

Of and For the Community: The Education and Community Engagement Work of Orchestras

A report by the League of American Orchestras

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Introduction

Orchestras across America are reexamining and recreating their roles as civic institutions, both of and for the diverse communities they serve. For many, education and community engagement have already become central to a vision in which the work of orchestras is shaped by the distinctive characteristics of the people they serve.

Orchestras' ambitions to engage with communities, in ways that create new and distinctive opportunities for creative expression and connection, are growing. Yet at the same time, social, cultural, economic and policy change creates a complex and ever-shifting landscape for this work.

At this crucial moment, the education and engagement work undertaken by orchestras deserves dedicated attention. Naturally, every community has its own distinctive culture and needs, and—as a result—each orchestra has its own story to tell about the impact of its education and community engagement work. Nonetheless, there is an important role for a cohesive, national picture. The field-wide data provided by this report provides an essential backdrop to each orchestra's own story of impact and engagement, as well as important insights into the tremendous scale and breadth of the work underway nationally.

Drawing on a dedicated survey of League of American Orchestras' member orchestras, this report presents a more accurate and detailed picture of orchestra Education and Community Engagement (EdCE) activity than has previously been available to the field. This report—the first League review of EdCE programming since 2008—is also the first to investigate current field interests such as the diversification of orchestra EdCE programming and the true artistic costs associated with orchestras' EdCE programs.

Scale of activity and participation

Our data indicates the impressive breadth and impact of orchestras' EdCE work. Of course, these figures can only present a partial picture: while our survey cohort includes all the larger-budget orchestras operating extensive EdCE programs, it includes fewer of the hundreds of smaller-budget orchestras creating regular or occasional EdCE opportunities across the United States. Today, we are aware of more than 1,600 orchestras across the United States contributing to the vitality of communities large and small, connecting, inspiring and educating people through music. Nonetheless, the data shows that the scale of orchestras' EdCE work is both significant and growing, with the 98 adult and youth orchestras in our survey cohort reporting the following collective totals for FY 2014:

- 2.1 million EdCE program participants, almost two thirds of whom took part free of charge.
- Almost 19,000 EdCE performances, musical activities, and events.
- In addition, 82% of our survey respondents stated that the number of EdCE participants in their programs had increased over the five-year period 1999-2014.

Breadth of community engagement

Our survey responses suggest that the participants engaged by orchestras in their EdCE programs are significantly younger and more racially / ethnically

¹ *Orchestra Facts 2006-14: A Study of Orchestra Finances and Operations*, commissioned by the League of American Orchestras.

Figure 1: Racial / Ethnic Demographics of Orchestra EdCE Program Participants (FY 2014)

diverse—on average—than typical orchestra audiences. Specifically, orchestra administrators reported the following:

- 70% of all EdCE participants were believed to be 18 years old or younger.
- 38% of EdCE participants were believed to be African American, Hispanic / Latino, Asian / Pacific Islander, or American Indian / Alaskan Native, and 62% were believed to be white.

Work with young people remains central to orchestras' EdCE programming, and—at the same time—racial/ethnic diversity continues to improve: 61% of the 98 orchestras in our cohort reported that their EdCE participant base was more diverse in 2014 than it had been in 2009.

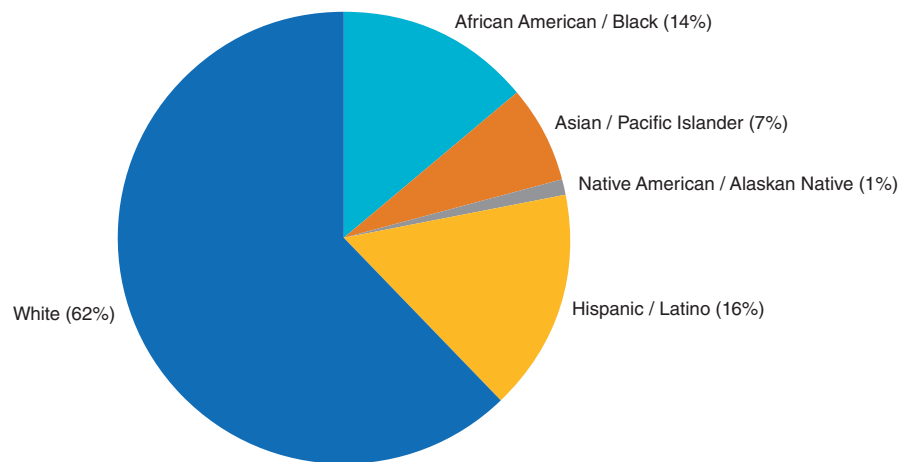
The participation of people from economically disadvantaged backgrounds is currently difficult to track. What our data does show is that orchestras' pricing policies resulted in 66% of all EdCE program participants taking part without charge in FY 2014.

