

About the

League of American Orchestras

The League of American Orchestras unites and advances the orchestra field—building capacity, fostering innovation, amplifying its collective voice, and laying the groundwork for a vibrant future.



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The only national organization dedicated to orchestras and their communities, the League supports the field through advocacy, leadership development, convenings, research, and artistic programs.



above A percussionist in concert with the Albany Symphony. Photo by Gary Gold.

right The Dallas Symphony Orchestra, under the direction of Shira Samuels-Shragg, performing *the sound of where I came from* by Moni Jasmine Guo, part of the Virginia B. Toulmin Orchestral Commissions Program. Photo by DSO/Sylvia Elzafor.

cover Musicians of the Portland Youth Philharmonic in performance. Photo by Zachary Person.





left The Jacksonville Symphony, under the direction of Associate Conductor Nathaniel Efthimiou. Photo by James Gilbert.

below Students from the Alexander W. Dreyfoos School of the Arts Strings Chamber Ensemble, under the direction of Jeffrey Adkins, perform before a Palm Beach Symphony concert. Photo by IndieHouse Films.



Our members

The League includes nearly 25,000 musicians, conductors, orchestra staff, board members, volunteers, and industry professionals working within our membership of 2,000 world-renowned orchestras, community groups, summer festivals, student and youth ensembles, conservatories, libraries, businesses serving orchestras, and individuals who love orchestral music.

Our impact

The League's support and leadership drive progress throughout the orchestral field. Working in concert with our members, the League advocates for policies that strengthen the orchestral ecosystem, including sustained public investment in the arts and arts education. Through convenings and networking opportunities, we bring together orchestra professionals nationwide to learn from one another and build connections.

We cultivate effective leadership, work for equitable opportunities onstage and off, and deliver research and insights that support informed financial and operational decision-making. Together, these efforts help orchestras thrive—and ensure that communities across the country can experience the joy, power, and beauty of live orchestral music.

Core programs and initiatives



above The League's Heather Noonan represents the interests of American orchestras at the CITES International Treaty Negotiations, 2025.

right American Youth Symphony musicians performing at UCLA's Royce Hall. Photo by Philip Holahan.



Advocacy

Leading national advocacy efforts to influence public policy and strengthen the orchestra field through direct representation, resources, and strategic communications.

- **Federal policy** The League advocates for the value of the orchestral community with Congress, the Administration, and federal agencies. Key policy issues include arts funding, equitable access to music education, ticketing policies, visas for guest artists, travel with musical instruments, and nonprofit charitable giving incentives, among others.
- **Advocacy support** We build our members' capacity to tell their stories, help map their community impact, and provide hands-on guidance as they advocate at the local, state, and national levels.
- **Resources** We offer one-on-one help to individual orchestras as well as guidance for the whole field through Advocacy Updates and online resources such as Artists from Abroad, Resources for Navigating the Changing Landscape, and our public policy advocacy guide, Playing Your Part.
- **Media relations** We work with national and local press to highlight our members and tell the orchestra field's story through both data and narrative.
- **Representing American orchestras abroad** We are the voice of our members in global treaty negotiations on the movement of musical instruments, and we advocate for visa policies that support global artistry.

Convenings, Networking, and Community

Bringing together the people of the orchestra field to exchange ideas, learn from one another, and spark growth and innovation

- **National Conference** The League brings orchestras together from across the country and beyond for the field's most important gathering for professional development, networking, and the advancement of best practices and new ideas.
- **Midwinter Managers Meeting** We provide a crucial annual opportunity for orchestra executive directors to connect and learn—from one another and from expert speakers on important topics, such as capacity building, philanthropy, governance, programming, and community engagement.
- **Constituency groups** We convene peer groups for executive directors, orchestra board members, staff by department, youth orchestra administrators, composers, conductors, musicians, students, and volunteers.
- **Digital connections** Week in, week out, we meet our members where they are through webinars, online peer and affinity group meetings, and discussion forums.
- **Supporting boards and effective governance** We bring together board members through in-person and online roundtables and our Orchestra Board Member Forum. Our popular guidebook for orchestra governance shares the best current and emerging practices for orchestra boards.



above Enjoying conversations in the Exhibit Hall at Conference. Photo by Melissa Taylor.

left A lively Conference session. Photo by Melissa Taylor.

