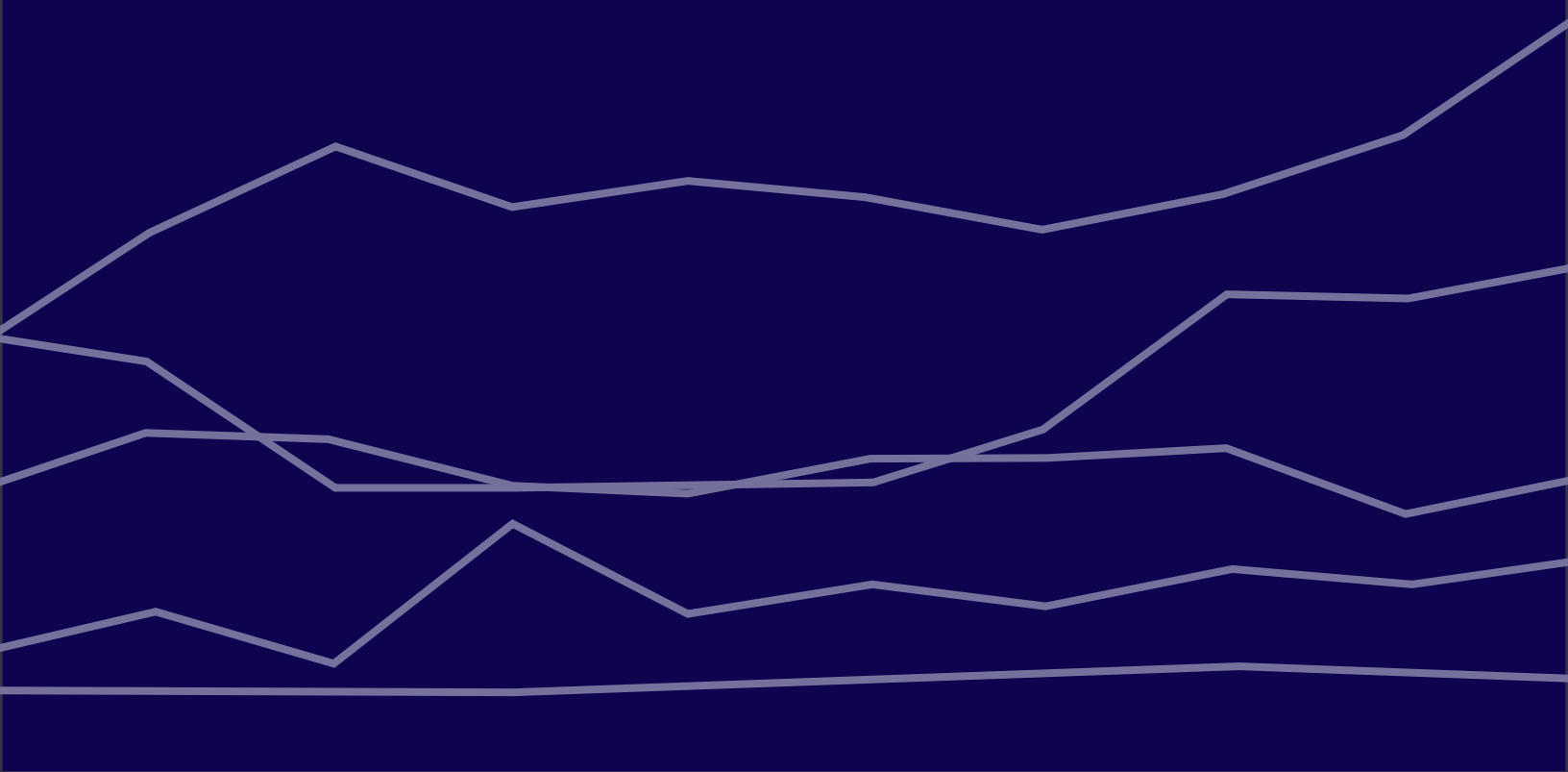


Racial/Ethnic and Gender Diversity in the Orchestra Field in 2023

A Report by the League of American Orchestras

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League
of American
Orchestras



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Introduction

Racial/Ethnic and Gender Diversity in the Orchestra Field in 2023, published by the League of American Orchestras (the League), covers the ten-year time period from the 2013-14 season through the 2022-23 season. It builds on the League's 2016 report *Racial/Ethnic and Gender Diversity in the Orchestra Field* (Doeser, 2016), which established a baseline for member demographic analysis unique among U.S. arts service organizations.

