



For Immediate Release

**Oakland Symphony Names Warren Williams
Director of Education and Community Engagement**

(Oakland, CA, October 2, 2018) - Oakland Symphony names Warren Williams Director of Education and Community Engagement. This newly created position will oversee all Oakland Symphony education activities and initiatives including MUSE, MUSE Bridge, Oakland Symphony Youth Orchestra and their international touring, Young People's Concerts in October, and Instrument Petting Zoos. Mr. Williams will lead the development of a strategic plan for education and community engagement that focuses on equitable access for high-level music education and enrichment for all.

"The creation of this new senior staff position is the first of many initiatives to fortify Oakland Symphony's commitment to building a culture of belonging through music," said Oakland Symphony's newly appointed Executive Director Dr. Mieko Hatano. "I am grateful for the support of our Board of Directors to take this bold action forward. Warren Williams' background and proven experience paired with his passion for music is crucial to the Oakland Symphony making deeper connections with the diverse communities of the East Bay."

"I am delighted to join the Oakland Symphony team," said Williams. "Their commitment to music education and authentic community engagement presents a way forward for the orchestra field and our society. I look forward to serving in this new role, collaborating with the Oakland community, and working to expand opportunities for all to experience the transformative power of music without barriers."

For the last 11 years, Warren Williams developed community programming for the National Symphony Orchestra in Washington, DC. He established the National Symphony Orchestra *In Your Neighborhood* residency that featured 50 free performances and educational activities in unexpected venues across the Washington DC area each year. Activities included collaborations with the Smithsonian Institution, DC Public Schools, Howard University, Shakespeare Theatre Company, Eastern Market, Arena Stage, the Washington DC Jewish Community Center, the National Basilica, and the U.S. Marine Band.

Oakland Symphony | Oakland Symphony Youth Orchestra | Oakland Symphony Chorus

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Exploring the intersection of music and wellness, Mr. Williams launched the *Sound Health* initiative, building unique collaborations with the National Institutes of Health, Children's National Medical Center, and Walter Reed National Medical Center. Williams received the NIH Clinical Center Director's Award for 2014. He inspired the Kennedy Center to adopt its *Sound Health* initiative, a national partnership with NIH and renowned soprano Renée Fleming. Working with the United Services Organization (USO), he established the *Notes of Honor* military program providing free performances for service members and their families.

Mr. Williams also worked with the Detroit Symphony Orchestra as its Assistant Director of Education managing school partnerships and assisted with all of the Detroit Symphony's educational programming and first statewide jazz symposium.

Mr. Williams was formerly the Director of Development for the Sphinx Organization and worked for the University Musical as its Education and Audience Development Manager. He served on numerous grant review panels for the Michigan Council for Arts and Cultural Affairs.

Mr. Williams is a graduate of the University of Michigan's Ross School of Business, holding a Bachelor's of Business Administration (BBA) with an emphasis in accounting.

For the 2018-19 season, Oakland Symphony will explore the issues of today through music by remembering those lost in the tragic Ghost Ship Fire in 2016 and amplifying the voices of women across our musical landscape. Last season, the Symphony launched the groundbreaking performance series, *Playlist*, the annual concert inviting the major thinkers of our time to host and curate a concert, giving audiences unique insights into their passions. The first *Playlist* featured the musical selections from social commentator and host of CNN's *United Shades of America*, W. Kamau Bell. This season presents the second installment of *Playlist* featuring selections from Dolores Huerta, the Mexican-American labor leader and civil rights activist who, with Cesar Chavez, co-founded the United Farm Workers. President Obama honored her with the Presidential Medal of Freedom in 2012. The season will also present time-honored composers from Rachmaninoff to Ellington, honor the rich cultural traditions of the African diaspora, and the season opens on Friday, October 12 with the audience choice winner, Shostakovich's powerful 5th Symphony.

For more information, visit OaklandSymphony.org.

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