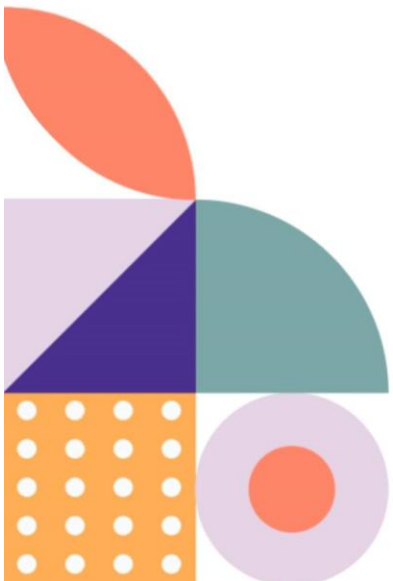




ANN ARBOR  
SYMPHONY  
ORCHESTRA  
Music in the Key of A<sup>2</sup>.



# EQUITY DIVERSITY INCLUSION FRAMEWORK



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## STATEMENT OF EQUITY, DIVERSITY & INCLUSION

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The Ann Arbor Symphony Orchestra (“A<sup>2</sup>SO”) is committed to advancing the values of equity, diversity, and inclusion throughout all parts of our organization. We believe in the power of music to transform lives, unite communities, and enrich the culture of the region. However, we recognize that certain groups of people have been historically underrepresented at the concert hall and may experience the Symphony as a foreign and unwelcoming environment. We pledge to do the following:

1. Provide access to transformative musical experiences for everyone in our community.
2. Work to make our Board, Staff, Orchestra, and volunteers reflect the rich diversity of our community in race, ethnic and cultural background, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, socio-economic status, disability, neurocognitive diversity, and religion.
3. Build relationships and bridges across our community to make the A<sup>2</sup>SO a place where everyone feels welcome and accepted.

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## INTRODUCTION TO THE EDI TASK FORCE AND FRAMEWORK

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The Equity, Diversity and Inclusion (“EDI”) Task Force was created by the A<sup>2</sup>SO Executive Committee in August, 2021 to: (a) analyze where the A<sup>2</sup>SO stands in terms of EDI by reviewing organizational data; (b) identify gaps and where the A<sup>2</sup>SO can improve; and (c) make recommendations for policy and/or next steps to the Executive Committee/Board. The goal of the Task Force is to evolve and progress the culture of the A<sup>2</sup>SO in carrying out its mission in a manner that ensures our Orchestra represents and welcomes everyone in the community we serve.

Task force members include: Jon Beebe (Board Member, Co-VP of Special Events); Sarah Calderini (Executive Director); Yi-Ching Chen (Director of Education and Community Engagement); Henry Johnson (Board Member); Carol Sewell (Board President); Ben Tisherman (Director of Orchestra Personnel); Jane Wilkinson (Board Member, Past President); Matt Wixson (Community Member; Associate Chair of Diversity at Michigan Medicine); and Remy Young (Board Member).

The Task Force met monthly during its tenure, collected, and analyzed internal organizational data; discussed and reviewed information from the League of American Orchestras as well as EDI information from other Michigan orchestras; interviewed various EDI consultants; and stored and organized its work on an interactive Google document that can be used for future reviews and enhancements. The resulting Framework serves as a guide for integrating EDI considerations into A<sup>2</sup>SO operational, governance, and program decisions. It is intended to be flexible to guide our work going forward. It is also intended to be reviewed and updated regularly (see below) to ensure it remains useful and relevant into the future.

The Framework purposefully avoids recommending specific metrics around the goals. The Framework is intended to be adaptive in scope and to establish and promote an EDI culture. We will measure success by the degree by which the goals outlined in the Framework become an intra-organizational priority. To measure that success, we must ask “Are we putting resources of time, energy, staff, and money behind them? Are we aligning them intuitively with our Strategic Plan? If we can answer “yes” to these questions, healthy numbers will follow.

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### **CORE ASSUMPTIONS AND BELIEFS**

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1. We believe in the power of music to transform lives, unite communities, and enrich the culture of the region.
2. EDI work is essential to achieving our mission to “attract, inspire, and educate the most diverse audience possible.” By making EDI an organization-wide value, we can advance this mission and further benefit the community we serve.
3. Through our EDI work, we hope to bring new voices to our leadership, new repertoire to our programs, and new audiences to our halls.
4. Historically, classical music has been seen as an elevated, even elitist, art form. We pledge to make our organization (Orchestra, Board, and Staff) and the music we celebrate more diverse and inclusive than ever before. We will do this through innovative programming—both on and off the stage, strategic audience development initiatives, and intentional decision-making that includes appropriate resource allocation to support this important work.

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## SUMMARY OF GOALS

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The A<sup>2</sup>SO is a safe and welcoming organization that attracts and encompasses a plurality of voices and backgrounds, reflecting our diverse community by:

1. Making EDI an organization-wide value through ongoing learning, growing, questioning, and applying.
2. Making the Board, Staff, and Orchestra\* more diverse and inclusive.
3. Offering a diverse musical repertoire and educational programming for a broad audience of all ages.

\*For Orchestra, see Goal II, Strategy 5.

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## GOAL I

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*Making EDI an organization-wide value through ongoing learning, growing, questioning, and applying*

### TASK FORCE LEARNING:

We believe that rather than having one individual, or a formal EDI committee lead these efforts, our pursuit of EDI goals should be shared across Board, its committees, and the Staff.

### OBJECTIVE:

All Board and Staff members are responsible for leading and prioritizing this Framework and for creating and promoting a culture consistent with its goals.