Leadership and Professional Development

Helping orchestra professionals launch careers, build essential skills, and take their work to the next level

- **Essentials of Orchestra Management** Early- and mid-career orchestra leaders can take their careers to the next level through this transformative ten-day professional development program.
- **Anne Parsons Leadership Program** We provide executive leadership training, mentorship, and networking and community-building opportunities to build greater gender diversity in orchestra leadership.
- **Orchestra Intensives** Orchestra professionals can develop their skills, experience deep learning, and build community in specific fields of orchestra administration.
- **Individual consultations** League team members devote many hours each month to one-on-one calls and meetings across the country with orchestra board, staff, and artistic leaders, providing advice and guiding them to helpful resources.



above Anne Parsons Leadership Program participants, mentors, and League staff. Photo by Douglas Carter Photography.

right Attendees celebrate learning at Essentials of Orchestra Management. Photo by Juan Patino.



Research and Insights

Providing essential data and analysis of all aspects of the orchestral field to promote understanding and enable leaders to make informed, strategic decisions

- **Orchestra Statistical Report** We provide financial and operational benchmarking data to member orchestras, helping them to strategize and budget, and to help board members, staff, and musicians navigate the current orchestral financial landscape.
- **Salary and Benefits Report** We share compensation data with League members to help orchestras offer competitive compensation, to promote salary transparency and fairness across the field, and to empower employees to advance their careers.
- **Financial Trends Research** Each year we publish orchestra-specific research reports on topics critical to the field, such as Orchestra Facts and Orchestras Making Progress Towards Financial Sustainability.
- **Audience Data and Insights** We deliver high-quality data and insights in collaboration with leading research organizations such as TRG Arts, WolfBrown, SMU DataArts, and other trusted leaders in the field.
- **Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Data Hub** We provide racial, ethnic, and gender metrics for musicians, staff, composers, board members, and executive directors to help build an orchestra field that is fair, accessible, and welcoming to all.



above Brainstorming and planning during a 2024 Inclusive Stages convening. Photo by Doug Coombe.
left First Orchestra Intensive Cohort, 2026.



above During an Inclusive Stages convening, Lani Kelly, visiting oboist in the Memphis Symphony, shares some positive experiences as an orchestra musician. Photo by Doug Coombe.

right Premiere of Anna Clyne's *This Moment* by The Philadelphia Orchestra under the direction of Yannick Nézet-Séguin, as part of the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation Orchestral Commissions Program. Photo by Allie Ippolito.



Publications and Resources

News, features, and guides that share compelling stories and important information

- **Symphony.org** The League's magazine is an essential source of industry information amid declining arts coverage—publishing timely news and in-depth articles, bringing forward important field-wide issues, and highlighting effective practices and success stories.
- **Catalyst Guides** Designed to spark change across the orchestra field, these guides highlight members' stories of progress and include actionable takeaways that inspire and support innovation, inclusivity, and community impact.
- **KeyNotes** We share a biweekly email for members, providing news, resources, opportunities, events, job listings, and other relevant information.
- **Resources** We host an ever-expanding array of online resources, including the Music Director Search Handbook and web pages on critical topics such as Fundraising, Audience Diversification and Growth, and Preventing and Addressing Sexual Misconduct.

Artistic Programs

Supporting artistic progress and equity through grants and partnerships

- **Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation Orchestral Commissions Program** We support new music through this national commissioning initiative that seeks to increase gender diversity among composers presented on orchestras' stages.
- **Inclusive Stages** The League created and leads a coalition of more than 40 orchestras and national partners dedicated to increasing diversity onstage, including through research and action related to inclusion in orchestras and audition and tenure practices.
- **Robust partnerships** We collaborate with organizations such as The Sphinx Organization, the American Composers Orchestra, and New World Symphony to support artistic innovation and equitable practices through programs such as EarShot and the National Alliance for Audition Support.

Imagining the Future

The League leads change boldly to help orchestras thrive for the next generation. We share examples of innovation across the field, integrate leading-edge practices into our professional development programs, prepare orchestra leaders and administrators for our complex and fast-evolving world, and invest in young leaders who will form the next generation of orchestras and their audiences.

right Close-up photos of musicians of the Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra. Photo by Joyce Tseng.
bottom Krystle Ford conducting the Metropolitan Youth Orchestra with Acting Associate Principal Concertmaster Peter Vickery.



Together with our members,
we imagine what orchestras
can become—and help bring
that vision to life.

To learn more about the League and League membership,
visit americanorchestras.org

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