The League of American Orchestras urges the subcommittee to approve Fiscal Year 2012 funding for the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) at a level of $167.5 million. We urge Congress to continue supporting the important work of this agency, which broadens public access to the arts, nurtures cultural diversity, spurs the creation of new artistic works, and fosters a sense of cultural and historic pride, all while supporting countless jobs in communities nationwide.

The League of American Orchestras leads, supports, and champions America’s orchestras and the vitality of the music they perform. Its diverse membership of nearly 900 orchestras across North America runs the gamut from world-renowned symphonies to community groups, from summer festivals to student and youth ensembles. The only national organization dedicated solely to the orchestral experience, the League is a nexus of knowledge and innovation, advocacy, and leadership advancement for managers, musicians, volunteers, and boards. Founded in 1942 and chartered by Congress in 1962, the League links a national network of thousands of instrumentalists, conductors, managers, board members, volunteers, and business partners.

Federal arts support has a compelling exponential impact: the intense competition for federal dollars means that the awarding of an NEA grant greatly enhances and strengthens an orchestra’s application for funding from other sources. Furthermore, an NEA grant serves as an emblem of public value and national artistic significance, and communities large and small partake in the distinction of presenting nationally recognized NEA-supported programs. In Fiscal Year 2010, the NEA’s Grants to Organizations included 119 grants to orchestras, and continued funding for the agency will support its ability to serve the American public. The Endowment promotes creation, engagement, and learning in the arts through Arts Works, the major support category
for organizations that includes the Access to Artistic Excellence, Learning in the Arts for Children and Youth, and Challenge America: Reaching Every Community grant programs—as well as through vital Federal/State partnerships.

The presence of orchestras is often an indicator of a community’s economic and cultural strength. In fact, investing in the arts has a demonstrated impact in helping to reverse economic decline. In addition to fueling local economies, attracting new business development, and educating young people, music unites people and cultures in good times and bad. The League is committed to help orchestras by bringing new knowledge and perspectives concerning the shifting priorities in our communities to our members. Likewise, the NEA plays an incredibly valuable leadership role through its direct grants to organizations, strategic initiatives, and ongoing national research illuminating trends in public participation and workforce development.

**NEA Grants Help Orchestras Educate and Encourage America’s Youth**

The Boise Philharmonic, a 70-member professional orchestra with an administrative staff of 9 employees, is Idaho’s largest and oldest performing arts organization. The orchestra maintains a vast array of educational programs, including classes for young children, a Family Concert series, annual Children’s Concerts with full symphony orchestra performing for 15,000 school children in 9 free performances, Musicians in the Schools, Ensembles in the Schools, Conductor in the Schools and the Jeker Eagle Schools music project. In FY10 the Boise Philharmonic received NEA support for Classic Collaborations, a series of concerts accompanied by related educational activities. Each concert in the series integrated symphonic music with vocal music, theater, or dance along with participating area opera, theater, and dance companies, embodying the collective strength of arts disciplines coming together.

The New World Symphony, a 23-year old orchestral academy whose 750 graduates now perform in over 176 orchestras across the country, is also committed to serving America’s youth. In addition to connecting musicians and artists around the globe, the orchestra provides instruction and mentoring to schools by making its performances available to school systems across South Florida. The Musician Professional Development Program receives NEA support to offer performances, coaching, and community outreach activities as a means to prepare more than 80 gifted young musicians each year for musical leadership positions in the orchestral field. Thanks in part to federal funding, these young musicians have the opportunity to experience music at multiple levels of engagement and enjoy the advantages of highly trained coaches to develop their own professional careers in music.

**NEA Funding Leads to Increased Public Access to Culturally Diverse Art**

The NEA, together with the organizations that it helps support, is committed to improving public access to the arts. With grants reaching every Congressional district in the country, the NEA helps orchestras connect to their community, but perhaps even
more important, the experience of live music serves as a conduit for disparate communities to connect with each other. The Pacific Symphony, employing 88 part-time musicians and 44 full-time staff, formed a partnership with an Indian cultural center in Irvine, California to present numerous traditional Indian performances to rapt audiences. With financial assistance from the NEA, many listeners had the unique opportunity to experience a new musical form and enjoy the cultural richness of their own community for the first time. Additionally, the multicultural performances broadened the make-up of the concert audience as well.

