

League  
of American  
Orchestras

2024

# Impact Report

---



## A Message from League President and CEO, Simon Woods

---

Dear Friends,

Thank you for your generous investment in the League's mission to support and strengthen orchestras. We are pleased to share our 2024 Impact Report, which illustrates how your philanthropic support makes a difference for the League and its more than 630 member orchestras, as well as their dedicated staff, musicians, board members, and volunteers who help bring the music to life.

The League's **27-member team** has been hard at work, creating opportunities for thousands of orchestra professionals to connect, share best practices, and celebrate success stories. These efforts span countless meetings and events, including our 79th National Conference in Houston, Texas, as well as constituency meetings, webinars, and through our online constituency portal, League360.

In addition to bringing people together, the League's programs reflect our commitment to strengthening the orchestra field through advocacy, leadership development, professional development, and research. We are thrilled to be moving forward with our three-year **Inclusive Stages** program which aims to increase the racial diversity of musicians in orchestras.

The League's **Student Leadership Council** is in its second year, helping build new pathways for the next generation of orchestra leaders to enter our field, and over fifty percent of our members actively opted-in to our research projects, underscoring the value of League data to orchestras.

Your support makes all of this possible. We invite you to explore the report and celebrate the impact we are making together. Thank you for your dedication to the League, and to orchestras.

With gratitude,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Simon". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a large, sweeping initial 'S'.

**Simon Woods**  
*President and CEO*

2023-24

# League by the Numbers

## MEMBERSHIPS



**630**

Member orchestras in all 50 states, Canada, and 7 countries worldwide



**25,000**

Members receiving benefits individually or through a member orchestra

## ADVOCACY

**210**

Members of the U.S. House and Senate engaged with critical arts policy issues, with member orchestras mobilized by the League

**348**

Requests fulfilled for help with visas, international travel, and building stronger advocacy skills



## KNOWLEDGE CENTER

**321**

Orchestras participated in studies by the League and its partners, providing essential data to the field

**334**

Requests fulfilled for vital data, information, and resources



## CONVENINGS AND WEBINARS

**1,372**

Registrants shared ideas and learned from each other at **48** Online constituency meetings

**1,085**

Delegates gathered for the League's 2024 Conference in Houston

**1,500**

Professionals advanced their knowledge base through **9** live and **61** on-demand webinars currently available at [americanorchestras.org](http://americanorchestras.org)

## THE LEAGUE TEAM

**27**

Staff serving the organizations and people of the orchestra field

**71**

Board and Emeritus Board members representing orchestras across the country

## LEADERSHIP & ARTISTIC PROGRAMS

**862**

Alumni of League professional development programs, many now in leadership positions at orchestras

**467**

Grants over **5 years** totaling **\$4,800,787** to support the future of orchestras

**ONE GOAL**  
TO SERVE THE FIELD

# DREAM BIG! 2024 National Conference



More than 1,000 orchestra professionals “Dreamed Big!” at the League’s 79th National Conference held in Houston, Texas on June 6-8, 2024. Hosted by the Houston Symphony for the first time, Conference shared new ways to deepen relationships with audiences and communities, forge pathways to financial sustainability, creatively use Artificial Intelligence, increase diversity and inclusion both on and offstage, grow artistically, and invite the voices of the next generation to help shape what comes next.

This year’s Conference included an unprecedented seven live performances by five local orchestras: the Houston Symphony’s *Salome in Concert*, Houston Youth Symphony, Texas Music Festival

Orchestra, Mercury Chamber Orchestra, and ROCO. The Conference Opening Session featured an inspiring keynote address by composer and pianist Gabriela Lena Frank, as well as the presentation of the **Gold Baton Award**, the League’s highest honor, to Former President and Director of the Gateways Music Festival, Lee Koonce.

The closing luncheon featured a moving presentation by Dr. Ahmad Sarmast, Founding Director of the Afghanistan National Institute of Music (ANIM), and an inspirational performance from Resilient Sounds, a Houston Symphony project celebrating the determination and hope of Houston’s refugee communities. **Conference recordings** are posted online.



I so value the two League programs in which I was fortunate to participate. I applaud this effort to keep the alumni connected.

– David Renfro, Essentials of Orchestra Management and Emerging Leaders Program, class of 2017, and Chief Development Officer, Arkansas Symphony Orchestra

## League Alumni Network

The **League Alumni Network** enjoyed multiple opportunities to convene, including two social Zoom calls, a gathering in Cincinnati, Ohio where alumni attended a group dinner and concert, a networking reception in New York City held in conjunction with the 2024 class of Essentials of Orchestra Management, and a reception at the League’s National Conference in Houston. We also launched a **League Alumni Network Book Club**, creating a space for participants to exchange ideas and build community.

