fundamentals of collective bargaining; and analyzing important factors when your organization is considering new major fundraising campaigns. These four-hour seminars are hands-on, intensive, and interactive. There is also a half-day Pre-Conference meeting for education and community engagement staff, as well as a Pre-Conference career workshop for conductors, co-presented with the Conductors Guild.

Live Music

Attending performances with peers and colleagues at the League Conference offers a unique way to experience live music. And the musical events at this Conference begin with an only-in-Chicago event: opening night of the Grant Park Music



Cellist Yo-Yo Ma (left) and Chicago Symphony Orchestra Music Director Riccardo Muti (right) acknowledge the audience following a May 2011 performance with the CSO in Orchestra Hall. Muti, Ma, and the CSO will participate in the 2018 Conference.

Violinist Jennifer Koh, who will speak at the Conference, works to expand the definition of American identity in classical music, advocating for voices underrepresented on concert stages.

Festival's 2018 season on Wednesday, June 13. At the heart of downtown Chicago each summer, the Grant Park Orchestra and Chorus perform ten weeks of free concerts in a stunning outdoor venue. Under the direction of Artistic Director and Principal Conductor Carlos Kalmar and Chorus Director Christopher Bell, the opening-night program will include William Walton's powerful *Belshazzar's Feast*, featuring bass-baritone Dashon Burton as

3, and Shostakovich's Cello Concerto No. 2 with Yo-Yo Ma as soloist. The trifecta of CSO, Muti, and Ma is sure to be a concert that you won't want to miss!

Plenty more live music will be performed throughout the Conference. The plenary session on the afternoon of Thursday, June 14 will feature the world premiere of Michael Abels's double concerto for New York Philharmonic Principal Clarinet Anthony McGill



Violinist Jennifer Koh will speak and perform at the Conference. She will discuss how musicians and musical institutions can work to achieve inclusive representations of America.



Street Symphony

Vijay Gupta, violinist with the Los Angeles Philharmonic and advocate for artistic voices in social issues, will deliver the keynote address at the Conference. In 2011, Gupta co-founded Street Symphony, a non-profit organization that presents live music for underserved communities experiencing homelessness and incarceration.

soloist. Plan to settle in on the lawn with a picnic dinner (BYO beer and wine!) or reserve a seat in the pavilion seating when you register for Conference.

Be sure to reserve tickets well in advance for the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's concert on Thursday evening, June 14, conducted by Music Director Riccardo Muti in a program of Shostakovich's Festive Overture, Prokofiev's Symphony No.

and Seattle Symphony Principal Flute Demarre McGill, along with the Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestras. The session will also feature a performance by the spectacularly talented student musicians of the Chicago Symphony Orchestra's Percussion Scholarship Program, a training program founded and led by CSO percussionist Patricia Dash.

Several sessions at Conference head-

quarters—the Palmer House Hilton Hotel—will feature live music, including violinists Vijay Gupta and Jennifer Koh. You will also have the opportunity to listen to and engage with musicians of the Chicago Sinfonietta's Project Inclusion program, a talent development initiative supporting African American and Latinx musicians entering the orchestra field.

Much more awaits you at the 2018 National Conference. As the League's flagship event, this is the only national conference dedicated to orchestras and the one time of the year when the entire orchestra field and partners come together in one place. If the tremendous networking opportunity, insightful learning, and the palpable inspiration don't draw you in, then come for the delectable food and dramatic architecture in what *Conde Nast Traveler* calls "the best city in the U.S. now."

See you in Chicago! [S](#)

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