

League of American Orchestras
in collaboration with
Juilliard Extension
Presents

ESSENTIALS OF ORCHESTRA MANAGEMENT

New York, New York
July 21-30, 2026

Empowering Orchestra Leaders for the Future

The League of American Orchestras' ***Essentials of Orchestra Management*** is a transformative, ten-day professional development program designed to equip early and mid-career orchestra leaders with the tools, knowledge, and confidence to excel as leaders and catalysts for change. The program provides participants with the opportunity to:

1. Learn key skills and gain insights into orchestras and their role in society

Essentials offers crucial insights into the key functions and constituencies within American orchestras, emphasizing their unique roles and interconnectedness. It offers a collaborative and reflective environment to consider orchestras' societal impact, while inspiring participants to envision innovative pathways to the future.

2. Join a dynamic network of professionals

Essentials connects participants with a diverse cohort of talented early and mid-career professionals. Participants come together to exchange ideas, share experiences, and build lasting relationships during the immersive ten-day experience that continue for years to come through the League Alumni Network.

3. Build their leadership capacity to strengthen orchestras

Through a distinguished and diverse faculty and the sharing of effective practices, participants develop core leadership strategies to foster collaboration, navigate challenges, and implement successful change to ensure orchestras are vibrant, relevant arts organizations.

Program Overview and Application Guidelines

Since its inception in 2000, *Essentials* has prepared nearly 700 current and aspiring orchestra professionals with the tools and mindsets they need to grow as leaders and

progress in their careers, including many who now hold key leadership positions in orchestras. The gold standard of orchestra management training, this residential program with classes at The Juilliard School in New York City provides an in-depth overview of orchestra management, builds career networks, and offers participants an interactive opportunity to build necessary skills and mindsets to become innovative and successful leaders in the arts. Participants will also receive a non-credit Juilliard Extension certificate upon completion.

Orchestras are increasingly focusing on authentic civic and community engagement, as the art form draws upon today's rich and varied cultural currents to connect with new and diverse audiences. *Essentials* explores not only tried and trusted aspects of leadership, strategy, and governance, but also examines community and equity in its many dimensions as well as orchestras' need to address changing demographics and societal attitudes.

Essentials will introduce participants to the real-life opportunities and challenges that orchestras face today and highlight the creative, adaptive, and community-oriented skills that leaders need to help move their organizations and the field forward. The course includes individual reflection and sharing with peer groups as well as open discussion and personal commitments.

As graduates of *Essentials*, participants will be able to:

- Demonstrate basic knowledge of core business and operating practices in orchestras
- Use critical thinking skills to identify and analyze key strategic challenges of the field
- Thrive in an environment of competing imperatives and multiple stakeholders
- Increase their understanding and awareness of critical issues of equity, diversity, and inclusion in the orchestra field
- Articulate the value and purpose of orchestras in our communities
- Build strong relationships with a wide range of constituents, including staff teams, musicians, audience members, donors, and the general public
- Deepen knowledge of orchestras as diverse and inclusive organizations, fulfilling their unique role in the cultural context of their communities
- Cultivate a network of peers, mentors, and resources for continued professional development
- Receive a non-credit Juilliard Extension certificate upon completion

Led by prominent leaders inside and beyond the orchestra field, including many *Essentials* alumni, the curriculum explores all aspects of orchestra administration and the changing nature of orchestras and addresses both theory and practice, integrating the faculty's extensive practical experience and expert knowledge in the course curriculum. *Essentials* also addresses the new values, roles, and practices that are emerging as orchestras evolve. Participants gain an understanding of the key functions of orchestra management, while engaging in robust interrogation of norms in our field and new thinking about the future. Topics include:

- Artistic Planning
- Development and Fundraising

- Education and Community Engagement
- Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion
- Finance
- General Management
- Governance
- Human Resources
- Leadership
- Marketing, Communications, and Media
- Musicians' Perspective
- Negotiations and Collective Bargaining Agreements
- Operations and Production
- Organizational Culture
- Small-Budget Orchestras
- Strategic Planning

Additional core activities include faculty mentoring, visits with prominent artists and executives, concert attendance, and excursions to David Geffen Hall.