League alumni gathered at the National Conference in Houston: (left to right) Terrell Pierce, Essentials class of 2022; Monica Meyer and Karina Bharne, Emerging Leaders Program class of 2020. Photo by Melissa Taylor

# Advocacy for Orchestras

The League's Washington, D.C. team continued to lead in policy work across the wider arts and nonprofit sectors, representing orchestras in three White House convenings, partnering to advance a **U.S. Department of Education action** to improve arts education in our nation's schools, and organizing successful advocacy to protect nonprofit arts organizations from a massive proposed increase in **guest artist visa fees**. The League's global policy action earned us designation as an **International Champion by the Global Initiative to End Wildlife Crime**, recognizing our work to use the power of music to elevate issues related to environmental sustainability, and to support

responsible practices for making, buying, and travelling with musical instruments.

Our member orchestras tapped the League for urgent direct help in critical areas that impact our field, and we responded with assistance to help international artists travel to the U.S. in time for planned concert events, strategies to combat widespread and costly fraudulent ticket practices that damage orchestras' finances and audience confidence, and interventions for navigating the final steps in accessing COVID-19 relief, such as long-delayed employee retention tax credit payments (ERC).

The League's advocacy support for its members was key in enabling my orchestra to push through our ERC application and receive more than \$500,000 in needed stimulus funding from the federal government.”

– Al Jacobsen, Executive Director, Allentown Symphony/Miller Symphony Hall



# Engaging the Next Generation



“We need to invest more in our up-and-coming talent! My mentee was amazing and just needs more opportunities to thrive.”

– Anwar Nasir, Executive Director, Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra

Photo by Asaeda Badat

## STUDENT LEADERSHIP COUNCIL

The League’s **Student Leadership Council** completed its first year with five high school, college, and graduate students selected in 2023-24, helping build inclusive pathways for a new generation of diverse and creative professionals to enter the orchestra field and forge a thriving future for orchestras. The Council co-designed and facilitated four student constituency Zoom events, as well as a Discovery session and student constituency meetings at our 2024 Conference. In addition, Council members were the first participants in a new Student Mentorship Program. [Read the \*Symphony\* article](#) for more information.



## Increased Access for Students

In 2024, the League made membership free for students across the country. Since January, student membership has increased by over 250%, with 208 current student members. Students participated in a dedicated online discussion group, and in meetings online and at the League’s 2024 Conference on topics including the skills needed for orchestra career success and how to craft resumes and excel in interviews.



Photo by Juan Patino

## ESSENTIALS OF ORCHESTRA MANAGEMENT

The 2024 Class of **Essentials of Orchestra Management** included 35 professionals and volunteers working at American and international orchestras, and arts organizations. For the first time, we welcomed a participant from Africa, a welcome new voice in the class discussion. Now in its 24th year, Essentials is the League’s flagship program for early- and mid-career orchestra and arts professionals and offers a proven pathway to future leadership and career success. Nearly twenty percent of Essentials participants this year have received job promotions since completing the program.

“Essentials gave me space to pause, collaborate, and innovate with people who encourage each other to push boundaries and lead with vision.”

– Julienne Cormier, Essentials of Orchestra Management class of 2024

# Inclusion Programs

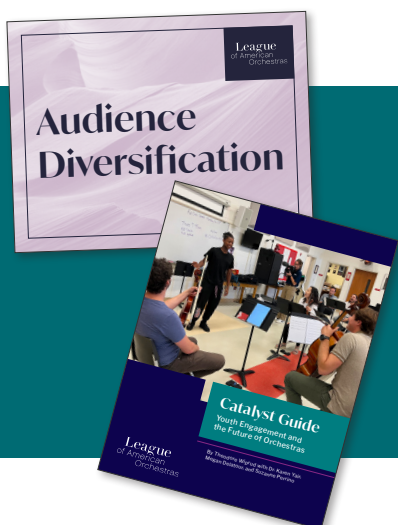


## INCLUSIVE STAGES

We are thrilled to announce the continuation of **Inclusive Stages** for the next three years thanks to a generous grant from the Sakana Foundation. Aimed at increasing musician racial diversity in American orchestras, Inclusive Stages is tackling the underrepresentation that has persisted in orchestras for generations. The next three years bring exciting updates, including the expansion of the Inclusive Stages coalition to welcome youth orchestras, educational institutions, and pathway programs; helping orchestras establish best practices and processes for recruitment; and providing data-driven insights to help fuel change. More than 50 orchestras have joined the expanded Inclusive Stages Coalition and are committed to overcoming this generational challenge in partnership with unions and other key stakeholders across the field.

