



Walt Disney Concert Hall, home of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, will be the site of concerts and events during the League's 2022 National Conference.

Forward Together

The League of American Orchestras' 77th National Conference, June 1-3, 2022, will be the first in-person League Conference in three years, as the 2020 and 2021 Conferences headed online due to the pandemic. The world and orchestras have changed greatly in recent years, but orchestras' commitment to their communities has never wavered and is more important than ever. Here's a look at what's ahead when the orchestra field gathers for the League's 2022 Conference.

By David Styers

The League of American Orchestras' 2022 National Conference brings the orchestra field together for the first time physically in three years. This Conference, hosted by the Los Angeles Philharmonic for the first time since 2006, is also our first time back on the West Coast since 2014. "What I love most about the League Conference is the opportunity for us to gather and share informally as friends and colleagues around the ideas that are percolating within our industry," says Chad Smith, chief executive officer of the Los Angeles Philharmonic. "We are looking forward to welcoming everyone to Los Angeles in person."

The League is excited to be partnering for this year's Conference with the Association of California Symphony Orchestras (ACSO). "Rather than holding our own separate ACSO conference in the summer of 2022, we are working with the League to bring the orchestra field together after three long years apart," says ACSO Executive Director Sarah Weber. "This is a prime opportunity to combine our nationwide network and for California orchestras to reconnect with each other and welcome their industry peers from around the country. After the marathon of Zoom meetings during the pandemic, this Conference offers the opportunity for

fresh ideas and a professional reboot with your colleagues in person."

Inspiring Speakers and Live Music

Music has been a great balm during the pandemic as orchestras and musicians have reached out in new and innovative ways to connect with audience members and spotlight repertoire written and performed by a more diverse group of composers and artists. The Conference opens on Wednesday afternoon, June 1 with music center stage, when LA Phil Music and Artistic Director Gustavo Dudamel conducts the Youth Orchestra Los Angeles (YOLA) at Walt Disney Concert Hall—home of the Los Angeles Philharmonic and a stunning architectural landmark. The opening session will also feature a discussion between Dudamel and Oscar-winning composer John Williams on how the large-ensemble sound of an orchestra uniquely animates storytelling through film. Hilda L. Solis, Chair of the Los Angeles County Board of Supervisors, will welcome delegates to LA.

The Conference performance on Thursday evening, June 2 features the LA Phil with Dudamel and mezzo-soprano J'Nai Bridges at Walt Disney Concert Hall in a richly varied program of two 20th-century works—Peter Lieberson's *Neruda Songs* and William Grant Still's

2022 NATIONAL CONFERENCE

The League of American Orchestras' 2022 National Conference will take place June 1-3 in Los Angeles, hosted by the Los Angeles Philharmonic in partnership with the Association of California Symphony Orchestras. Conference headquarters is the Westin Bonaventure Hotel and Suites. Visit leagueconference.org for more information and to register. (Note: Conference specifics may be subject to change.)



Chad Smith, chief executive officer of the Los Angeles Philharmonic



Sarah Weber, executive director of the Association of California Symphony Orchestras



Gustavo Dudamel, music and artistic director of the Los Angeles Philharmonic, will lead concerts at the League's 2022 National Conference—and open the Conference with a discussion with legendary film composer John Williams.



Conductor Thomas Wilkins will deliver a keynote address on June 3 in which he shares his perspectives on the importance of bringing music to young people and committing to local communities. Wilkins is principal conductor of the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra, artistic advisor for education and community engagement of the Boston Symphony Orchestra, and music director laureate of the Omaha Symphony.

Symphony No. 1, “Afro-American”—and the world premiere of a new piece by Puerto Rican-born composer Angélica Negrón.

Another musical and architectural high point will be the unique opportunity to experience the LA Phil's new Judith and Thomas L. Beckmen YOLA Center in Inglewood with architect Frank Gehry and a working rehearsal with YOLA musicians on Tuesday evening, May 31, before the Conference's official first day.

The Conference will take advantage of another exciting performance space in LA on Thursday morning, June 2, at the Colburn School's Zipper Hall. The Inner City Youth Orchestra of Los Angeles (ICYOLA), which describes itself as the largest majority-Black orchestra in America, will celebrate music by Black composers in a concert led by ICYOLA Founder, Executive Director, and Conductor Charles Dickerson III.

For even more music, there will be a sponsored showcase by the Kontrapunktus Chamber Orchestra at the Conference's annual meeting luncheon on Thursday afternoon. Kontrapunktus is a chamber orchestra of young classical musicians primarily from the Colburn School who perform repertoire of Baroque music intended to inspire people from all walks of life.

