



**Oakland Symphony Cellist Elizabeth Vandervennet One of Five  
Orchestra Musicians to Receive  
The Ford Musician Awards for Excellence in Community Service**

**A New Program of the League of American Orchestras  
Made Possible by Ford Motor Company Fund**

Oakland, CA (April 22, 2016) – Oakland Symphony cellist Elizabeth Vandervennet is one of only five exemplary musicians selected by The League of American Orchestras to receive The **Ford Musician Award for Excellence in Community Service**. A new program made possible by Ford Motor Company Fund, the awards celebrate orchestra musicians and the essential work they do in their communities.

“Beth Vandervennet plays such a key role in our Oakland Symphony MUSE program which serves students throughout our community,” said Oakland Symphony Executive Director Steven Payne. “We are delighted to see Beth receive the recognition for her hard work throughout the year in Oakland schools by our colleagues at the League of American Orchestras and Ford Motor Company Fund.”

“These five musicians serve as models and mentors to the entire orchestra field,” said Jesse Rosen, the League of American Orchestras’ President and CEO. “Their commitment and dedicated work, whether by inspiring under-served students, bringing comfort in healthcare settings, or bridging cultures through their artistry, is on the leading edge of orchestras’ service to their communities. We are grateful to Ford Motor Company Fund for helping support this vital program and for enabling us to publicly acknowledge and share the important work of these musicians.”

“It is a pleasure to honor these dedicated musicians who bring the joy of music from the stage to the community,” said Yisel Cabrera, community relations manager, Ford Motor Company Fund and Community Services. “Thank you for taking the extra steps to entertain, educate and lift people’s spirits. Bravo!”

Elizabeth Vandervennet received a Bachelor of Musical Arts from the University of Michigan where she studied applied cello with Jeff Solow, Nina DeVeritch, and Jerome Jelinek. Upon graduation she received high honors in Music Theory as well as a Minor in Arts Administration. Her Master of Music in Cello Performance from Carnegie Mellon University was obtained under the guidance of Anne Martindale-Williams, the Principal Cellist of the Pittsburgh Symphony. Elizabeth currently lives in Oakland California as an active freelance musician, teacher, and advocate for arts education. She is a member of the Oakland Symphony, Santa Rosa Symphony, Marin Symphony, and Principal Cellist in Vallejo Symphony. Elizabeth's chamber music posts include: cellist of Squid Inc, string quartet, and Rosin Coven, theatrical Pagan Lounge ensemble. In addition to teaching throughout the community of Oakland, she holds the post of Education Coordinator for the Oakland Symphony's MUSE (MUSIC for Excellence.) program.

The award recipients and their orchestras are:

- Penny Anderson Brill, viola – Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra's Music and Wellness Program
- Shannon Orme, bass clarinet – Detroit Symphony Orchestra's Neighborhood Residency Initiative
- Jeffrey Paul, Principal Oboe – South Dakota Symphony Orchestra's Lakota Music Project
- Brian Prechtl, percussion – Baltimore Symphony Orchestra's OrchKids
- Beth Vandervennet, cello – Oakland Symphony's Music for Excellence Program (MUSE)

The five orchestra musicians were selected by a panel of industry professionals through a competitive nomination process to receive the awards. They include a \$2,500 grant to each musician, as well as an additional \$2,500 grant to their home orchestra to support professional development focused on community service and engagement for its musicians.

The awardees and their orchestras will receive their awards at the League's National Conference in Baltimore, June 9-11, 2016. The musicians will also

participate in a Conference presentation and separate webinar, providing the orchestra field opportunities to learn from their experience.

Community work is defined as meaningful service through music: education and community engagement programs at schools, hospitals, retirement homes, community and social service centers, places of worship, and wherever people gather for civic, cultural, and social engagement. Those served may include low-income or at-risk populations, homebound elderly, immigrants, veterans, prisoners, and students of all ages, as well as members of the general public who may not otherwise have access to or are not traditionally served by orchestras.

The Ford Musician Awards for Excellence in Community Service mark the League's second partnership with Ford Motor Company Fund, which was previously the title sponsor of Ford Made in America, the largest commissioning consortium in the country's history.

### **About Ford Motor Company Fund and Community Services**

Ford Motor Company Fund and Community Services works with community and global partners to advance driving safety, education and community life. Ford Motor Company Fund has operated for more than 65 years with ongoing funding from Ford Motor Company. Ford Driving Skills for Life is free, interactive, hands-on safety training focused on skill development and driving techniques, while addressing inexperience, distractions and impaired driving. Innovation in education is encouraged through Ford Blue Oval Scholars, Ford Driving Dreams, Ford Next Generation Learning and other innovative programs that enhance high school learning and provide college scholarships and university grants. The Ford Volunteer Corps enlists more than 30,000 Ford employees and retirees each year to work on local projects that strengthen their communities and improve people's lives in more than 40 countries around the world. For more information, visit <http://community.ford.com>.

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 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](http://americanorchestras.org).

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