FACULTY LEADERSHIP

Scott Faulkner (Faculty Director) Principal Bassist, Reno Philharmonic & Reno Chamber Orchestra; Former Executive Director, Reno Chamber Orchestra; Director, League Alumni Network

Laura Reynolds, Vice President, Impact and Innovation, San Diego Symphony

John McCann, Founder and President, Partners in Performance

LEAGUE LEADERSHIP

Simon Woods, President and CEO

Caen Thomason-Redus, Vice President, Inclusion and Learning

David Styers, Director, Learning and Leadership Programs

Maria Martini, Meetings Manager

JUILLIARD LEADERSHIP

John-Morgan Bush, Dean of Juilliard Extension, The Juilliard School

GUEST FACULTY (as of 1/22/2026)

Lisa Brown Alexander, CEO, LBA Holdings & Founder, Nonprofit HR

Jennifer Barlament, Executive Director, Atlanta Symphony Orchestra

Michelle Miller Burns, President and CEO, Dallas Symphony Orchestra

Vince Ford, Senior Vice President, Digital Strategy and Innovation, Curtis Institute of Music

Doug Hagerman, Immediate Past Board Chair, League of American Orchestras

Christina Littlejohn, Executive Director, Arkansas Symphony Orchestra

Katie McGuinness, Chief Artistic Officer, Dallas Symphony Orchestra

Denise McGovern, former Vice President of Communications & Media, Dallas Symphony Orchestra

Anwar Nasir, Executive Director, Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra

Heather Noonan, Vice President of Advocacy, League of American Orchestras

Jessica Phillips, Musician, Metropolitan Opera

Faith Raiguel, Former CFO, LA Opera; Board Member, Ojai Music Festival; Board Members, Silk Road

Paul Scarbrough, Principal, Akustiks, LLC

Jessica Schmidt, Principal Consultant, Orchestrate Inclusion

Alexa Smith, Associate Artistic Director, The Public Theater

Michelle Zwi, Director of Orchestra Operations and Touring, Philadelphia Orchestra

Program Tuition: \$4,260

Tuition covers 10 days of instruction at The Juilliard School and housing for up to 11 nights at Columbia University, and concert tickets. Residency is required. Each participant will be responsible for covering their own costs of travel and most meals. **Full and partial scholarships based on financial need are available.**

Participants are expected to commit to all 10 days of the program and attend all sessions and associated events. Partial attendance is not permitted: participants will receive a non-credit Juilliard Extension certificate upon completion.

We will have a Zoom welcome for introductions on Tuesday, July 14, 2026, from 3:00-4:30pm Eastern. The program will begin at Juilliard with lunch on Tuesday, July 21 at 12:00pm noon and conclude on Thursday, July 30 at 6:30pm following dinner.

Accommodation is provided in single-occupancy bedrooms with shared private bathrooms and lounge space at Columbia University. Check-in is on Monday afternoon, July 20 or Tuesday, July 21; check-out on Thursday, July 30 or Friday morning, July 31.

Note: Applicants will be notified by Thursday, April 30, 2026. If accepted into the *Essentials* Class of 2026, a non-refundable tuition deposit of \$1,000 will be due immediately. The tuition balance will be due by Tuesday, July 14, 2026.

Application Instructions

Apply online

Application deadline: Tuesday, March 3, 2026

In a highly competitive application process, up to 36 participants will be selected based on demonstrated experience, potential, commitment to serving American orchestras, and motivation and goals for participating in this professional development program. Early and mid-career professionals, musicians, career changers, and students are eligible to apply, as well as experienced administrators who wish to expand and deepen their knowledge base in all aspects of an orchestral organization. The League especially invites applicants from backgrounds that have been historically underrepresented in the orchestral field. All program applicants will receive a one-year professional membership to the League of American Orchestras.

Applicants must complete an online application with following requirements:

REQUIREMENT: Medical insurance and compliance with any health and safety measures that may arise

Please upload the below materials with your application. Text documents should be in pdf format. Applications that exceed the stated page/word/duration limits will not be considered.

1. Personal written statement 1 (max 250 words): Share an experience or perspective that has shaped who you are/how you show up as a professional in the field.
2. Personal written statement 2 (max 250 words): Name one opportunity and one challenge facing American orchestras (or, if applicable, your orchestra specifically). What are the implications – not only to the field and the future of orchestras, but to you personally?
3. What is one important question you think the orchestra field should be asking and why do you feel it is important?
4. Bio (max 250 words)
5. Resume (max 2 pages)
6. Personal video statement (max 2 minutes): In your video response, help us understand what draws you to work in the orchestral field and why this is the right moment in your career to participate in the Essentials of Orchestra Management program.
7. Financial Aid (optional)
 - Scholarship monies are available for need-based tuition awards. Please submit your 2025 tax return (if not available, your 2024 tax return is acceptable). All information will be kept confidential.
8. Pay the \$65 application fee.

Only fully complete applications will be considered. All submitted materials become the confidential property of the League of American Orchestras and will not be returned. Applicants will be notified by Thursday, April 30, 2026. Please note that the application fee is non-refundable.

Questions

Please contact David Styers, Director of Learning and Leadership Programs, at dstyers@americanorchestras.org or 646 822 4033.

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