The Conference will conclude on Friday morning, June 3, with a closing plenary session featuring Thomas Wilkins, principal conductor of the Hollywood Bowl Orchestra. In 2020, Wilkins was named the Boston Symphony Orchestra's first-ever artistic advisor for education and community engagement, and in 2021, he was named music director

laureate of the Omaha Symphony after 16 years, becoming the longest-serving music director in the Omaha Symphony's 100-plus-year history. Wilkins will share his perspectives on the importance of bringing music to young people and committing to local communities.

Pre-Conference Seminars and Conference Elective Sessions

The past two years have stretched orchestras in unprecedented ways to be more flexible and agile in extremely uncertain times. On the morning of Wednesday, June 1 three Pre-Conference seminars, open to everyone for an extra fee, will take four-hour dives into specific topics on how to adapt successfully to complex times.

“Conscious Leadership in an Age of Uncertainty: Regaining Resilience, Patience, and Strategic Thinking” with Suzanne Lahl of SyncUp Leadership Group will give participants experience with a specific process to dive below the surface and explore past experiences, beliefs, and patterns that limit their strategic choices, get in the way of learning, and keep them stuck in choice-making that derails their best self. Participants will emerge with greater self-awareness, the ability to think deeper, and skills to drive more actions that support conscious leadership.

“Moving from Good Intentions to Impact: Exploring the Intersection of Governance and Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion (EDI)” with Vernetta Walker of Walker & Associates Consulting will create space for participants to confront challenges, deepen understanding and commitment, and explore actionable

strategies for change to build strong governance and strategic leadership on EDI. Participants will engage in critical thinking and conversations covering the role of the board of directors and leaders in setting the tone at the top for EDI, internal assumptions and practices that can impede an orchestra's efforts, and effective strategies to help boards of directors to develop and align values and actions on EDI.

“Smallify Challenges: Innovation and Problem-Solving Lab” with Dave Viotti of SMALLIFY will give participants space and tools to work on an important goal for their orchestra in a supportive and generative environment. This highly interactive, inspirational, and practical session will take any goal and break it down into smaller, more actionable pieces and help participants reach them faster through “small bets” and “small wins.” Participants will practice skills and mindsets from the fields of rapid innovation and human-centered design, make great connections with peers, and best of all, leave with a clear action plan to make progress on their goal right away.

In response to needs expressed by the League's members, Conference programming addresses such topics as:

- Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion – strategy; effective practices
- Artistic Planning – women composers; multi-genre crossover
- Audience Development – latest research; digital engagement



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Led by Music and Artistic Director Gustavo Dudamel, the Los Angeles Philharmonic will perform two twentieth-century works and a world premiere during the League's Conference. Dudamel will also lead Youth Orchestra Los Angeles (YOLA) during the Conference.

- Revenue Generation – philanthropy; finances
- Emerging Trends – environmental sustainability; workforce development and retention
- California Stories – Beckmen YOLA Center; ACSO's pandemic collaboration

Networking and Learning

Just about everyone at orchestras has missed the joy and camaraderie of networking in person during two long years of online convenings. So, throughout the Conference, small-group Constituency Meetings will gather delegates each day by peer group to focus on their most pressing concerns. Whether you are connected to the orchestra field as an executive director, board member, staff member, conductor, musician, or

student, there will be agendas designed specifically for you, as well as special networking events, including those for administrators of African, Latinx, Asian, Arab/Middle Eastern, or Native American descent (ALAANA); alumni of the League's orchestra management leadership programs; and, new this year, Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, Queer, Intersex, Asexual (LGBTQIA+) attendees.

The League's Volunteer Council is planning exciting, hands-on programming for orchestra volunteers, including presentations by 2021 Gold Award of Excellence winners, insights from the LA Phil Affiliates volunteer groups, and numerous networking opportunities.

As always, the Exhibit Hall will continue to serve as the central gathering point for networking breaks and

receptions: a place to reconnect with old friends, make new ones, and visit with Conference exhibitors and sponsors.

We have all missed seeing one another since the field last convened in person. This National Conference is going to be an unforgettable moment to come back together again to share experiences and fellowship in solidarity with one another. Don't miss joining us in the City of Angels to reunite with colleagues and celebrate how we as a field have overcome unprecedented challenges to lead, support, and champion orchestras and the importance of music and musicians for our communities. [S](#)

DAVID STYERS is the director of Learning and Leadership Programs at the League of American Orchestras.

Comprising five sleek, 35-story cylindrical glass towers, the Westin Bonaventure Hotel and Suites is a symbol of downtown Los Angeles and an architectural landmark. The striking structure and its soaring atrium have been featured in multiple films and television shows, including *CSI*, *Hancock*, *Interstellar*, *Mission Impossible III*, *The Dark Knight Returns*, and *Vice*. The Westin Bonaventure is in the heart of downtown LA and a short walk from Walt Disney Concert Hall, the Colburn School's Zipper Hall, and major art museums.

