

CONTEMPORARY  
YOUTH ORCHESTRA



**DATE:** Friday, January 26, 2024

**CONTACT:** Kimberly Deichler, Executive Director, 330-414-7298

## **Contemporary Youth Orchestra to Receive \$15,000 Grant from the National Endowment for the Arts**

Cleveland, OH—Contemporary Youth Orchestra (CYO) is pleased to announce it has been approved by the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) for a Grants for Arts Projects award of \$15,000. This grant will support community performances of a new work CYO has commissioned reflecting on the mass shooting that occurred at Emanuel African Methodist Episcopal Church in Charleston, South Carolina on June 17, 2015.

“The NEA is delighted to announce this grant to Contemporary Youth Orchestra, which is helping contribute to the strength and well-being of the arts sector and local community,” said National Endowment for the Arts Chair, Maria Rosario Jackson, PhD. “We are pleased to be able to support this community and help create an environment where all people have the opportunity to live artful lives.”

“As an organization that focuses exclusively on contemporary music, Contemporary Youth Orchestra seeks to use new music to explore relevant issues impacting the lives of our students and our community,” shared Executive Director Kimberly Deichler. “NEA support provides critical funding that will enable our students to premiere this new work in Cleveland, as well as explore opportunities to perform the piece in Chicago and Charleston.”

CYO has commissioned Dr. Dana Hall, Associate Dean for Faculty Affairs for the School of Music at DePaul University, to write a new work for full orchestra inspired by Akron-based saxophonist Chris Coles’s [Nine Lives Project](#). Coles’s original work is a multi-movement jazz suite that includes elements of animation, spoken word, and dance. *Nine Lives* aims to examine broad societal problems through different art forms, and the music features different genres of African American music such as Blues, Gospel, Jazz, and Hip-Hop. Ultimately, *Nine Lives* offers audiences an invitation to understand how constant self-examination and empathy can bring about positive transformation.

In Dr. Hall’s words, “I am very interested in being in dialogue as a composer, a performing artist, a historian, and an educator with the *Nine Lives Project* in a new and original form and with a new, unique, and personal vision.” An accomplished musician, teacher, educator, composer and performer, Dr. Hall will work with CYO’s 100 students from February through May to prepare them for the world [premiere of his new work](#) on May 17, 2024.

CYO changes lives through the study and performance of new and contemporary music and introduces students to careers in the creative arts industries. Proudly in residence at the Creative Arts Academy of Cuyahoga Community College, CYO annually commissions new works from composers who do not traditionally have a voice on orchestral stages. CYO includes 100 students, ages 11-18 and representing more than 35 Cleveland area public, independent, parochial, and home schools. More information about CYO can be found at [cyorchestra.org](http://cyorchestra.org).

In total, the NEA will award 958 Grants for Arts Projects awards totaling more than \$27.1 million that were announced as part of its first round of fiscal year 2024 grants. For more information on other Grants for Arts Projects, please visit [arts.gov/news](http://arts.gov/news).

###