Last year's pilot achieved significant milestones, including establishing a coalition of 28 orchestras committed to increasing racial diversity onstage through concrete action plans and timelines. The coalition is fostering strong relationships with union groups essential to driving change and is launching new data collection surveys to measure progress. These surveys capture critical insights, on **orchestra demographics**, audition and tenure practices, and **inclusion and belonging**, providing a robust foundation to track progress. Through Inclusive Stages, the number of orchestras participating in the **Audition Applicant Demographics Survey** also doubled, enabling the National Alliance for Audition Support to share its first set of aggregated findings with participants.

Photos by Doug Coombe



## CATALYST GUIDES

The League launched two new Catalyst Guide reports, sharing actionable guidance for advancing EDI efforts, together with the stories of the multiple orchestras making progress in this work. In 2024, the **Catalyst Guide on Audience Diversification** attracted over 2,700 page views along with 650 pdf downloads of the full report.

The new **Catalyst Guide: Youth Engagement and the Future of Orchestras** highlights how member orchestras are taking steps to center youth creativity, empower their voices, and create career pathways, showing what's possible when we embrace the energy and ideas of the next generation.





## VIRGINIA B. TOULMIN FOUNDATION ORCHESTRAL COMMISSIONS PROGRAM

The **Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation Orchestral Commissions Program**, now in its tenth year in partnership with the American Composers Orchestra, continues to be an inspirational force for change in the inclusion of living women composers being performed by orchestras. The program's 28 alums have received nearly 70 additional orchestral commissions since receiving their Toulmin commission.

The 2023-24 season saw the world premieres of Arlene Sierra's *Kiskadee* by the Detroit Symphony Orchestra and Angel Lam's *Please let there be a paradise...* by the Kansas City Symphony along with 31 repeat performances of commissioned works by Anna Clyne, Sarah Gibson, Wang Lu,

Gity Razaz, Andreia Pinto Correia, and Arlene Sierra. The 2024-25 season began with the world premiere of Brittany J. Green *TESTIFY!* by the Jacksonville Symphony and Meilina Tsui *Floridian Symphony* by the Naples Philharmonic.

In October 2024, the League announced its latest orchestra consortium and commissioning program with three new, 25- to 30-minute works by Stacy Garrop, Angel Lam, and Leanna Primiani performed by a nine-orchestra consortium during the 2025-26 and 2026-27 seasons. Additionally, a repeat performance initiative will support additional presentations of works previously commissioned by the program.

Photos of composers (left to right) Angel Lam (photo by Caroline Havens); Brittany J. Green (photo courtesy of Jacksonville Symphony); Arlene Sierra (photo by Sarah Smarch); Sarah Gibson (photo courtesy of Knoxville Symphony Orchestra)



## ANNE PARSONS LEADERSHIP PROGRAM

The **Anne Parsons Leadership Program**, dedicated to improving gender equity in executive orchestra leadership, completed its inaugural program year with a cohort of six talented orchestra professionals. Participants attended a program launch luncheon at our 2023 Conference, participated in two executive leadership workshops and four leadership forums, engaged in bi-monthly conversations with their two mentors, and had bi-monthly cohort Zoom calls.

Some of the Anne Parsons Leadership Program mentors and program participants gathered at the 2024 Midwinter Managers Meeting in Detroit, along with Anne's daughter, Cara Dietz and husband, Donald Dietz. Photo by Doug Coombe

**The diversity of thought that women bring to the table is critical in challenging the norms, seeking new paths forward, and nurturing the relationships with all our stakeholders. Being able to foster this community is a huge asset for the orchestra field.**

—Melia Tourangeau, Mentor, Anne Parsons Leadership Program, and President & CEO, Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra

# Informing and Equipping



The League's **Research and Resources** team provided critical data and insights that support member orchestras. This year, over 50% of members actively opted-in to our research projects, underscoring the critical value and relevance of data to orchestras.



The League's partnership with the TRG Arts & Culture Benchmark provided members with the **latest orchestra patron data**, including ticket sales and revenues; donation units and revenues; and patron demographics. Fifty participating orchestras also received real-time access to an interactive dashboard for analyzing and patron trends.



We updated our online resources on **Audience Growth** and **Audience Diversification Resources**, which curates the latest intelligence on attracting and retaining new audiences. Also, a total of 375 registrants joined us for webinars exploring findings from two new reports exploring audience tastes and preferences, from our partnerships with international consultancies WolfBrown and Slover Linett @ NORC.



