

Orchestras at a Glance

March 2019 (reporting on FY2013-14)

Orchestras are a vital part of America's musical landscape and civic life.

America is brimming with extraordinary musicians, live concerts, and orchestras as unique as the communities they serve. Orchestral music making is flourishing in our country, encouraging creativity and bringing people together to share the experience of live music. Orchestras fuel local economies, attract new business development, educate young people, and—through the power of music—unite individuals and cultures in times of public celebration and healing.

Orchestras serve communities large and small.

Orchestras exist in all 50 states, serving virtually every community, with annual budgets ranging from less than \$30,000 to more than \$100 million. Two thirds of all orchestras have budgets under \$300,000.¹

Orchestras are 501(c)(3) nonprofit organizations.

The impact orchestras create in communities nationwide is supported by a critical combination of public and private support. Orchestras are not supported by ticket sales alone. As members of the nonprofit charitable sector, orchestras depend upon private philanthropy and civic support to fuel programs that serve community needs.

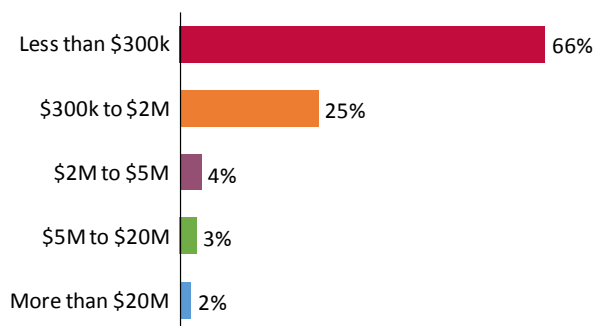
Orchestra expenses totaled more than \$1.8 billion in FY2014.

Their economic impact exceeds several times that amount as orchestras create jobs, engage in commerce with local businesses, and spur local expenditures on related goods and services (hotels, restaurants, parking, and more).

At last count, an estimated **105,000 musicians** performed in some **1,600 orchestras** across the United States. Orchestras offered over **28,000 performances** - of which about **28% were free of charge** - and reached **24.9 million people**.

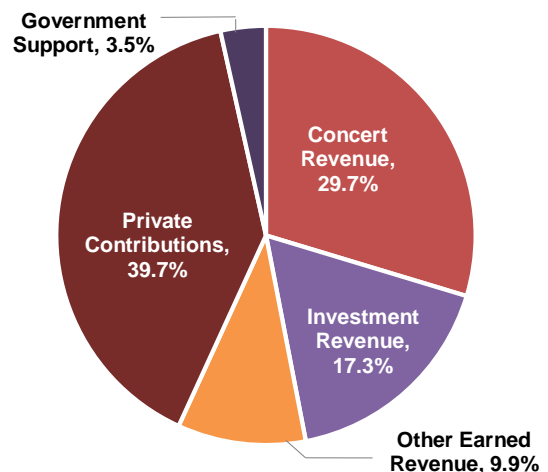
Source: Orchestra Facts: 2006-2014, League of American Orchestras
Note: youth orchestras and youth orchestra musicians are included

Orchestras by Budget Category



Source: the 1224 orchestras submitting 2014 IRS data

Adult Orchestras' Total Revenues by Source



Source: the 107 League member orchestras completing the 2013-14 Orchestra Statistical Report

Why does a community support its orchestra?

Orchestras contribute to healthy societies through their increasingly active participation in civic life. The presence of an orchestra is often an indicator of a community's economic and cultural strength, as

¹ League of American Orchestras, *Orchestra Facts: 2006-2014*.

communities with orchestras tend to draw volunteers, voters, philanthropists, and other active, civic-minded participants. From a survey of 800 random households in ten American cities², the vast majority of citizens believe that the presence of live, professional performing arts in the community:

- **Improves quality of life**
- **Promotes understanding of other cultures**
- **Fosters pride in the community**
- **Contributes to the education and development of children and adults**

Orchestras are active participants in international cultural exchange.

In 2014 alone, orchestras in communities across the United States are estimated to have engaged international guest artists on **more than 1,500** occasions for multiple concerts and community engagement activities.³ These artists—such as composers, conductors, instrumentalists, and vocalists—perform alongside U.S. musicians for concert audiences and in school and community settings. By inviting international musicians to perform and collaborate, orchestras provide American audiences with the opportunity to experience a diversity of musical talent and encourage a supportive climate for U.S. orchestras to perform abroad. Six adult orchestras that reported the results of their 2013-14 international tours performed **60 concerts for more than 100,000 attendees**.⁴ American youth orchestras also tour internationally, providing young U.S. musicians the chance of a lifetime to perform in the world's greatest venues and to engage in cultural exchange with young people from diverse countries and cultures.

What role do orchestras play in community engagement?

Orchestras provide lifelong musical experiences and participation in the creative process. They enhance the quality of life in their communities by collaborating with school systems and other local partners to deliver a wide array of community programs. Reports from 98 of the more than 1,200 orchestras across the U.S. indicate that those orchestras alone offered over 5,000 education and community engagement concerts and an additional 13,750 other activities and events in 2013-14, serving more than 2.1 million participants. Orchestras offer a wide variety of programs tailored to meet community needs, including **pre-school learning, in-depth residencies in schools, afterschool partnerships in high-poverty communities, educational classes for seniors, and health and wellness programs.**

How do orchestras increase access to music education for young people?

Music education is an indispensable part of life-long learning, and participation in music programs prepares students to succeed in school, work, and life. That's why the great majority of orchestras engage in advocacy on behalf of in-school music education in their communities. Also, kids "play their part" by joining an orchestra. Being part of an orchestra encourages young people to develop their talents and to experience teamwork, self-discipline, and individual expression. There are more than **400 youth orchestras across America**,⁵ with new orchestras created each year to help meet the growing demand for music education and positive activities for young people. These orchestras involve over **40,000 young musicians** in the joy of music making and all its ancillary benefits.

Leadership, Service, and Advocacy for America's 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 2,000 organizations and individuals across North America runs the gamut from world-renowned symphonies to community orchestras, from summer festivals to student and youth ensembles, from businesses serving orchestras to individuals who love symphonic music. 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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***** An updated version of this document is forthcoming: you will find the latest version to be posted at <https://americanorchestras.org/advocacy-government/making-the-case-advocacy-resources/orchestras-at-a-glance.html>*****

² Performing Arts Research Coalition, *The Value of the Performing Arts in Ten Communities*, p. 3

³ League of American Orchestras, *2013-14 Orchestra Statistical Report*.

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ This is an estimate based on the League's membership, 2013 Form 990 filings, and the IRS Exempt Organization list.