



#### NEWS RELEASE

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#### **Knoxville Symphony Orchestra musician recognized by League of American Orchestras for his work in Music & Wellness program**

The Knoxville Symphony Orchestra (KSO) is excited to announce that Sean Claire is one of just five orchestra musicians from across the United States to receive a Ford Musician Award for Excellence in Community Service from the League of American Orchestras. The award, made possible by Ford Motor Company Fund, recognizes professional musicians and the deeply impactful work they do outside the concert hall, much of it virtual this year due to the pandemic.

Claire will be honored for his exceptional work in the KSO's award-winning Music & Wellness program, which places professional musicians in healthcare settings to provide live therapeutic music for staff, patients and their families to enhance the healing process. Claire will be presented the award at the virtual [2021 League Conference, June 7-17](#). Videos of Claire's work will be posted on the League's website after the Conference.

"The power of music extends beyond the concert hall and touches our daily lives in whatever we do," said Knoxville Symphony Orchestra Executive Director Rachel Ford. "We are extremely appreciative for the recognition by the League of American Orchestras for all the hard work our musicians do in our Music & Wellness program. One of our missions at the KSO is to acknowledge and develop our musical connections throughout the community, and performing in healthcare facilities has allowed us to touch the lives of patients, staff and families through music."

"The musicians we see on stage making great music together in an orchestra are all treasured individual members of their communities. Many of them are using their talents and humanity to teach, to inspire, and to draw out the power of music for comfort and healing," said League of American Orchestras President and CEO Simon Woods. "This award honors that work, and the incredible generosity of spirit that underpins it. We're grateful to Ford Motor Company Fund for their years of support for this important program—made even more meaningful due to the pandemic."

“These five musicians have truly gone above and beyond for their communities over the past year, creating lasting positive impacts during such an uncertain time,” said Yisel Cabrera, Manager, Government and Community Relations, Ford Motor Company Fund. “When people couldn’t get together in person, being able to connect through music brought joy to so many.”

Since 2016, [25 professional orchestra musicians](#) from across the country have received awards. Honorees were selected through a competitive application process; each musician receives a cash award of \$2,500 and complimentary registration to the League’s National Conference. The musician’s orchestra receives a grant of \$2,500 to support professional development for its roster of musicians, as well as complimentary registration for one staff member to attend the Conference.

**About Sean Claire, Violin, Knoxville Symphony Orchestra**

Since 1990, Sean Claire has been a core member of the Knoxville Symphony Orchestra; during his tenure he has served in a variety of roles including Acting Principal Second Violin and Acting Associate Concertmaster, which included an extended period as Concertmaster. He has appeared as soloist with the Knoxville Symphony Chamber Orchestra numerous times and also holds the distinction of being the first of a select group of solo performers in the KSO’s Music and Wellness program. In addition, Claire holds the position of Concertmaster with the Symphony of the Mountains (Kingsport, TN) and has appeared there several times as soloist. His position at the Symphony of the Mountains, along with his extensive orchestral and teaching experience, led to a temporary position at East Tennessee State University (2015-16) as Instructor of Violin and Viola, and Chamber Music Coach. Some of his other orchestral credits include the Nashville Chamber Orchestra (TN), the Bryan Symphony Orchestra in Cookeville (TN), the Syracuse Symphony (NY), and the Asheville Symphony (NC).

The five 2021 Ford Musician Awards for Excellence in Community Service honorees and their orchestras are:

**Sean Claire, Violin**

**Knoxville Symphony Orchestra**

*Knoxville Symphony Orchestra’s Music & Wellness program*

**Jeremy Crosmer, Cello**

**Detroit Symphony Orchestra**

*Detroit Symphony Orchestra’s partnership with Kadima Mental Health Services’ Creative Expressions Program*

**Lorien Benet Hart, Violin**

**Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra**

*Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra’s partnership with 412 Food Rescue*

**Miho Hashizume, Violin**

**The Cleveland Orchestra**

*The Cleveland Orchestra’s violin program at Mound Elementary School in the Slavic Village neighborhood (front-porch private violin lessons and schoolyard group classes during the*

*pandemic)*

**John Turman, Horn**

**Seattle Symphony**

*Tiny Tots early-childhood education series and Tiny Clips for Tiny Tots online program*

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**About the Knoxville Symphony Orchestra**

Led by Music Director Aram Demirjian, the Knoxville Symphony Orchestra consists of 80 professional musicians and performs 300 programs throughout the region each season, reaching audiences of more than 200,000 people. The KSO performs in traditional venues such as the Tennessee Theatre, Bijou Theatre and Civic Auditorium, as well as non-traditional places like hospitals, schools, city parks and churches. For more information regarding the KSO, please visit [www.knoxvillesymphony.com](http://www.knoxvillesymphony.com) or call 865-291-3310.

**About Ford Motor Company Fund**

As the philanthropic arm of Ford Motor Company, Ford Fund's mission is to strengthen communities and help make people's lives better. Working with dealers and nonprofit partners in more than 50 countries, Ford Fund provides access to opportunities and resources that help people reach their full potential. Since 1949, Ford Fund has invested more than \$2.1 billion in programs that support education, promote safe driving, enrich community life and encourage employee volunteering. For more information, visit <https://www.fordfund.org/> or join us at @FordFund on [Facebook](#), [Instagram](#) and [Twitter](#).

**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](http://americanorchestras.org).