

# *Detroit Rising / Transformation in American Orchestras*

This year's National Conference tackles today's most urgent topics, while delivering insights, strategies, perspectives, and tactics. Here's a look at just some of what's on the slate.

Orchestras are in the throes of a great transformation: from *what they are* to *who they are for*. Orchestras are redefining their purpose to align with the new creative and civic opportunities arising from the profound changes in American society. Against the backdrop of Detroit's remarkable transformation and the rapidly changing public policy landscape in America, this year's Conference will explore the role of orchestras in our increasingly diverse society, the nexus of creativity and community, and the culture of orchestras themselves. The Conference will venture beyond the overarching themes to connect delegates with the leading experts who will share the hands-on, detail-oriented knowledge needed to implement new ideas and strategies.

Here's a look at just some of the highlights in store for the League's 2017 National Conference, *Detroit Rising / Transformation in American Orchestras*, June 6–8, 2017, hosted by the Detroit Symphony Orchestra.

Even before the Conference officially begins on June 6, a plethora of Pre-Concert Seminars on June 4, 5, and 6 offer in-depth, intensive learning and professional development. The three-day **Foundations**

**of Collective Bargaining** seminar, led by commissioners from the Federal Mediation and Conciliation Service, is designed for orchestra musicians and administrators, and will increase participants' ability to facilitate productive negotiations and working relationships. The three-part **Leadership Seminar**, will enhance orchestra executives' ability to communicate with impact, productively navigate conflict situations, and foster quality relationships and collaboration. Other Pre-Conference seminars include **Everyone Is a Fundraiser: A Fundamentals-Rich, Application-Robust Crash Course on Fundraising**, a half day of **professional development for Education and Community Engagement personnel**, and **Knowing Your Audience: A Step-by-Step Guide**, which builds on effective methods the Wallace Foundation has identified for developing

new audiences and strengthening bonds with existing ones.

Throughout the Conference, small-group **Constituency Meetings** gather delegates by peer group to focus on their most pressing concerns. Whether you're working at an orchestra as an executive director, board member, volunteer, staff, or musician, there is learning designed specifically for you.

## **Opening Plenary: Detroit Rising: Stories of Renewal**

Fueled by the emergence from the 2013 bankruptcy, the city of Detroit is now rising with neighborhood revitalization, economic development, a new light rail, and a resurgent creative community. Economics, race, immigration, urban versus suburban, arts and culture, and of course transportation—this being the Motor City—all converge in a story about transformation and how to lead in the face of adversity. In the Opening Plenary, civic, business, and cultural leaders reveal the powerful interplay of their paths and how they've become change agents in building a new Detroit for all.

## **League of American Orchestras' 72nd National Conference**

*Detroit Rising / Transformation in American Orchestras*

June 6–8, 2017 in Detroit, Michigan

Hosted by the Detroit Symphony Orchestra

Ford Motor Company is the lead sponsor of the 2017 Conference and the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation is providing major support to the Conference.

Visit <http://americanorchestras.org/conference2017/> for complete information and to register.



W/D Palmisano

Detroit is the host city for the League's 2017 Conference.

At the session, Ann Hobson Pilot, former principal harpist of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, will be presented with the League's highest honor, the Gold Baton Award, which is given annually for distinguished service to America's orchestras. The first African American woman to serve as a principal player in a major orchestra, Pilot is widely considered one of the greatest living harpists, and a pioneer in the orchestra field and beyond.

### [Detroit Symphony Orchestra Concert](#)

Music is always central at a League Conference, and here Music Director Leonard Slatkin conducts the Detroit Symphony Orchestra in an engaging program that focuses on music from the 20th and 21st centuries. Bertolt Brecht and Kurt Weill's satirical *Seven Deadly Sins*, with vocalist Shara Nova, will be performed alongside three exciting contemporary works: Ferran Cruixent's *Big Data* (a DSO commission), Cindy McTee's *Double Play*, and Mason Bates' "Warehouse Medicine" from *B-Sides*, an homage to Detroit techno. The concert kicks off with a special performance by the Detroit Symphony Youth Orchestra.

### [Diversity and Inclusion in Action](#)

From the performers on stage, to the audiences served, to the stakeholders in between, organizations are testing new approaches to diversifying and to including a broader cross-section of their communities. In this session, representatives from orchestras across the country will share their approaches to diversity and inclu-

sion in fast-paced presentations, with a lively interactive discussion to follow. The session is hosted by Eric Booth, president of Everyday Arts, Inc. Those interested in presenting their diversity strategies at the session should submit a proposal before May 1; [find more information here](#).

### [Market Smarter: Insights and Strategy for Digital Marketing](#)

How are orchestras and other arts organizations embracing digital in order to market their offerings? For five years,

Capacity Interactive, a digital marketing firm for the cultural sector, has surveyed arts organizations to understand how they are using social media, video, analytics, mobile, digital advertising, email, and the web. Erik Gensler, the firm's president, will present findings from the most recent survey, explaining trends and highlighting opportunities. He will also share orchestra case studies to illustrate how digital marketing can help orchestras meet marketing goals.



Detroit Symphony Orchestra

Led by Music Director Leonard Slatkin, the Detroit Symphony Orchestra performs a program of works from the 20th and 21st centuries on June 6 during the League of American Orchestras' Conference in Detroit.



Richard Lippencroft

At the League's annual Conference, delegates learn not only from nationally recognized experts, but from peers and colleagues who share their strategies and successes.

**[Classical Musicians of African Descent: Perspectives, Aspirations, and Outlook](#)**

This session features a performance by Ann Hobson Pilot, the trailblazing former principal harp of Boston Symphony Orchestra and recipient of the League's 2017 Gold Baton Award, along with musicians from Gateways Music Festival, the 23-year-old organization that celebrates professional classical musicians of African descent at its six-day event in Rochester, New York. Many classical musicians of African descent have unique perspectives on their roles and the challenges and opportunities that orchestras face today.



