Against the Backdrop of Detroit’s Dramatic Renewal, League of American Orchestras’ 2017 National Conference to Examine Role of Orchestras in a Changing Public Policy Landscape

Detroit Rising / Transformation in American Orchestras
June 6-8 in Detroit

Special Events Include Celebration of League’s 75th Anniversary, Presentation of Ford Musician Awards and The Gold Baton

New York, NY (May 22, 2017) – The League of American Orchestras’ 2017 National Conference in Detroit, June 6-8, will focus on the ways forward for orchestras in an uncertain public policy landscape. Using the story of Detroit’s revitalization and resurgent creative community as a backdrop, the Conference will include a diverse array of civic, business, and cultural voices, including many from the Motor City.

Nearly 1,000 orchestra constituents from across the country – managers and staff, musicians, trustees, and volunteers – are expected to attend the Conference, taking place at the Detroit Marriott at the Renaissance Center and at the Max M. and Marjorie S. Fisher Music Center, home to Conference host Detroit Symphony Orchestra and Music Director Leonard Slatkin. This is the third League Conference in Detroit; it was held there previously in 1964 and 1986.

The 2017 National Conference will include live performances, social and networking events, and an assortment of sessions highlighting diversity, artistic innovation, fundraising, audience development, technology, financial sustainability, and more, including a special behind-the-scenes look at the Detroit Symphony Orchestra’s groundbreaking live video webcasts.

“As we celebrate our 75th anniversary, we find one of the League’s core mandates – that together we are stronger than individually – more prescient than ever,” said Jesse Rosen, president and CEO, League of American Orchestras. “At the Conference, we will hear from diverse voices, using the city of Detroit’s remarkable...
transformation as a symbol of what we can accomplish together, through effective partnerships, advocacy, and innovative practice."

"The Detroit Symphony Orchestra is thrilled to be the host orchestra for this year’s League of American Orchestras’ Conference," said Anne Parsons, president and CEO of the Detroit Symphony Orchestra. "Our resurgent city that we are so proud to call home is sure to surprise and delight the Conference delegation. We know everyone will come away inspired and enriched by the content of the meetings and as well as their experiences in the great city of Detroit."

The Conference Opening Plenary kicks off at Orchestra Hall on June 6 with Detroit Rising: Stories of Renewal, a panel discussion of how economics, race, immigration, urban versus suburban, arts and culture, and transportation converge in a story about transformation and how to lead in the face of tremendous adversity. Ann Hobson Pilot, former principal harpist of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, will receive the League’s highest honor, The Gold Baton. She will also perform.

On June 7, the Luncheon and Annual Meeting will celebrate the official launch of the League’s 75th anniversary and League Giving Day, a new one-day fundraising campaign. Five musicians and their orchestras will receive the Ford Musician Awards for Excellence in Community Service, and The Annie Moses Band will be featured in a special showcase performance.

The Closing Plenary and Luncheon on June 8 will feature national thought leaders Melanca Clark, president, the Hudson Webber Foundation; Maria Rosario Jackson, member, National Council on the Arts, senior advisor to the arts and culture program, the Kresge Foundation; Rip Rapson, president and CEO, the Kresge Foundation; and Steven J. Tepper, dean, Herberger Institute for Design and the Arts, Arizona State University will discuss Pathways Forward as they examine the role of arts and culture in these uncertain times.

Conference delegates will enjoy a variety of events, including an evening performance at Orchestra Hall on June 6 by the Detroit Symphony Orchestra, conducted by Music Director Leonard Slatkin, of Mohammed Fairouz’s Pax universalis, Kurt Weill’s Seven Deadly Sins, Sarah Kirkland Snider’s Something for the Dark, Michigan native Jonathan Bailey Holland’s Equality (text by Dr. Maya Angelou), and Mason Bates’ Warehouse Medicine. Detroit resident Shara Nova is the vocalist and Dr. Tonya Matthews the narrator. The concert will also feature a special performance by the Detroit Symphony Youth Orchestra. Immediately following the concert, the venue’s Atrium will be the site of an all-delegate Tune-Up Party; the next evening, on June 7, a social event for young professionals will also take place at the
Atrium, followed by a DSO Mix @ The Max concert with Detroit’s Shigeto in the DSO’s flexible performance space The Cube. Conference attendees will also have the option of attending a Detroit Tigers game at Comerica Park on the evening of June 7.

The inspirational story of Detroit and its orchestra, as well as advocacy strategies for orchestras navigating the current public policy environment, will be woven into a number of Conference sessions, including:

- Opening Plenary
- Closing Luncheon and Plenary
- Mapping the DSO Journey
- No Sound Barriers: Sphinx at 20
- Changing Orchestra Culture: A Conversation with DSO Musicians
- Make the Case Now!
- Activating and Nurturing Community Alliances
- Cultural Equity

Additional Conference Elective Sessions on June 7 and 8 will cover a range of topics including diversity and inclusion, community engagement, artistic programming, digital marketing, audience development, pricing, and philanthropy. Highlights include:

- Bold and Informed: Researching Audiences on a Budget
- Diversity and Inclusion in Action
- Market Smarter: Insights and Strategy for Digital Marketing
- The Strategic and Artistic Understanding of Pops
- Classical Musicians of African Descent: Perspectives, Aspirations, and Outlook
- Pricing: The Heart of the Matter
- Socially-Conscious Musician-initiated Projects in Haiti and Seattle
- Change Before You Have To (featuring the League’s Emerging Leaders Program Class of 2017 with lead faculty John McCann)
- Musicians as Organizational Leaders
- What is the Relevance of the Western Orchestral Canon in America Today?

Other Pre-Conference sessions include:

- Foundations of Collective Bargaining
- Leadership Seminar with Horst Abraham, faculty, Ross School of Business, Executive Education, University of Michigan
- Education and Community Engagement Half-Day Meeting
- Everyone is a Fundraiser: A Fundamentals-rich Application-robust Crash Course on Fundraising
- Knowing Your Audience: A Step-by-Step Guide
- 2017 Diversity Forum, the League’s third national convening of leaders from the field addressing major initiatives and topics, including a national diversity audition fund, national instrumentalist mentorship and audition training, field-wide board and staff diversity, and music education pathways.

For a full Conference schedule, including online registration, hotel accommodations, and travel discounts, visit [http://americanorchestras.org/conference2017/](http://americanorchestras.org/conference2017/)

The League gratefully acknowledges all of our 2017 Conference sponsors, including Lead Sponsor: Ford Motor Company Fund; Major Supporter: the John S. and James L. Knight Foundation; and Generous Contributor: The Kresge Foundation.

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. Visit [americanorchestras.org](http://americanorchestras.org).

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