### STRATEGIES:

1. Lead and prioritize the work of this Framework, ensuring everyone's participation and engagement. To start, the Board President and Executive Director to maintain and promote a culture of EDI across the organization and establish annual goals for the organization.
2. Beginning with April/May 2022 Board meetings - share the EDI Task Force

work, highlight the diversity in the 22-23 program and introduce the listening list for underrepresented composers.

3. Board and Staff is to undertake EDI training:
  - a. Two Board and Staff education sessions in partnership with Nonprofit Enterprise at Work (“NEW”) in fall 2022. NEW offers local nonprofits leadership training on this topic and can partner in future goal setting.
  - b. After above training, consider future education trainings with NEW (e.g., Ways of Being/Equity Challenge).

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## GOAL II

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*Making the board, staff, and orchestra more diverse and inclusive*

### **TASK FORCE LEARNING:**

Racial diversity on Board and Staff are urgently needed as they are currently, and historically lacking, especially on the Executive Committee. Similarly, the musician roster is currently and historically lacking in diversity.

### **OBJECTIVE:**

Increase meaningful participation and leadership opportunities for underrepresented people within the Board, Staff, and Orchestra.

### **STRATEGIES:**

1. Nominating committee (with assistance of entire Board) by building bridges with diverse community organizations, to build pipeline of potential committee and board members to increase diversity of Board and in particular, the Executive Committee.
2. Policy Committee to review Bylaws and governing documents to propose updates to promote EDI, specifically regarding provisions relating to the Board of Directors.
3. All Board committees to recruit and conduct work with EDI in mind.
4. Sharing of reading recommendations (see Recommended Reading below).
5. Staff to consider adding additional days to auditions to increase access and hear every musician who wishes to apply.

6. Strengthen partnerships with Sphinx and other organizations of diverse musicians and utilize them as a resource.
7. Find additional ways to attract diverse musicians (e.g., consider partnering with other orchestras to make a move to the area financially worthwhile).
8. Intentionally seek out opportunities to build broader and deeper relationships with community members and key constituents we want to attract to the A<sup>2</sup>SO.

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### GOAL III

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*Offering an inclusive musical repertoire and educational programming for a broad audience of all ages*

#### **TASK FORCE LEARNING:**

- Programming underrepresented composers/music is lacking for mainstage concerts.
- Education programming is very diverse, with an opportunity to expand and strengthen.
- There has been a gradual increase in diversity in guest artists over last ten years in mainstage concerts.
- Programming for other performances (family and pops concerts, chamber music, popup, and outreach programming) represents an important opportunity to deepen the A<sup>2</sup>SO's impact in the community.

#### **OBJECTIVE #1:**

Regularly feature underrepresented composers and guest artists throughout on-stage programming.

#### **STRATEGIES:**

1. Some Current and Proposed work examples:
  - a. Programming progress in proposed 22-23 season.
  - b. Artistic Committee Listening List of underrepresented composers begun and to be shared and expanded.
  - c. Continued consideration and contracting of diverse guest artist selection.

- d. Studio Ghibli (Japanese anime) will be a 22-23 family concert.
  - e. Consider commissioning new works by underrepresented composers.
2. Establish expectations for new Music Director and Artistic Committee to include EDI programming that represents diversity in the selection of composers, guest artists, and commissioned works.

**OBJECTIVE #2:**

Expand scope of current Education and Community Engagement programs.

**STRATEGIES:**

1. Expand in more Title I K-12 schools.
2. Deepen engagement with specialty units at U-M and other regional post-secondary institutions.
3. Build partnerships that enhance and encourage lifelong learning through our craft (e.g.- KinderConcerts, senior centers, Osher Institute/OLLI).
4. Develop meaningful partnerships through the community (e.g.- district libraries, AASF, Penny Stamps, farmers' markets).

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**EVALUATION AND REVIEW PROCESS**

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*Regularly review, discuss, and update this Framework to continue to grow and expand the A<sup>2</sup>SO's EDI efforts and impact*

This initial Framework is proposed to focus on internal initiatives that assist the A<sup>2</sup>SO in building an organization-wide mindset focusing on EDI. However, this document is intended to be reviewed and updated to expand efforts beyond these initial goals, both external and internal. This is only the beginning of the work for our A<sup>2</sup>SO.

As we move forward, the Board, committees, and Staff are empowered to generate ideas and initiatives that promote EDI across the organization. Those initiatives are to be incorporated into this Framework, which shall be reviewed and updated by the Executive Committee on at least a semi-annual basis.

For the initial review(s), below are a few guideposts and strategies to consider:

1. This initial Framework focuses primarily on internal initiatives. As a next step, consider external initiatives (e.g., how to acquire and retain new audience members and Staff discussion on-going re: inclusive ticket pricing/access).
2. Development Committee to see out grant opportunities that support the ongoing and future EDI work that financially sustains and encourages our efforts.
3. Consider partnering with NEW for visioning and future goal setting sessions.
4. To monitor our progress, consider third party EDI audit on a bi-annual basis.



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## RECOMMENDED READING

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[A2SO EDI Task Force Working Documents - Google Doc](#)

[Cultural Entities Are Not Expanding Audiences Fast Enough To Sustain Attendance. Here's What This Means Data](#)

[League of American Orchestras Catalyst Fund](#)

[NEW- diversity-equity-and-inclusion](#)

[Ralph C. Wilson, Jr. Foundation Commits \\$100m to bolster arts culture sustainability economic impact and access in Southeast Michigan](#)