Balance of programming

Orchestras work in many ways to leverage their performances and repertoire as catalysts to meaningful community engagement.

The traditional orchestra education concert continues to be important to EdCE programming, often presented in the form of family concerts or school concerts. Offered by the majority (68%) of orchestras responding to our survey, these concerts make the unique cultural experience of the full symphony orchestra welcoming and accessible to a large community audience. Over 80% of our survey cohort expands this model by offering performances by smaller professional groups of orchestral musicians, which enables this work to take place in a wider range of community venues.

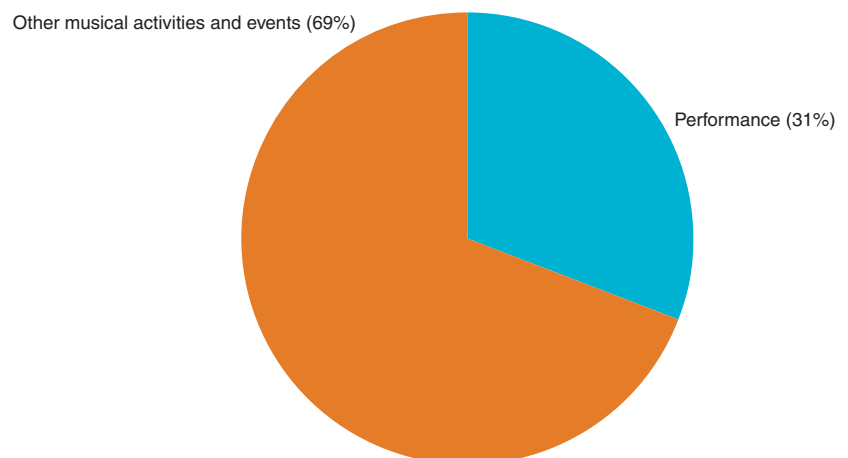
These EdCE concerts make up almost one third (30%) of respondent orchestras' total performance offerings (with the remaining 70% consisting of subscription series concerts and



special performances). And almost half of our survey cohort reported that the number of EdCE concerts they performed had increased during the five-year period 2009-2014.

Despite the significance of these concerts, our data shows that they are only part of the EdCE picture: the orchestral experience and repertoire drive a vast array of other musical activities and events, too. In fact, only around one third of all EdCE sessions take the form of a performance: within their EdCE programming, orchestras also teach, lead, facilitate, and train. Furthermore, this diversification is increasing, with 69% of our survey respondents confidently reporting a greater range of EdCE program types by their orchestra in 2014 than in 2009.

Figure 2: EdCE Activity Types (FY 2014)



Specifically:

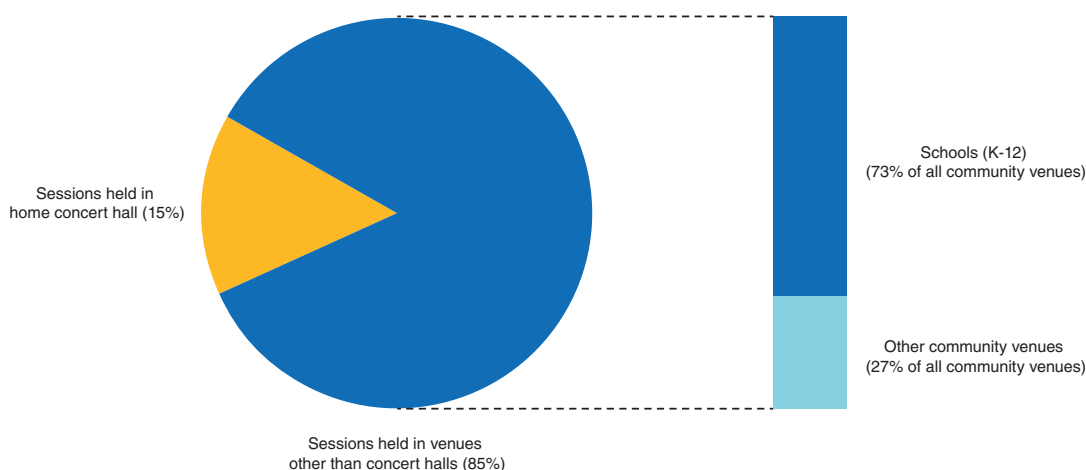
- The majority of orchestras offer educational opportunities that help to **illuminate the orchestral experience and/or repertoire**. Eighty-three percent offer the opportunity to meet musicians and/or explore orchestral instruments, while 73% offer in-person lectures or talks, and 10% offer online learning opportunities.
- Opportunities for community members to **advance their own musical learning** also feature strongly. Thirteen percent of respondents are independent youth orchestras, dedicated primarily to active musical learning. Even removing these independent youth orchestras from the dataset²:
 - o Almost two thirds of respondents (65%) present a program designed to advance the learning of the highest-achieving young musicians (e.g., concerto competition).
 - o 61% offer the opportunity for amateur musicians to rehearse and perform alongside orchestra musicians.
 - o Over half (51%) offer individual instrumental instruction.
 - o Over one third (32%) run affiliated youth orchestras and/or other ensembles.
 - o Over one third (34%) run a community orchestra for adults, and 30% run an adult community choir.
- A significant proportion of respondents work to connect communities directly with the process of **creating new orchestral repertoire**: in 2014 alone, 21% of our total survey cohort offered composition workshops as part of their EdCE programming, while 14% ran a composer-in-residence program of one week or longer.

Best practices in community engagement

Orchestras across the United States are seeking new ways of increasing and deepening their engagement with the racially, ethnically, and economically diverse communities they serve. Our data shows how orchestras are responding to this opportunity, in many cases adopting known principles of effective community engagement in order to connect with communities in ways that are meaningful, authentic, and respectful of distinctive cultures. Specifically:

- o Orchestras are **taking their work to the communities they serve**. In 2014, 85% of all EdCE sessions (incorporating both concerts and other musical activities and events) took place outside of the concert hall. Of these community-based EdCE sessions, 73% took place in schools, and 27% took place in other venues, ranging from healthcare settings and civic institutions (such as museums or libraries) to—on relatively rare occasions—religious buildings, civic spaces (such as parks and town squares), care homes for the elderly, youth and community centers, criminal justice settings, community festivals or parades, and social care centers, shelters, and refuges.

Figure 3: Breakout of EdCE Venues (FY 2014)



² Note: Larger-budget orchestras are more likely than smaller-budget orchestras to have responded to our survey.

- Orchestras are increasingly **working in partnership with community-based organizations**. In FY 2014, 79% of our survey cohort reported working with schools (Kindergarten through 12th grade), while 63% reported working with community (non-school) partner organizations.

Moreover, two thirds of all responding orchestras reported that the extent of their partnership work had increased during the five-year period 2009-14. In 2014 alone:

- o 34% of our survey cohort had worked with (non-school) community partners focused on youth engagement.
- o 26% had worked with health and wellness organizations.
- o 24% had worked with senior services providers.
- o 17% had worked with organizations focused on racial diversity and inclusion.
- o 13% had partnered with organizations working to address poverty in their communities.

Less commonly, orchestras had worked with organizations dedicated to homelessness (10%), mental health (8.2%), domestic violence and abuse (4.1%), criminal justice (3.1%), bullying (3.1%), young people in the foster care system (3.1%), and school drop outs (3.1%).

- Orchestras are amplifying the impact of their work by investing in the **professional development activities** that can help to sustain a culture of music-making with partner schools and community organizations. Specifically, almost half (48%) of all participating orchestras indicated that they had provided professional development opportunities for at least one stakeholder group (e.g., orchestra musicians, partner organization staff and/or school teachers, or teaching artists) in FY 2014. In addition, 55.4% of survey respondents confidently reported that the number of staff hours dedicated to EdCE activity had increased during the five-year period 2009-14.