With this new report, our intentions are to support orchestras in their equity, diversity, and inclusion (EDI) work, and to provide an evidence-based foundation for field-wide efforts to accelerate progress towards an equitable future. While quantifying representation is only one way of measuring progress in EDI work, it is nevertheless indispensable to the process of decision-making about where change efforts are most needed. We focus in this report on where diversity has improved and where it has not, describing the current state of racial/ethnic and gender diversity among orchestra musicians, conductors and music directors, staff and top executives, and board members.

Since the 2016 report, continuing violence against Black and Asian individuals and communities, including the murder of George Floyd and the ongoing inequities exposed by the COVID-19 pandemic, have brought a new urgency to the orchestra field's work in equity, diversity, and inclusion. At the same time, critical dialogue has illuminated the field's history of discrimination and racism, and the ongoing practices that perpetuate inequities (Flagg, 2020, Rabkin and Hairston O'Connell, 2016). In 2020, many orchestras engaged in a period of reflection about race, alongside continued discussions about gender equity, and made statements of commitment to improving racial/ethnic inclusion, equity, and representation.

As a result, recent years have seen significant work on culture and capacity building around EDI in many orchestras, as well as new and renewed commitments to diversity in orchestra programming, and investments in a range of EDI initiatives (see Appendix 2 for examples). In some areas of work, such as increasing the

visibility of repertoire by BIPOC, women, and nonbinary composers, notable progress has already been made (Deemer and Meals, 2022). In others — including addressing discrimination within audition and tenure processes (Woolfe and Barone, 2020; Tommasini, 2020) and supporting pathways for young people of color to progress into orchestral careers — the urgent work of challenging conventions, systems, and processes calls for significant, increased investment and coalition building in order to foster more diversity now and in the future.

It is important to state that representation in itself does not necessarily lead to equity within an organization or to inclusive experiences for the historically and continuously marginalized people associated with it. Specifically, the prominence of Asian or Asian American musicians in U.S. orchestras should not imply that Asian or Asian American musicians have equivalent voice, power, or influence, nor be used to perpetuate the false narrative of an Asian “model minority” (Yoshihara, 2021; Hernández, 2021). For EDI efforts to create a culture of belonging for historically and continuously marginalized people, they must be part of an orchestra's long-term plans, aligned with changes in internal culture, processes, practices, resourcing, and partnership building.

Every orchestra has its own unique story to tell within the national narrative we present in this report — not only about diversity of representation, but also about its own progress toward building an inclusive and equitable organizational culture. Orchestras taking the kinds of actions outlined in the League's *Promising Practices* guide are building strong foundations. We urge all orchestras to continue to invest in this work and to commit to accelerating the pace of change for the future.

Resources to Support Change in Orchestras' EDI Work

- [Promising Practices: Actions Orchestras Can Take to Make Progress Towards Equity](#)
- [Catalyst Snapshots: EDI Case Studies from American Orchestras](#)
- [Making the Case for Equity, Diversity, and Inclusion in Orchestras](#)

Overview

Our research reveals crucial differences between the experiences of different racial/ethnic and gender groups. Inequities persist in overall representation, and also between orchestra roles and budget categories.

From low starting points, **some relative progress was made** during the period from the 2013-14 season to the 2022-23 season. Specifically, representation improved among Asian or Asian American and women conductors, Black or African American staff and board members, Hispanic/Latinx and Multiracial top executives, and women top executives in larger budget orchestras.

Putting this relative progress into context, however, it becomes clear that **certain historically and continuously marginalized groups remain much less well represented in the orchestra field than in the overall U.S. population.** Specifically, the proportion of Black or African American, Hispanic/Latinx, and American Indian and Alaska Native people remains significantly lower in every orchestra role than in the U.S. population, as does the proportion of women and nonbinary people working in conductor and music director roles.

