

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

The Jacksonville Symphony Chosen as One of 20 U.S. Orchestras to Receive Prestigious League of American Orchestras' Grant to Advance DEI Efforts

Jacksonville, FL: The Jacksonville Symphony furthers its strong commitment to diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) initiatives through a three-year, \$75,000 Catalyst Fund Incubator grant awarded by The League of American Orchestras. The League's three-year grant is made possible by support from The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, with additional support from the Paul M. Angell Family Foundation.

The grant program reimagines orchestras as laboratories for the field, developing strategies and utilizing a peer-focused curriculum to help drive field-wide change. To be chosen for this grant, the Symphony was required to demonstrate strength of vision, institutional commitment and readiness. The Symphony was selected via an independent panel of DEI experts and practitioners in the arts and orchestral fields.

"The Jacksonville Symphony is honored to be one of 20 orchestras across the United States to receive the Catalyst Fund Incubator Grant that will allow us to create impactful change," said Steven B. Libman, President and CEO of the Jacksonville Symphony. "We are grateful for the League's support that will strengthen our mission to fostering a culture centered on DEI initiatives and achieving a connected and unified community."

Through the Catalyst grant, the Jacksonville Symphony will use models from high-tech incubators to create strong peer communities through brainstorming, strategizing and developing new ideas through mentorships. It will also focus on building capacity to attract new resources, including funding and partnerships, for the orchestra's DEI work.

To build upon its DEI growth over the three-year grant period, the Symphony will implement the following specific recommendations from the Bucherati Group: the organization will create a DEI business case, vision and strategy along with metrics, accountabilities and initiatives such as training; it will broadly communicate a compelling, authentic DEI vision and

strategy that provides board members, musicians, staff, donors, patrons, and Symphony partners a clear picture of the Symphony's commitment to DEI as a long-term strategy; the Symphony also plans to provide DEI Education sessions to board members, musicians, and staff where all three groups interact with each other; it will continue to recruit and retain more diverse board members, staff, and musicians; the organization will continue to develop a better understanding of the community it serves, so it is aware of what its patrons require; and the Symphony will increase engagement with diverse community members through the development and implementation of vibrant programming and marketing strategies.

"A world, an organization or an entity that does not reflect the constituent groups it seeks to serve will be myopic in its decision making and engagement of those groups," said Dr. Barbara Darby, board member and chair of the Symphony's DEI Committee. "Therein lies the value of our focus on diversity, equity and inclusion--to broaden perspective, engagement, representation and to add strength to the decisions we make on behalf of all."

The grant enables the Symphony to work directly with professional DEI consultants. The consultants' work is multifaceted where they will assist the Symphony in a variety of areas such as clarifying, mapping and measuring DEI goals. They will perform the additional role of offering guidance on a wide array of issues, such as avoiding common pitfalls when performing DEI work and mediating conflict around differences of opinion on approach and strategy. They will also inform best practices for including a multitude of voices and perspectives.

The Jacksonville Symphony's mission is to enrich the human spirit through symphonic music. It is committed to fostering a culture that values and embraces diversity, equity and inclusion. These core values will be reflected in the makeup of its patrons, orchestra, professional staff and board as the organization mirrors the community it serves. The Symphony pledges to engage in culturally responsive performances, education and community initiatives. Its strategic plan will be the guidepost for accountability as the Symphony achieves its goals.

The Jacksonville Symphony is honored to receive the Catalyst Fund Incubator Grant from The League of American Orchestras and develop DEI initiatives that pave the way for field-wide change.

The Jacksonville Symphony is North Florida's leading music nonprofit offering live performances at Jacoby Symphony Hall in the Times-Union Center for the Performing Arts and other venues throughout the area. In addition, the Symphony provides music instruction for youth and operates the Jacksonville Symphony Youth Orchestras. For more information about the Symphony, visit JaxSymphony.org, like them at facebook.com/JaxSymphony; follow them on [@jaxsymphony](https://instagram.com/jaxsymphony), on Instagram at [JaxSymphony](https://instagram.com/jaxsymphony) and on YouTube at [JacksonvilleSymphony](https://youtube.com/JacksonvilleSymphony).

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