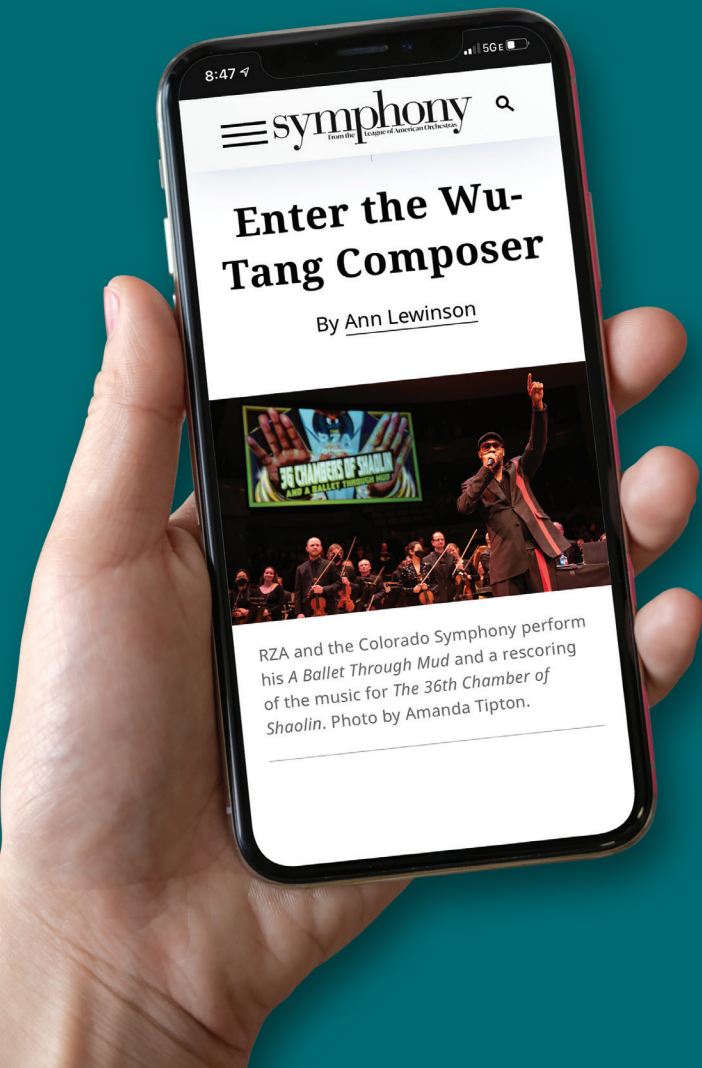
Updated in January 2024 with data supplied by 178 member orchestras, the League's **EDI Data Hub** attracted over 2,000 page views this year. The Hub tracks the impact of equity, diversity, and inclusion initiatives over time, supporting our collective efforts to accelerate change.



A record 165 orchestras participated in an updated **Orchestra Statistical Report** this year, which helped the League provide essential benchmarking data to orchestras, with metrics across five essential categories of ticket sales, revenues, expenses, personnel, and balance sheet health. These metrics strengthen the League's ability to advocate for the orchestra field, with key findings shared in our public messaging document **Orchestras at a Glance**.



Over 200 orchestras took part in the **Orchestra Repertoire Report** this year, produced in partnership with the Institute for Composer Diversity, allowing us to report on trends in the programming by U.S. orchestras of living, BIPOC, women, and non-binary composers.



# Symphony

In 2024, **Symphony** featured more than 800 must-read News Briefs of breaking news about orchestras, and two dozen in-depth articles that analyzed the latest thinking, brought forward new voices, and drove industry conversations about the rapidly changing orchestra field. Since launching in 2022, **symphony.org** has grown to include over 2,000 subscribers, who receive symphony.org news and articles for free in their inboxes. Its page views average 31,750 per month, an increase of 27% over last year, and 211,000 active users/visitors. Among the most widely viewed articles were **“Forward Thinking: Culture Matters”** by League President and CEO Simon Woods and **“Indigenous Composers in the Spotlight”** by Rita Pyrrillis.



To support the League, scan the QR code or visit [americanorchestras.org/donate](http://americanorchestras.org/donate)

**Thank you for supporting the League of American Orchestras.** Your generosity fuels the League’s mission to provide leadership and service to more than 630 member orchestras along with their devoted musicians, conductors, composers, staff, board members, volunteers, and all who work to bring orchestral music to communities across the country.



# League of American Orchestras

---

© 2025 League of American Orchestras  
Impact Report 2024 by the  
League of American Orchestras  
520 8th Avenue, Suite 2203  
New York, NY 10018  
[americanorchestras.org](http://americanorchestras.org)