



May 26, 2021

Princeton Symphony Orchestra Awarded Catalyst Fund Grant

The League of American Orchestras has awarded a \$19,500 grant to the Princeton Symphony Orchestra (PSO) to strengthen their understanding of equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI), and to help transform organizational culture.

Given to 25 orchestras nationwide, the one-year grants comprise the final 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.

"This grant represents the second consecutive year of Catalyst funding for the PSO, which will enable us to build upon the foundational work we have begun under the guidance of our EDI consultant this season," said Marc Uys, the PSO's executive director.

"American orchestras have made a strong commitment to embrace equity, diversity, and inclusion and reverse decades of inequity on-stage and off – an imperative made even more urgent by the pandemic's disproportionate impact on communities of color," said Simon Woods, the League's president and CEO. "This is a long-term journey, but it starts with taking immediate action and creating organizational momentum. We're grateful for The Andrew W. Mellon Foundation's long-standing support for the orchestral field, and for the strategic vision that has allowed this group of orchestras to model what change looks like for our entire field through their Catalyst Fund grants."

Through this grant, the Princeton Symphony Orchestra will develop and enact a formalized plan for equity, diversity, and inclusion efforts. The EDI plan will become part of the larger strategic plan, which will guide the organization forward in the years ahead. Board members, staff, and musicians will continue to engage in shared learning opportunities and discussion through the EDI Task Force and external trainings and workshops.

The Catalyst Fund has made a strong impact on the field, with several orchestras receiving multiple grants over three years to sustain their work. Since its launch in 2019, 76 Catalyst Fund grants were awarded to 49 orchestras of all sizes and types, each demonstrating a strong commitment and dedication to EDI work and an increased awareness that systemic change requires a sustained effort over time. More than 80% of first-year grantees reported making either policy or programming changes as a result of their funded work, with most engaging board and musicians alongside staff.

EDI practitioners are central to The Catalyst Fund grant program, helping orchestras 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 also a key component of the program. The Catalyst Fund Learning Cohort, made possible by the support of the Paul M. Angell Family Foundation, enables past and present grantees to interact with colleagues through remote and (pre-pandemic) in-person convenings, peer learning, and a dedicated web-based forum. Applications were reviewed by an independent panel of EDI experts and practitioners in the arts and orchestral fields.

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