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NEWS RELEASE

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AUGUSTA SYMPHONY ONE OF EIGHTEEN U.S. ORCHESTRAS AND YOUTH ORCHESTRAS TO RECEIVE \$30,000 GRANT FROM THE LEAGUE OF AMERICAN ORCHESTRAS AMERICAN ORCHESTRAS' FUTURES FUND GRANT TO ADVANCE INNOVATION

New York, NY – Augusta Symphony is one of just eighteen orchestras and youth orchestras to receive grants of \$30,000 each to spark a culture of innovation and learning in U.S. orchestras. Created by the League of American Orchestras to support a variety of forward-thinking and experimental projects, the two-year *American Orchestras' Futures Fund* grants, made possible by the generous support of the Ann and Gordon Getty Foundation, focus on artistic vibrancy, civic engagement, and organizational vitality.

“The Futures Fund represents an important part of the incentive and fuel to support orchestras as they pivot and adapt to a dramatically changed environment,” said Jesse Rosen, the League’s President and CEO. “We are grateful to the Ann and Gordon Getty Foundation for their continued ongoing support and flexibility during this time when it is so urgently needed.”

“The Foundation is pleased to fund these projects that contribute to the long-term sustainability of the art form,” said Lisa Delan, Director of the Ann and Gordon Getty Foundation. “Our support of the League—indeed, the unity of the field itself—is critical as we search for ways not only to endure but to emerge stronger than ever. We are at a crossroads and our only way forward is arm in arm.”

“Funding for a mindfulness-based music therapy program could not come at a better time for our community,” shared Augusta Symphony Executive Director, Anne Catherine Murray. “We are so grateful to the League of American Orchestras and the Ann and Gordon Getty Foundation for their generous support of Augusta Symphony’s evolution of the Group Music Therapy program begun last season.”

Augusta Symphony is expanding its free music therapy program to include a mindfulness-based music therapy initiative. Symphony musicians and university students will provide live music for group therapy sessions, facilitated by Augusta Symphony’s music therapist, that focus on guided relaxation, imagery, and mindfulness practices to positively impact the lives of participants such as those suffering chronic illnesses as well as community members interested in self-care and wellness.

This is the fourth round of the League’s \$6 million Futures Fund program; previous grants were announced in [2017](#), [2018](#), and [2019](#). Smaller-budget U.S.-based orchestras and youth orchestras that are members of the League were eligible to apply in this round. An independent review panel selected the orchestras based on criteria including evidence of organizational readiness and the project’s potential for long-term impact. Each proposal was required to address at least one of three categories: Artistic Vibrancy (e.g., innovative approaches to performance and programming); Organizational Vitality (e.g., work addressing new organizational models that explore alternatives to traditional operating models and leadership structures and which redefine relationships among organizational stakeholders); and Civic Engagement (e.g., programs on or off the stage that are responsive to and reflective of their communities and the key issues the communities face). In order to facilitate field-wide learning, grant applicants were encouraged to focus on ways their orchestras could develop, share, and document new ways of working both locally and across the field.

Reflecting the potential of new ways of thinking and flexibility during this time of tremendous challenge and uncertainty, the funded programs’ areas of focus vary greatly. The League—with the encouragement and approval of the Ann and Gordon Getty Foundation—offered grantees flexible alternative options for using their Futures Fund grant. Projects include a travelling music float in Kentucky permitting residents to social-distance while enjoying music from their front lawns; an alternative medical program in Georgia utilizing mindfulness-based music therapy; a commissioning program for composers of color in Maryland aiming to diversify the pool of composers who write for youth orchestras; an intensive after-school music and social program for students in communities in El Paso, near the Texas- Mexico border; and a New Jersey partnership with Nokia Labs creating new chamber music works using C4C technology to turn audiences’ phones into speakers at live concerts. All the initiatives demonstrate the innovative measures orchestras are taking to grow their audiences and increase their relevance during the pandemic.

Now in its sixty-sixth season, **Augusta Symphony** is the primary professional orchestra for the Central Savannah River Area and pursues its mission “to share the joy of great musical performance with our community – together we are music” through annual symphonic, pops, and family concerts that reach approximately 20,000 people each year. Via its Community Chords education and outreach programs, the Symphony further strives to foster broad accessibility to live classical music performance and a lifelong appreciation of the art form among people of all ages, backgrounds, and means. The Symphony’s Community Chords programs currently serve thousands of youth and adults in communities within a seventy-five mile radius of Augusta.

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.

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*Our mission is to share the joy of great musical performance with our community.
Together, we are music.*

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