In addition, breaking down the findings by budget category reveals that women's representation in all orchestra roles is focused within **smaller-to-medium budget orchestras**, as is the representation of Black or African American, Hispanic/Latinx, and Multiracial musicians.

In some categories, little or no progress has been made since the 2013-14 season or earlier.

Specifically, Black or African American musician representation has improved only very slightly since data collection began in 2010. In addition, Black or African American and Multiracial music director representation decreased between 2013-14 and 2022-23. The proportion of women music directors working in larger budget orchestras also decreased during this decade. And the growth of Asian or Asian American among staff members halted during the pandemic years, as the representation of other BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) groups increased.

While recognizing that representation does not imply equivalence in voice, power, or influence,¹ we note that — in certain roles — particular groups remain at least as strongly represented as in the U.S. population. This finding applies specifically to Asian or Asian American people in all artistic roles; Multiracial people in all roles except for staff and board members; Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander in all roles apart from top executives; and women staff members.

Our recommendations indicate where orchestras should seek to reverse declines and accelerate slow progress. In doing so, they provide an evidence-based framework for the future work of the orchestra field.

¹Yoshihara, 2021; Hernández, 2021

Key Findings

Musicians

- Black or African American, Hispanic/Latinx, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, and American Indian and Alaska Native representation is significantly lower among orchestra musicians than in the U.S. population overall.
- Continuing a longstanding trend, Black or African American musician representation improved at a slower rate than that of any other racial/ethnic group, increasing only very slightly during the ten-year period.
- The proportion of Asian or Asian American people working as orchestra musicians remains higher than in the overall U.S. population and is higher than that of all other BIPOC groups combined.
- The proportion of Asian or Asian American musicians remains highest in larger budget orchestras, while the representation of Black or African American, Hispanic/Latinx, and Multiracial musicians remains highest in smaller-to-medium budget orchestras.
- Near parity in men's and women's representation was maintained throughout the ten-year period, but women musicians were more likely to be working in smaller-to-medium budget orchestras than in larger budget orchestras.

Conductors, Including Assistant Conductors and Music Directors

- While BIPOC representation still lags well behind the U.S. population, it is now stronger here among conductors, including assistant conductors and music directors, than in any other orchestra role, having nearly doubled overall and accelerated during the pandemic years to reach close to one in three.
- This growth was largely driven by a doubling in the representation of Asian or Asian American people, who are now almost twice as well represented in this group as in the U.S. population overall. Black or African American and Hispanic/Latinx representation lags well behind the U.S. population, despite moderate increases.
- Fewer than one in four conductors, including assistant conductors and music directors, are women despite strong growth in representation compared to other orchestra roles during the ten-year period.

Music Directors

- BIPOC representation among music directors improved slowly overall, but more rapidly in larger budget orchestras than in smaller-to-medium budget orchestras. In 2023, roughly one in four music directors are BIPOC.
- Growth was mainly driven by a strong increase in the representation of Asian or Asian American music directors within larger budget orchestras. In 2023, Asian or Asian American people are better represented in the music director population than in the U.S. population as a whole.
- Hispanic/Latinx music director representation also increased, resulting in higher representation here than in other orchestra roles.
- Black or African American and Multiracial representation among music directors decreased between 2013-14 and 2022-23.
- Only one in nine music directors are women. The percentage of women in larger budget orchestra music director roles fell from one in nine to one in 18.

Staff Members, Including Top Executives

- The proportion of women, nonbinary, and Black or African American people is higher among staff than in any other role.
- BIPOC representation increased moderately overall. From a relatively low starting point in 2014, BIPOC representation among orchestra staff increased to reach roughly one in five.
- This moderate growth was driven by a strong increase in Black or African American representation during the pandemic years. As a result, the proportion of Black or African American people is now higher among staff than in any other orchestra role.
- The proportion of Asian or Asian American staff members barely increased during the ten-year period, and Asian or Asian American people continue to be less well-represented among orchestra staff than in other orchestra roles.
- Nonbinary representation increased and is now higher among staff than in any other orchestra role.