Purpose:

Questioned about the underlying purpose of their EdCE work, orchestras most often mentioned their ambitions to help to shape, articulate, and/or celebrate community identity (56% of respondents), to deepen the audience experience (52%), and to create access for audiences not traditionally engaged by the orchestra (50% of respondents). Increasing ticket sales was a consideration for just over half of all respondents, but a main focus for only 5%.

Forty-four percent of respondents also reported a strategic focus on addressing social issues specific to their communities (44%), and we asked these orchestras to say more about the particular social issues they engaged with in FY14. Forty-two percent of these respondents reported a focus on youth engagement, with a further 28% reporting having worked to improve community cohesiveness in FY14, and an additional 22% reported having worked in the field of racial diversity and inclusion.

Looking at orchestras' aspirations for their future work in this area, over half (53%) of respondents reported an interest in addressing social issues specific to their communities, with senior services appearing to be an emerging area of interest, alongside veteran services and health (including mental health).

Finances:

Narrowing our focus to the work of the 85 adult orchestra EdCE departments (and the youth orchestras affiliated with 24 of them) in our cohort³ enables us to provide a snapshot of EdCE income and expenditure for FY 2014, and also to indicate some broad trends for the preceding five-year period 2009-14.

This analysis shows that orchestras' investment in their EdCE work is increasing. Almost half (47%) of the 85 orchestras in our cohort of adult orchestras (and their affiliated youth orchestras) stated definitively that the budget available for EdCE programming increased over

³ Independent youth orchestras are excluded from our financial analysis, because—as independent 501(c)3s—they operate in a very different financial context as compared to the EdCE departments of adult orchestras (and their affiliated youth orchestras).

⁴ 13 of the 98 orchestras responding to our survey were independent youth orchestras. The remaining 85 respondents' data is included in our analysis.

the five-year period, 2009-14—relative to their orchestra’s overall budget.

On average, in FY 2014, 60% of the EdCE income of adult orchestras (and their affiliated youth orchestras) was contributed by donors and grantmakers. A further 20% was earned (through contract fees, participant fees, ticket sales, etc.), and the final 20% was generated by endowments restricted for education activity. On average, larger-budget orchestras drew a more significant proportion of their EdCE income from endowments and other contributed income sources, while smaller-budget orchestras drew a more significant proportion from their own earnings.

Consistently across orchestra budget groups, income for EdCE programming was lower than expenditure. Budget groups 1–3 saw a disparity between income and expenditure of around 50% in FY 2014, while for budget groups 4–8 the discrepancy was less marked.

EdCE report budget categories	Number of participating orchestras	Annual total expenses	Average FY 2014 total expenditure for survey cohort orchestras	Average FY 2014 EdCE expenses	Average FY 2014 EdCE income	Average FY 2014 EdCE expenditure, as a percentage of average total expenditure	Average FY 2014 EdCE revenue, as a percentage of average EdCE expenditure
Group 1	16	Greater than \$16.4m	\$42,827,423	\$4,236,800	\$2,006,300	10%	47%
Group 2	11 ⁵	\$7.35m – \$16.4m	\$11,501,063	\$837,800	\$559,900	7%	67%
Group 3 & 4	20	\$2m – \$7.35m	\$4,376,561	\$707,200	\$345,300	16%	49%
Group 5 & 6	22	\$545,000 – \$2m	\$1,126,438	\$129,400	\$123,400	11%	95%
Group 7 & 8	16	Less than \$545,000	\$269,920	\$75,100	\$72,600	28%	97%
Independent Youth Orchestras	13 ⁶	Data not available	\$604,666	\$604,666	\$681,006	100%	113%

Looking in more detail at expenditure related to EdCE activity, our survey data allows us to isolate the artistic costs associated with EdCE programming, including expenditure on conductors, teaching artists, and musicians (whether contracted or employed).

This analysis reveals that average expenditure on artistic costs represented 45% of orchestras’ total EdCE expenditure in FY 2014, with the remainder allocated to administrative personnel costs (20%) and non-personnel expenses (35%). This figure of 45% is both substantial and consistent with orchestras’ overall expenditure profile: as we note in the 2016 League of American Orchestras’ report *Orchestra*

⁵ Note: small sample size.