Federal support often helps grantees extend the reach of their activities beyond their immediate home cities and towns, bringing unique musical experiences to communities that would otherwise not be able to enjoy them. The Bremerton Symphony Orchestra employs 11 full-time and part-time staff, and with the help of 120 volunteer orchestra and chorale members, it will present an “Inspiring Virtuosity” concert with violinist Marié Rossano. In addition to the concert itself, the orchestra’s NEA grant will help make the concert accessible to the Hispanic and Tribal populations of the Kitsap Peninsula as well as low income families of Bremerton. The orchestra conductor will meet each of the groups to personally invite members of Kitsap County public to the concert. The NEA support is underwriting tickets to make this possible. NEA grants are undoubtedly a vital part of the support system that enables orchestras to showcase our society’s rich array of cultures and to engage and connect with the diverse audiences around them.

NEA Support Fosters National Pride and Remembrance
In addition to widening access to the diverse cultural heritage of our country, NEA grants provide a stirring way for orchestras to aid in the remembrance and honoring of key moments in our American history. To commemorate the 10th anniversary of September 11th, the New York Philharmonic commissioned a new work, “One Sweet Morning,” by American composer John Corigliano. The orchestra, which employs 192 full-time and 353 part-time or seasonal staff, along with 190 volunteers, will use its NEA grant in the presentation of this poignant artistic perspective on the years following September 11, 2001, which will incorporate texts on war and peace by American lyricist E.Y. “Yip” Harburg, Lithuanian-American poet Czeslow Milosz, the Ancient Greek poet Homer, and Tang Dynasty poet Li Po.

The National Symphony Orchestra, numbering 100 musicians and 19 administrative employees, likewise commemorated another important event in American history – the 50th anniversary of President John F. Kennedy's 1961 inauguration. The historic concert was performed earlier this year at Constitution Hall in tribute to a leader who believed that the arts can help shape the national character and bring understanding between nations. The celebration included the commissioned piece, Remembering JFK (An American Elegy) by Peter Lieberson, which incorporated text from President Kennedy's speeches and writings.
The city of Birmingham pays homage to another important figure in American history in *Reflect and Rejoice: A Community Tribute to Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr.*, an annual remembrance of the progress that has taken place since Dr. King’s "Letter from a Birmingham Jail," written in 1963. A consortium grant from the NEA supports this musical and artistic collaboration between partners such as the Birmingham Civil Rights Institute, local choirs, and the **Alabama Symphony Orchestra**, which employs an administrative staff of 20 full-time and 2 part-time employees, a full-time core orchestra of 54 musicians, and 4 conductors. In conjunction with the tribute, the orchestra holds a poetry contest every year in which students submit poems inspired by orchestral work from the *Reflect & Rejoice* concert. Appreciating our history is crucial for current and future generations, and the NEA is a valued partner in creating impactful, engaging, and memorable ways such as these to honor our past.

**NEA Funding Encourages New Works and Programming**

NEA grants to orchestras help support the creative capacity of American musicians and composers. A grant from the NEA will support the *Living Composers Project*, produced by **The Saint Paul Chamber Orchestra**, whose 35 musicians and 33 full-time and 15 part-time administrative staff share a commitment to stimulate and challenge audiences by including recent and newly commissioned works as part of its regular programming. The project will encompass more than 20 performances and world premieres throughout the Twin Cities metro area. Composers will be invited to attend performances of their commissioned pieces and participate in open rehearsals and pre- and post-concert discussions to help introduce audiences to contemporary chamber orchestra music in thoughtful and engaging ways.

With 10 full-time staff and approximately 70 part-time musicians, the long-term support of the NEA has been essential to the **Albany Symphony Orchestra** in keeping living American composers at the center of its mission. This year, an NEA grant will help in the production of the orchestra’s *American Music Festival*, which nurtures and supports the work of living composers like Joan Tower, Zhou Long, and Michael Daugherty. Festivals such as this one are essential to assuring that orchestral music remains a part of the American cultural experience and that opportunities can be presented to composers to have their works shared at the highest artistic level.

NEA grants uniquely encourage orchestras to cultivate innovation, ensure that music continues to flourish within our cultural landscape, and help make it possible for audiences of all sizes to access it from every part of the country. Thank you for this opportunity to express the value of NEA support for orchestras and communities across the nation. The Endowment’s unique ability to provide a national forum to promote excellence, both through high standards for artistic products and the highest expectation of accessibility, remains one of the strongest arguments for a federal role in support of the arts. We urge you to support creativity and access to the arts by approving $167.5 million in funding for the National Endowment for the Arts.