Top Executives

- The proportion of BIPOC, women, and nonbinary people remains much lower among top executives than within orchestra staff.
- At fewer than one in nine, the proportion of BIPOC people in top executive positions remains considerably lower than in other orchestra roles, despite strong growth during the ten-year period.
- BIPOC growth was mainly driven by strong increases in Hispanic/Latinx and Multiracial representation, coupled with more moderate growth, from a higher starting point, among Asian or Asian American representation.
- Women's representation in top executive roles still lags far behind the wider nonprofit sector (despite increasing overall) and is focused within smaller-to-medium budget orchestras.
- No nonbinary top executives were reported.

Board Members

- Orchestra boards remain significantly less racially/ethnically diverse than the boards of nonprofit organizations overall, themselves acknowledged as poorly representative of the U.S. population. Hispanic/Latinx representation remains especially low in comparison with the overall U.S. population.
- From a standing start, board racial/ethnic diversity began to improve in the 2013-14 season, largely driven by new Black or African American board members, and more than doubled by the 2022-23 season.
- However, the low starting point meant that still only one in six orchestra board members identify as BIPOC.
- Men remain better represented than women on the boards of larger budget orchestras.
- No nonbinary board members were reported.

Recommendations

Informing the Work Ahead for the Field

The League of American Orchestras is committed to supporting the field in finding ways to accelerate the pace of change in equity, diversity, and inclusion. Through our conferences and meetings, our webinars and online resources, our partnerships, our research, and especially through the work of the new Inclusive Stages coalition for racial diversity, we are focused on building an orchestra field that reflects and embodies the diversity of this country.

The below recommendations are intended as a starting point for the action-focused discussions to come. They draw directly on our analysis of current representation, the extent of progress made between the 2013-14 and 2022-23 seasons, and comparisons with the 2021 U.S. population estimates.

Each person reading this report will have their own questions to ask and their own experiences and perspectives to bring forward in the conversations that must now take place. We invite you to join us in the work ahead. Explore our equity, diversity, and inclusion reports and resources online, and sign up for our mailing list to receive news about future League programs and initiatives.

- 1** Address the low representation in the following areas:
 - Black or African American, Latinx/Hispanic, and American Indian and Alaska Native people in all artistic roles, particularly within larger budget orchestras.
 - Women in conductor and music director roles, particularly within larger budget orchestras.
 - People of color in top executive and governance roles.
 - Nonbinary people in conductor, music director, top executive, and governance roles.
- 2** Progress women's representation in top executive roles towards the level seen in the wider non-profit sector, particularly within larger budget orchestras.
- 3** Accelerate the moderate progress seen in recent years towards improved representation among people of color among orchestra staff members.

Definitions

Orchestra Terms

Orchestra: Orchestra: Symphony orchestra. Youth orchestra data is included only for the following analyses: top executives; music directors; and conductors, including assistant conductors and music directors.

Larger budget orchestras: Orchestras with annual operating budgets of \$3 million and above, corresponding roughly to League of American Orchestras budget groups 1-3.

Smaller-to-medium budget orchestras: Orchestras with annual operating budgets of \$3 million and below, corresponding roughly to League of American Orchestras budget groups 4-8.

Musician: All professional musicians performing with the orchestra, including musician fellows.

Note: musician fellow representation ranges from 0.08% of all reported musicians in 2013, to 0.2% in 2023. The inclusion of musician fellows does not alter the racial/ethnic group trendlines we report.

Conductor: Non-music director conductor roles including assistant, resident, pops, and chorus conductors.

Music director: All music director roles, regardless of the number of weeks per year worked or distinct programs conducted. Music directors assume a higher level of artistic responsibility than other conductors and may also undertake a wider range of organizational duties such as fundraising and media work.

Conductors, including assistant conductors and music directors: Both conductors and music directors, as defined above.

Staff member: Full-time, part-time, and seasonal salaried employees.

Top executive: Chief executive officer, executive director, and/or president of the orchestra staff.

Board member: Full board members only (does not include individuals who serve on committees but have not been officially appointed to the board).

Racial/Ethnic Category Terms (U.S. Census Definitions)

American Indian and Alaska Native: A person having origins in any of the original peoples of North and South America (including Central America) and who maintains a tribal affiliation or community attachment.