⁶ Note: small sample size.

Facts: 2006-2014, expenditure on artistic costs is proportionally larger in the orchestra field than in any other arts and culture sector.

Conclusions:

The overall picture we see in the Education and Community Engagement field is one of growth: orchestras report five-year growth (over the period 2009-14) on each one of the following measures:

- The number of EdCE participants engaged;
- The racial/ethnic diversity of EdCE participants engaged;
- The number of EdCE concerts produced;
- The range of EdCE activity types undertaken;
- The extent of school and community partnerships developed;
- The number of staff hours dedicated to EdCE activity;
- Budget available for EdCE work, relative to the orchestra's overall budget.

This growth resulted in a tremendous scale of activity and participation in FY 2014. To recap, the 98 orchestras in our cohort alone engaged 2.1 million EdCE program participants, almost two thirds of whom took part free of charge. These orchestras alone produced 19,000 EdCE performances, musical activities, and other events in FY 2014, with more than 80% taking place in schools and other community venues. In the process, they connected with communities that were far more diverse than those typically attending a symphony concert.

The data depicts a field that is working creatively to mine the full potential of the orchestral experience and repertoire as catalysts to local community engagement. Orchestras are creating rich and varied EdCE programs that combine the scale and unique experience of school and family concerts with a vast array of other musical activities and events that are tailor-made to fit the needs and culture of the distinctive communities they serve. Young people and adults are experiencing opportunities

to further their own musical and creative development, audiences are connecting more deeply with orchestral repertoire, and—together—communities and their orchestras are creating new work that fuses and takes forward their vision. In this paradigm, orchestras not only perform, but also teach, lead, facilitate, and train.

Orchestras articulate a significant level of interest at a strategic level in helping to shape, articulate, and/or celebrate community identity; in creating access for audiences not traditionally engaged by the orchestra; and in addressing specific social issues in their communities. Our data shows that, in many cases, orchestras are translating this strategic imperative into partnerships and programs that achieve real impact and engagement in the communities they serve. By providing a national overview, this report not only illustrates the scale and breadth of the work taking place across the United States, but provides an essential backdrop to each orchestra's unique story of its own work within and on behalf of the communities it serves.

Appendix: Technical Notes

The League invited its 679 member orchestras to participate in the Education and Community Engagement Survey, and a total of 98 took part between August 20 and November 2, 2015, yielding an overall response rate of 14.5%.

Of these total 98 respondents, 61 were adult orchestras without affiliated youth orchestras, 24 were adult orchestras with affiliated youth orchestras, and 13 were independent youth orchestras.

Orchestras with larger annual operating expenses are better represented in the data set than those with smaller budgets: 59% of all League of American Orchestras' Budget Group 1 members took part in the survey, as well as 52% of all Budget Group 2 members, compared to 7% of those in Budget Group 7 & 8. This survey participant profile reflects the concentration of EdCE activity within orchestras with larger annual budgets, which typically have greater capacity for more substantial EdCE program development and delivery.

For the purposes of the report, the participating orchestras are grouped into the following five consolidated League of American Orchestras' budget group categories, based on overall annual expenses:

The statistics found in this report expand on the topline data found in the Education and Community Engagement Spotlight section of *Orchestra Facts: 2006-2014*, published by the League of American Orchestras in fall 2016.

For a more detailed focus on the work of independent youth orchestras, please see the League's report, *Youth Orchestra Profile 2015*.

EdCE report budget categories	Participant Count	League of American Orchestras budget group representation	Annual expenses
Group 1	16	59%	Greater than \$16.4 Million
Group 2	11	52%	\$7.35 Million – \$16.4 Million
Group 3 & 4	20	36%	\$2 Million – 7.35 Million
Group 5 & 6	22	17%	\$545,000 – \$2 Million
Group 7 & 8	16	7%	Less than \$545,000
Independent Youth Orchestras	13	12%	

Acknowledgments

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Group 1:

Boston Symphony Orchestra
Chicago Symphony Orchestra
Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra (incorporating Cincinnati Symphony Youth Orchestra)
Dallas Symphony Orchestra
Houston Symphony
Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra
Los Angeles Philharmonic
Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra
Minnesota Orchestra
Nashville Symphony (incorporating Curb Youth Symphony)
National Symphony Orchestra
New York Philharmonic
Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra (incorporating Pittsburgh Youth Symphony)
Seattle Symphony
The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra
Utah Symphony | Utah Opera

Group 2:

Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra
Fort Worth Symphony Orchestra
Grand Rapids Symphony (incorporating Grand Rapids Youth Symphony)
Kansas City Symphony
New Jersey Symphony Orchestra (incorporating NJSO Youth Orchestra)
New World Symphony
North Carolina Symphony
Omaha Symphony
Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra (incorporating Rochester Philharmonic Youth Orchestra)
San Antonio Symphony
The Florida Orchestra

Group 3 & 4:

Allentown Symphony Orchestra
Dayton Performing Arts Alliance (incorporating Dayton Philharmonic and Dayton Philharmonic Youth Orchestra)
Des Moines Symphony (incorporating Iowa Youth Symphony)
Eugene Symphony
Grant Park Music Festival
Kalamazoo Symphony Orchestra
Knoxville Symphony Orchestra (incorporating Knoxville Symphony Orchestra)
Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra (incorporating Greater New Orleans Youth Orchestra)
Louisville Orchestra
Mobile Symphony Orchestra (incorporating Mobile Symphony Youth Orchestra)
Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra (incorporating Florida Youth Symphony)

Reno Philharmonic Association (incorporating Reno Philharmonic Youth Orchestra)
Richmond Symphony (incorporating Richmond Symphony Youth Orchestras)
Santa Rosa Symphony (incorporating Discovery Orchestra)
Sarasota Orchestra
South Dakota Symphony Orchestra (incorporating South Dakota Symphony Youth Orchestra)
Tucson Symphony Orchestra
Virginia Symphony Orchestra
Winston-Salem Symphony
Youngstown Symphony Orchestra (incorporating Youngstown Symphony Youth Orchestra)

Group 5 & 6:

American Composers Orchestra
Annapolis Symphony Orchestra
Bangor Symphony Orchestra (incorporating Bangor Symphony Youth Orchestra)
Columbus Indiana Philharmonic
Columbus Symphony Orchestra
El Paso Symphony Orchestra (incorporating El Paso Symphony Youth Orchestras)
Flagstaff Symphony Orchestra
Hilton Head Symphony Orchestra (incorporating Hilton Head Youth Orchestra)
Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra
IRIS Orchestra
Lafayette Symphony Orchestra
Lancaster Symphony Orchestra
Lexington Philharmonic Orchestra
Peninsula Music Festival
Princeton Symphony Orchestra
Roanoke Symphony Orchestra (incorporating Roanoke Youth Symphony)
Rockford Symphony Orchestra (incorporating Rockford Symphony Youth Orchestra)
Santa Cruz Symphony

Group 7 & 8:

Amherst Symphony Orchestra
Central Wisconsin Symphony Orchestra
Dexter Community Orchestra
Gateway Classical Music Society
Gulf Coast Symphony
Idaho State-Civic Symphony
Lexington Symphony
Mankato Symphony Orchestra
Mid-Texas Symphony
Piedmont Symphony Orchestra
Pioneer Valley Symphony
Racine Symphony Orchestra
Sheboygan Symphony Orchestra (incorporating Sheboygan Area Youth Symphony)
Symphonicity
Tuscarawas Philharmonic
Westmoreland Symphony Orchestra (incorporating Westmoreland Youth Symphony Orchestra)
Stamford Symphony
Symphony Orchestra Augusta
The Symphony of Southeast Texas
Yakima Symphony Orchestra

Independent Youth Orchestras:

Houston Youth Symphony

Greater Miami Youth Symphony
Louisville Youth Orchestra
Hawaii Youth Symphony
Tacoma Youth Symphony Association
Napa Valley Youth Symphony
Youth Orchestras of Central Virginia
Utah Valley Youth Symphony
InterSchool Orchestras of New York
Youth Orchestras of San Antonio
New York Youth Symphony
Denver Young Artists Orchestra
San Diego Youth Symphony and Conservatory

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About the League

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 2,000 organizations and individuals across North America runs the gamut from world-renowned symphonies 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.

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