



Creating a level playing field for BIPOC classical musicians in the United States

Equity Arc Contact: Paula Wilson
media@equityarc.org

For Immediate Release

Stanford Thompson Appointed as Executive Director Charlie Grode and Jeffery Tribble Jr. to Co-Lead the Board of Directors

(April 14, 2023)—The Board of Directors of [Equity Arc](https://equityarc.org), a national coalition of organizations developing and promoting equitable advancement opportunities for aspiring professional classical musicians from underrepresented ethnicities, announces the appointment of Stanford Thompson as its first Executive Director and Charlie Grode and Jeffery Tribble Jr. as the Co-Chairs of the Board of Directors effective May 1, 2023.

Mr. Thompson played a critical role as a volunteer leader of the coalition, formerly known as the National Instrumentalist Mentoring and Advancement Network, and served as the founding Board Chair and Interim Managing Director since January 2020. As the outgoing Executive Director of the celebrated El Sistema inspired program Play On Philly, which he founded in 2011, Stanford is recognized as a visionary thought leader and consultant in the national field of classical music and brings a wealth of experience as a community builder and seasoned nonprofit leader.

“We are excited about our next chapter of growth as we welcome Stan into the role of Executive Director this spring,” said Co-Chair Jeffery Tribble Jr. “His initial work as Founding Board Chair and Interim Managing Director has helped to establish a strong foundation for our colleagues on the Board to support the Equity Arc team.”

“Stan has played a key role in shaping Equity Arc’s strategic vision, ensuring a wide variety of perspectives inform it,” said Co-Chair and Strategic Planning Chair Charlie Grode. “I am excited about what we will accomplish together with Stan’s primary focus on Equity Arc as we grow the organization’s capacity and impact.”

Equity Arc’s Board of Directors unanimously promoted Charlie Grode and Jeffery Tribble Jr. as the next Board co-leaders of the organization. Both lead two of the most

respected community music schools in the country—Merit School of Music and Levine Music respectively—and are proud members of Equity Arc.

“We have an ambitious vision to create a level playing field for all classical musicians in the United States and our members have been busy working from the inside out, breaking down barriers in their organizations and on stages across the country,” said Stanford Thompson. “We are eager to accelerate the impact on the professional trajectories of a new generation of classical musicians of color in a collaborative way.”

About Stanford Thompson

Stanford Thompson is a musician and educator who has provided visionary leadership to arts organizations like Play on Philly, El Sistema USA, and Equity Arc for over a decade. Recognized as a TED Fellow, Stanford believes that music is a powerful tool for positive personal and community change. Mr. Thompson serves on the faculty of the Global Leaders Program and regularly presents for major arts and business conferences, institutions, and stakeholders about leadership, entrepreneurship and social justice. As a principal of Goldsmith Strategies, he has guided the strategic development of dozens of organizations across the United States while collaborating with local and national initiatives to develop new strategies and programs that provide equitable access to the arts. As a professional trumpeter, Stanford has performed as a soloist and member with major orchestras around the world and continues to perform throughout the Philadelphia region. Stanford is a native of Atlanta, GA, a graduate of the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra’s Talent Development Program and holds degrees from The Curtis Institute of Music and the New England Conservatory’s Sistema Fellows Program.

About Charlie Grode

Charlie Grode is a collaborative leader in arts and education, with 30 years’ experience in organizational, partnership, resource, and staff development. He is passionate about musical learning’s power to open a world of opportunity to young people, and is focused on making that opportunity accessible to all. Since 2015, he has served as President & Executive Director for Merit School of Music, which has been a key organizational partner from Equity Arc’s inception. Merit is a nationally accredited music school that transforms the lives of more than 2,500 Chicago-area youth each year by removing barriers to sustained, high-quality music education. Charlie holds degrees from Lawrence University and Northwestern University, and participated in Harvard Business School’s Strategic Perspective in Nonprofit Management program.

About Jeffery Tribble Jr.

Jeffery Tribble Jr. is a strategic executive leader with over 13 years of comprehensive experience in non-profit and for-profit sectors. In 2009, he founded The MusicianShip, a nonprofit organization that facilitates music lessons, experiences and opportunities to benefit those who need it most. Under Jeffery's direction as CEO, The MusicianShip grew from serving two students in 2009 to nearly 2,000 in 2021, and acquired the Washington Youth Choir, the Washington Area Music Association Wammie Awards, and the DC Funk Parade. He graduated magna cum laude from Howard University and received his Juris Doctorate from The George Washington University Law School. In July 2021, he was appointed as the President & CEO of Levine Music, a community music school that serves 3500 students weekly with music lessons, while also providing music performances and programs that uplift the community.

About Equity Arc

Equity Arc (formerly known as the National Instrumentalist Mentoring and Advancement Network), is a national coalition of musical organizations and advocates who collaborate to provide classical musicians of color with advancement and mentoring opportunities to further their musical careers. The collective work follows two paths: Building a comprehensive arc of support and mentorship for instrumentalists to navigate the journey from student to professional and assisting in breaking down barriers to achieving success in the field. Equity Arc also provides forums, resources, and training for member organizations to dismantle the structural inequities, biases, and systemic racism ingrained in their policies and practices that inhibit the creation of equitable opportunities and environments for classical musicians of color.

In 2023, Equity Arc launched the National Collective for Musical Pathways, a collaborative initiative that provides a nucleus for Pathways programs across the United States. Pathways programs offer subsidized, musical training and mentorship that prepares pre-college musicians of color to enter prestigious collegiate music institutions. The National Pathways Festival is an annual opportunity for select fellows in the Collective to convene annually for a multi-day musical intensive, working alongside professional musicians and performing in our country's preeminent concert halls. The Equity Arc Annual Convening brings together partners from across the field for focused discussion and action to level the playing field in classical music.