



For Immediate Release

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Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra One of 28 U.S. Orchestras to Receive Catalyst Fund Grants from League of American Orchestras To Advance Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion Within Their Organization

PARK FOREST, June 16, 2020

The League of American Orchestras has awarded a grant to Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra (IPO) to strengthen their understanding of equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) and to help transform organizational culture. Given to just twenty-eight orchestras nationwide, the one-year grants comprise the second round of The Catalyst Fund, the League's three-year, \$2.1 million grant-making program, made possible by a generous grant from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation with additional support from the Paul M. Angell Family Foundation.

IPO Executive Director Christina Salerno states, "IPO believes in the strength of our community and our art form. We are excited to be taking a holistic approach to ensuring that our orchestra embraces equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) across multiple organizational lines in the hope that we might achieve greater understanding and openness - both on the stage and in our communities."

"Recent events have underscored the deep racial disparities existing in our country, already amplified by the pandemic's unequal impact on communities of color," said Jesse Rosen, President and CEO of the League of American Orchestras. "The work orchestras are undertaking with support from the League's Catalyst Fund highlights the urgency of addressing EDI as orchestras attempt to confront decades of inequity within our field. We must understand and address our personal and organizational roles in systems of inequity."

"Our first year of dedicated EDI work included a number of internal learnings, great conversations, and nuanced directional shifts, including a programmatic commitment to broadening our musical cannon," says Ms. Salerno. "We are thrilled to be awarded this second Catalyst Fund grant to help us continue this important trajectory forward into our future as a more inclusive and diverse orchestra. Preliminary analysis of the inaugural 2019 Catalyst Fund cohort demonstrates support and progress among orchestras, including an increased commitment and dedication to individual orchestras' EDI work and an increased awareness that systemic change requires a sustained effort over time."

Catalyst Fund grants support orchestras' use of EDI practitioners who help implement a range of organizational development activities involving musicians, staff, board, and, in some cases, volunteers and community leaders. These include anti-bias trainings, institutional audits, the creation of formal EDI plans, and work to build consensus and integrate EDI into mission statements and culture. Community building is a key component of the program; The Catalyst Fund Learning Cohort, made possible by the generous support of the Paul M. Angell Family Foundation, enables past and present grantees to interact with colleagues through remote and (post-pandemic) in-person convenings as well a dedicated online forum.

The Catalyst Fund is informed by earlier dialogue and research. A major national convening co-hosted by the League and The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation in December 2015 was catalytic in launching national task forces and annual convenings to engage orchestras in EDI efforts. Two important League studies, Racial/Ethnic and Gender Diversity in the Orchestra Field, and Forty Years of Fellowships: A Study of Orchestras' Efforts to Include African American and Latino Musicians, further served to inform and stimulate action. In April 2018 the League launched, in partnership with The Sphinx Organization and the New World Symphony, the National Alliance for Audition Support, a national initiative that offers Black and Latinx musicians a customized combination of mentoring, audition preparation, and audition travel stipends. Additional information on these programs and other EDI activity, including information about the League's EDI Strategic Framework, is available from the League's online EDI Resource Center.

League member orchestras were eligible to apply for Catalyst Fund grants; applications were reviewed by an independent panel of experts

2020 Catalyst Fund Grant Recipients

Arkansas Symphony Orchestra
Charlotte Symphony Orchestra
Chicago Sinfonietta
Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra
DC Youth Orchestra Program
East Texas Symphony Orchestra
Empire State Youth Orchestra
Grand Rapids Symphony
Handel and Haydn Society
Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra
Indianapolis Symphony Orchestra
Los Angeles Philharmonic
Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra
Minnesota Orchestra
Nashville Symphony
New Jersey Symphony Orchestra

New Jersey Youth Symphony
New World Symphony
North Carolina Symphony
Oakland Symphony
Pacific Symphony
Princeton Symphony Orchestra
Richmond Symphony
Saint Louis Symphony Orchestra
San Francisco Symphony
Seattle Symphony
South Dakota Symphony Orchestra
Virginia Symphony Orchestra

ABOUT THE ILLINOIS PHILHARMONIC ORCHESTRA

Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra is celebrating its 42nd Season in 2019-20. From its community orchestra roots in Park Forest, the 69-member orchestra has grown into a critically acclaimed professional orchestra, with increasing attendance and incredible regional support. Under the leadership of Music Director Stilian Kirov and Executive Director Christina Salerno, the mission of IPO is to provide concerts of compelling professional symphonic music, support music education, and expand audience awareness of musical excellence for the diverse communities of the greater Chicago region.

During the 2019-20 season, IPO will perform seven classical concerts at their venue, Ozinga Chapel at Trinity Christian College in Palos Heights. In addition, the orchestra performs four educational youth concerts each year, serving over 4,000 students in the Chicago Southland and a summer chamber series, IPO Summer @ Olympia Fields Country Club.

Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra is supported in part by Ozinga Foundation, Gerhard Manufacturing and Designing, Michuda Construction, Gaylord and Dorothy Donnelly Foundation, FnA Outdoors, and the Illinois Arts Council Agency.

For more information, visit ipomusic.org or call 708.481.7774.

ABOUT THE LEAGUE OF AMERICAN ORCHESTRAS

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 1,700 organizations and individuals across North America runs the gamut from world-renowned orchestras 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.

