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Six Women and Non-Binary Orchestra Professionals Selected to Participate in League of American Orchestras' Anne Parsons Leadership Program

Over 80 Professionals Applied to the New Mentoring Program

New York, NY (May 25, 2023) – Six women and non-binary orchestra professionals from across the country will comprise the first cohort of the League of American Orchestras' [Anne Parsons Leadership Program](#), the League has announced. Honoring Anne Parsons, the transformative orchestra field leader and mentor who passed away in 2022, the newly-launched mentoring program aims to effect structural change by supporting women and non-binary orchestra professionals in their career progressions, and ultimately improving gender equity among top orchestra executives (CEOs, executive directors, and other leadership positions).

“Developing the next generation of change leaders is an incredibly important focus of the League’s ongoing work, said League of American Orchestras President and CEO, Simon Woods. “The mentoring and guidance these six talented professionals will receive, and the personal networks they will build as a result of this program, will be critical to their future success. I’m so grateful to the four founding mentors for continuing Anne Parsons’ work. She would have been proud to know her legacy continues.”

The initial cohort will be comprised of:

[Catherine Beeson](#), Assistant Principal Viola, Colorado Symphony

[Kathryn Ginsburg](#), General Manager, Detroit Symphony Orchestra

[Emma Kail](#), Executive Director, Grand Teton Music Festival

[Kate Kammeyer](#), Executive Director, Berkeley Symphony

[Felecia Tchen Kanney](#), Vice President of Communications, Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra

[Pamela Calero Wardell](#), Executive Director, Ocala Symphony Orchestra

The new orchestra leadership program was originally conceived by the League in coordination with a group of four large-budget orchestra leaders who will serve as mentors:

[Jennifer Barlament](#), Executive Director, Atlanta Symphony Orchestra

[Marie-Hélène Bernard](#), President and CEO, St. Louis Symphony Orchestra

[Kim Noltemy](#), Ross Perot President & CEO, Dallas Symphony Orchestra

[Melia Tourangeau](#), President & CEO, Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra

Program Activities

The cohort will meet in person at the League's National Conference in Pittsburgh, June 14-16, 2023. Two leadership training sessions are also planned for the summer via Zoom: one on Gender Inclusivity and one on Executive Leadership. Quarterly Leadership Forums will take place virtually throughout the year featuring leaders from within and outside of the field (academic leaders, corporate executives, government representatives).

Each participant will have a pair of mentors and meet with them individually several times over the year. The cohort will also meet together virtually throughout the year to learn from each other, share resources, and build community.

About the Anne Parsons Leadership Program

The first year of the program will run from June 2023 to June 2024. Eligible candidates self-identified as a woman or non-binary individual and had a minimum of five years full-time employment by orchestras of any budget size; current employment was not required. Selection criteria for the free program included demonstrated experience; managerial vision; and commitment to leading and serving American orchestras.

Each participant has received funding to attend the League's National Conference in 2023, as well as a gratis, one-year membership to the League of American Orchestras.

About Anne Parsons

Anne Parsons (1957-2022) was a transformational mentor and leader, lost too soon after fighting a courageous battle with cancer. Parsons served as President and Chief Executive Officer of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra for seventeen years. Following her appointment at the DSO in 2004, she instilled a culture of resilience and financial stability and grew the audience and donor base, all while successfully navigating local and national economic downturns and a global pandemic. Under her leadership, the DSO posted nine consecutive operating surpluses from 2013 to 2021. Parsons was also responsible for bringing two new music directors to Detroit—Leonard Slatkin in 2007 and Jader Bignamini in 2020—and returning the orchestra to national and international prominence through touring and webcasts.

Parsons' vision of transforming the DSO into the "most accessible orchestra on the planet" led to an increased focus on serving audiences through innovative new programs. At the same time, her emphasis on reaching Detroiters and DSO fans across the region offered unique ways to connect with the organization, including chamber music programs, senior engagement concerts, music therapy partnerships, in-school appearances, and full orchestra performances in metro Detroit neighborhoods.

Prior to joining the DSO, Parsons served in management positions for a variety of major arts organizations, including New York City Ballet, the Hollywood Bowl in Los Angeles, the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and the National Symphony Orchestra in

Washington, D.C. She received a Bachelor of Arts degree from Smith College in Massachusetts. Post-graduation, Parsons was among the first class of League of American Orchestra Fellows (then called American Symphony Orchestra League Fellows).

Anne Parsons was named an Emeritus Director of the League of American Orchestras as well as President Emeritus of the Detroit 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 1,800 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 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.