



BERKELEY SYMPHONY AWARDED LEAGUE OF AMERICAN ORCHESTRAS CATALYST FUND GRANT TO ADVANCE DIVERSITY, EQUITY AND INCLUSION

Berkeley, CA – Tuesday, May 25, 2021 – Berkeley Symphony has been awarded a \$19,500 grant from the League of American Orchestras to strengthen their understanding of diversity, equity and inclusion (DEI) and to help transform organization culture. Given to only twenty-five organizations nationwide, this one-year grant comprises 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 work is essential to Berkeley Symphony’s ongoing commitment to honor, celebrate and represent the community that we serve, and to further our mission for presenting a diverse spectrum of composers, artists, and collaborators to our audience,” said Music Director Joseph Young. “We would like to thank the League of American Orchestras for their generous support in funding this important project and we look forward to our partnership with Elevated Diversity as we embark on our DEI journey as an organization.”

Beginning June 2021, Berkeley Symphony will work with Elevated Diversity, a California-based diversity, equity, and inclusion consultancy and training organization. Elevated Diversity’s mission is to help organizations create workplaces where diversity is viewed as a competitive strength and where inclusion is woven into the very fabric of the culture. The firm was launched in 2018 and is a certified minority and woman owned enterprise. The project will include a comprehensive assessment of current organizational structure, policies, practices and attitudes through a DEI lens and the development of an educational plan that embeds the DEI principles more broadly into the organization. The team assigned to work with Berkeley Symphony includes Dr. Lisa Coleman, a nationally-recognized DEI strategist and educator, Monroe French, a seasoned DEI practitioner, and Rhonda Moret, a DEI and multi-cultural marketing expert.

“We are beyond thrilled to have been selected to work with the Berkeley Symphony on this incredibly important initiative,” said Rhonda Moret, Founder of Elevated Diversity. “Being arts lovers ourselves, we find the project to be highly engaging and with our experience and expertise working with other organizations in the arts space, we feel like we are the perfect group to ensure the effort a successful one.”

Berkeley Symphony joins an illustrious list of twenty-five grant recipients nationwide including the New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, Los Angeles Chamber, and Cincinnati Symphony. A full list of 2021 Catalyst Fund Grant Recipients is included at the bottom of the release.

“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 the League’s President and CEO Simon Woods. “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.”

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.

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. Studies by the League further served to inform and stimulate action and 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. For further information, please visit the <https://americanorchestras.org/learn/equity-diversity-inclusion>.

2021 Catalyst Fund Grant Recipients

Adrian Symphony Orchestra (MI)

Arkansas Symphony Orchestra

Berkeley Symphony (CA)

BRAVO Youth Orchestras (OR)

Charlotte Symphony Orchestra (NC)

Chicago Sinfonietta (IL)
Chicago Youth Symphony Orchestras (IL)
Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra (OH)
Contemporary Youth Orchestra (OH)
Grant Park Music Festival (IL)
Kennett Symphony (PA)
Lexington Philharmonic (KY)
Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra (CA)
Los Angeles Philharmonic (CA)
Milwaukee Symphony Orchestra (WI)
New Haven Symphony Orchestra (CT)
New World Symphony (FL)
New York Philharmonic
North Carolina Symphony
Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra (PA)
Princeton Symphony Orchestra (NJ)
St. Louis Symphony Orchestra (MO)
San Diego Symphony Orchestra (CA)
San Diego Youth Symphony and Conservatory (CA)
Virginia Symphony Orchestra

ABOUT BERKELEY SYMPHONY

Berkeley Symphony is unique among Bay Area and American orchestras for its commitment to innovation, community, and excellence. Founded in 1971 in the intellectual and artistic nexus of Berkeley, California, the Orchestra is committed to premiering and commissioning new music and champions women composers, sustained by the supportive musical environment of Berkeley, the East Bay, and the San Francisco Bay Area. From the outset, the people behind Berkeley Symphony's culture and programming were attuned to the culturally diverse people and the heady creative climate of their home city. In the 2019-2020 season, Berkeley Symphony entered a new era under the leadership of Joseph Young, the Orchestra's fourth Music Director in its nearly 50-year history, following a highly successful February 2019 debut that was acclaimed by critics and audiences alike. In addition to building on the Orchestra's artistic innovation, creativity and adventurous programming, Maestro Young is committed to amplifying the voices of underrepresented composers and artists as well as continuing to tell diverse stories that reflect the local Berkeley community.

For more information, please visit: <http://www.berkeleysymphony.org>.

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 1,800 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 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.

ABOUT ELEVATED DIVERSITY

Elevated Diversity is a diversity, equity, and inclusion consulting firm that is a certified minority and female-owned enterprises. The organization provides strategic DEI planning and education and training for organizations from various industries and of varying sizes. Current and past clients include Google, Course Hero, FSBD, and an array of other small business and non-profit organizations and associations. More information can be found by visiting www.ElevatedDiversity.com.

PRESS CONTACT

Brenden Guy, Marketing & PR Consultant

(415) 640-3165

brendenguy@gmail.com

marketing@berkeleysymphony.org