Asian or Asian American: A person having origins in any of the original peoples of East Asia, Southeast Asia, or the Indian Subcontinent, including, for example, Cambodia, China, India, Japan, Korea, Malaysia, Pakistan, the Philippine Islands, Thailand, and Vietnam.

Black or African American: A person having origins in any of the black racial groups of Africa.

Hispanic/Latinx: A person of Cuban, Mexican, Puerto Rican, South or Central American, or other Spanish culture or origin regardless of race. Including all individuals who indicated Hispanic/Latinx AND any other race.

Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander: A person having origins in any of the peoples of Hawaii, Guam, Samoa or other Pacific Islands.

Multiracial: All individuals indicating Multiracial, excluding those who indicated Hispanic/Latinx.

White: A person having origins in any of the original peoples of Europe, West Asia, or North Africa.

Note: This categorization erases people identifying as Arab, West Asian, and North African.

BIPOC: Black, Indigenous, and People of Color.

Gender Terms (Human Rights Commission Definition)

Nonbinary: Nonbinary people may self-identify as transgender, transsexual, intersex, genderqueer, female-to-male, and male-to-female.

Other Terms

Pandemic years: We define 2020-2022, the years when orchestras' operations were most affected, as the pandemic years.

Technical Notes

Data Equity: Conventions and biases inform the ways in which we collect, analyze, and interpret quantitative data. With this in mind, we have taken several steps to minimize harm in the writing of this report, including the following:

- Centering the experiences of all historically marginalized racial/ethnic and gender groups in our analyses and reporting. Refraining from reporting across all BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color) groups where the experiences of each individual group are too disparate to make sense as a whole (e.g., musicians).
- Reporting on populations that have historically been excluded due to their relatively small size, while also being clear where a small sample size inhibits our ability to disaggregate data or report on trend lines.
- Consulting with advisors who bring a wide range of positionalities and professional experiences to the debate.
- Acknowledging that diversity of representation is only one aspect of inclusion.

Representativeness: Our dataset is drawn from League member orchestras' survey data. It is considered representative of the entire League membership. A constant sample analysis (of data from orchestras taking the survey in each of three designated years) verified that the data had not been skewed by shifts in annual survey participation.

Data limitations:

- **Disaggregation:** Relatively low sample sizes for music director and top executive roles — and for nonbinary, American Indian and Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander people — limit our capacity for detailed analysis, particularly for trends over time and for disaggregation by smaller-to-medium budget and larger budget orchestras.
- **Intersectionality:** The survey data is supplied to the League each year by orchestra administrators. Administrators are encouraged to optimize inclusion and ensure that the dataset is as accurate as possible by asking each person reported to self-identify their racial/ethnic and gender demographics. In the 2022-23 season, 46% of all participating orchestras adopted this self-reported approach to collecting data for one

or more orchestra roles. In all other cases, data was reported based on administrators' perception of racial/ethnic and gender identity. Because the majority of the data is not self-reported, we are not able to make any analysis of the intersectionality between racial/ethnic and gender identities, or to report on the intersections between different racial and ethnic identities.

Analysis by orchestra budget category:

Throughout the report, we distinguish between the demographics of smaller-to-medium budget orchestras (with annual budgets of less than \$3 million) and larger budget orchestras (with annual budgets of \$3 million and more), since the financial and operational profiles of each category are radically different. Smaller-to-medium budget orchestras employ fewer staff than larger budget orchestras, and the musicians they employ may work for multiple orchestras: only larger budget orchestras are typically able to provide full-time musician employment. Larger budget orchestras typically have the financial leverage needed to pay higher salaries and to hire consultants. Smaller-to-medium budget orchestras typically operate within local hiring markets, whereas larger budget orchestras typically operate within national hiring markets. It is important to note that the League membership includes a higher number of smaller-to-medium budget orchestras than larger budget orchestras.

Comparators: We consistently compare the orchestra population with [2021 U.S. Census population data estimates](#) and [2022 Pew Research estimates](#) of the nonbinary population. Where definitions are compatible, we also provide comparisons with data drawn from [OPERA America's 2022 demographic report](#) and with data reported in the 2021 BoardSource report [Leading with Intent](#).