Detroit Symphony Orchestra

Members of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, seen here taking a bow, will discuss the orchestra's evolving culture, how their roles in the organization have changed, and their aspirations for the future at the [Changing Orchestra Culture: A Conversation with DSO Musicians](#) session.

At this session, musicians discuss why they participate in Gateways, how support from Rochester's African American community has enabled the festival to grow, how playing in an ensemble of musicians of African descent differs from playing in other ensembles, and their hopes for the future. In the midst of the national discussions about diversity, equity, and inclusion,

this is an opportunity to hear from musicians whose lived experience puts them at the center of that conversation.

**[Make the Case Now!](#)**

Convincingly making the case for your orchestra's impact and forging strategic alliances are crucial to advancing your orchestra's mission. Developing the right relationships and clearly communicating your orchestra's relevance to broader civic issues is essential, from launching community development initiatives to cultivating philanthropic support; from defending your tax-exempt status to championing public music education. Now more than ever, advocacy must become a priority. Heather Noonan, vice president for advocacy at the League of American Orchestras, leads a discussion with Lester Abberger, chairman, Collins Institute for Public Policy; Gary Ginstling, president and CEO, Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra; Patricia Richards, chair, board of directors, League of American Orchestras; and David Thompson, vice president of public policy, National Council of Nonprofits.

**[Mapping the DSO Journey](#)**

The Detroit Symphony Orchestra, like its hometown, has undergone a major transformation. A highly intentional effort to change its culture has led to a refocused mission and governance, four consecutive balanced budgets, and two consecutive labor contracts settled quietly and early. The DSO has also in recent years broadened access to its programs, embraced technology, and expanded its geographic footprint. In this discussion, the DSO reflects on this change and discusses the orchestra's even higher aspirations both artistically and for its role in the community. Learn how an orchestra can make fundamental change on its journey towards sustainability.

**[Changing Orchestra Culture: A Conversation with DSO Musicians](#)**

Culture shifts at the Detroit Symphony Orchestra are multi-faceted and span the whole organization; there is widespread



Pilot, Ann Hobson

Ann Hobson Pilot, former principal harpist of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, will be presented with the League's Gold Baton Award during the Opening Plenary Session of the 2017 Conference. She will also take part in the [Classical Musicians of African Descent: Perspectives, Aspirations, and Outlook](#) session.

agreement that many of the shifts are due to an active collaboration between DSO musicians and the administration that continues to facilitate harmonious discussion on how best to serve their community while fulfilling their mission of unsurpassed musical experiences. In this session, DSO musicians discuss the orchestra's evolving culture, how their roles in the organization have changed, and their aspirations for the future.

**[Cultural Equity](#)**

Working toward greater cultural equity in our organizations has become imperative for the long-term viability of orchestras and the art form. What can orchestras do to keep up with this change of attitudes toward Euro-centric cultural institutions? The session will explore



Henry Peyrebrune, double bassist and major gifts officer at the Cleveland Orchestra, will moderate the [Musicians as Organizational Leaders](#) panel.



Heather Noonan, vice president for advocacy at the League of American Orchestras, will lead the [Make the Case Now!](#) session.

demographic, philanthropic, and political trends in American society, and provide insight into how orchestras must and should navigate the currents. Moderator Eric Booth will lead a panel discussion with Liz Alsina, program associate, The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation; Afa Dworkin, president and artistic director,



National thought leaders Stephen Tepper (above) and Rip Rapson will consider the new policy landscape in [The Path Forward](#), the closing plenary session of the Conference.

Sphinx Organization; Alexander Laing, principal clarinet, Phoenix Symphony Orchestra; and María López de León, president and CEO, National Association of Latino Arts and Cultures.

### Musicians as Organizational Leaders

Throughout North America, musician-created and musician-led ensembles and chamber orchestras are thriving and assuming larger and larger roles in the musical lives of their cities. Are these nimble, fresh, and spontaneous ensembles disrupters of classical music concert culture? Do they challenge the position of other orchestras? Musician leaders discuss

the freedoms and tensions of artist-led ensembles and explore what they and other orchestras might learn from one another. The panel will be moderated by Henry Peyrebrune, double bassist and major gifts officer, The Cleveland Orchestra.

### Pricing: The Heart of the Matter

What is the right strategic approach to pricing? Should it be to maximize revenue or to maximize attendance and accessibility? Is it possible to do both? What is pricing's role in making music accessible: can pricing be a socio-economic strategy to break down class barriers to participation? Does its influence extend to the heart of why we exist, our artistic missions, and the nature of our relationships in our communities? Three experts who have grappled with these questions share lessons from their deep and varied experiences.

### Change Before You Have To

This session offers a look at the future of orchestra leadership. Members of the League's Emerging Leaders Program posit a distinction between leadership and management, and share their viewpoints on how to create an adaptive work culture, challenge deeply ingrained assumptions, and anticipate change before it is forced to happen. They will explore dimensions of a thriving organizational culture as they see it, characteristics of innovation and change management, and adaptive leadership as well as the responsibilities of self-leadership as key pillars of orchestra leadership of the future.

### Closing Plenary and Luncheon: The Path Forward

America faces a dramatically new policy landscape that may pose serious threats to the arts and the values we associate with them. While the path ahead may not be clear, this is no time to stand on the sidelines. Join national thought leaders Rip Rapson, president and CEO of the Kresge Foundation, and Steven J. Tepper, dean of the Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts, Arizona State University, for a conversation on the way forward in these uncertain times. [S](#)

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