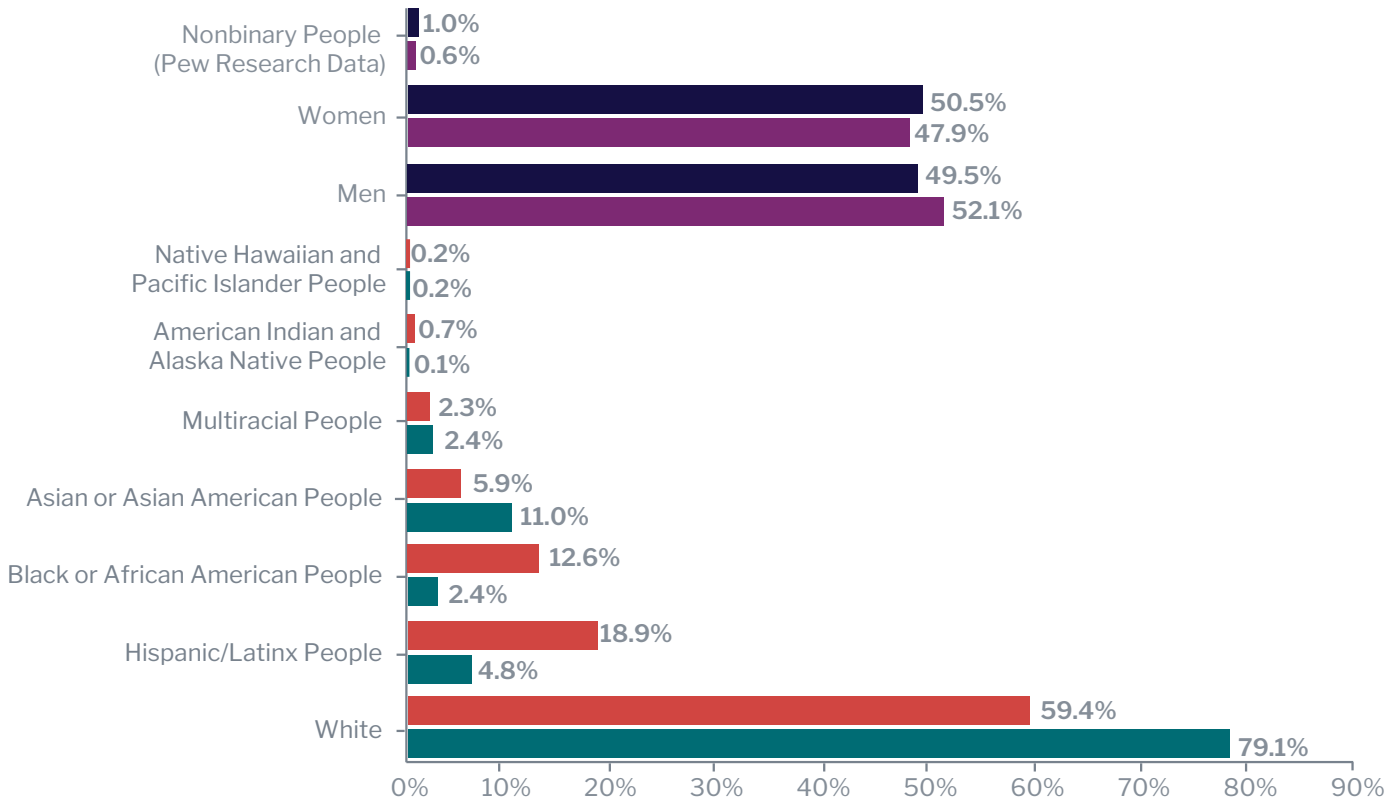
Terminology: Throughout the report, we balance readability with technical accuracy. As a result, we refer throughout to “Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander conductors” or “women top executives,” rather than the more authentic terminology of “conductors identified as Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander” and “top executives identified as women.”

Please see Appendix 1: Methodology for more detail about data representativeness and confidence levels, plus the conceptual and analytical framework underpinning our analysis.

Detailed Analyses

Analysis 1: By Orchestra Role

Musicians (2022-2023 Season)



Gender Diversity

■ U.S. population: Census estimates as of July 2021 (%)

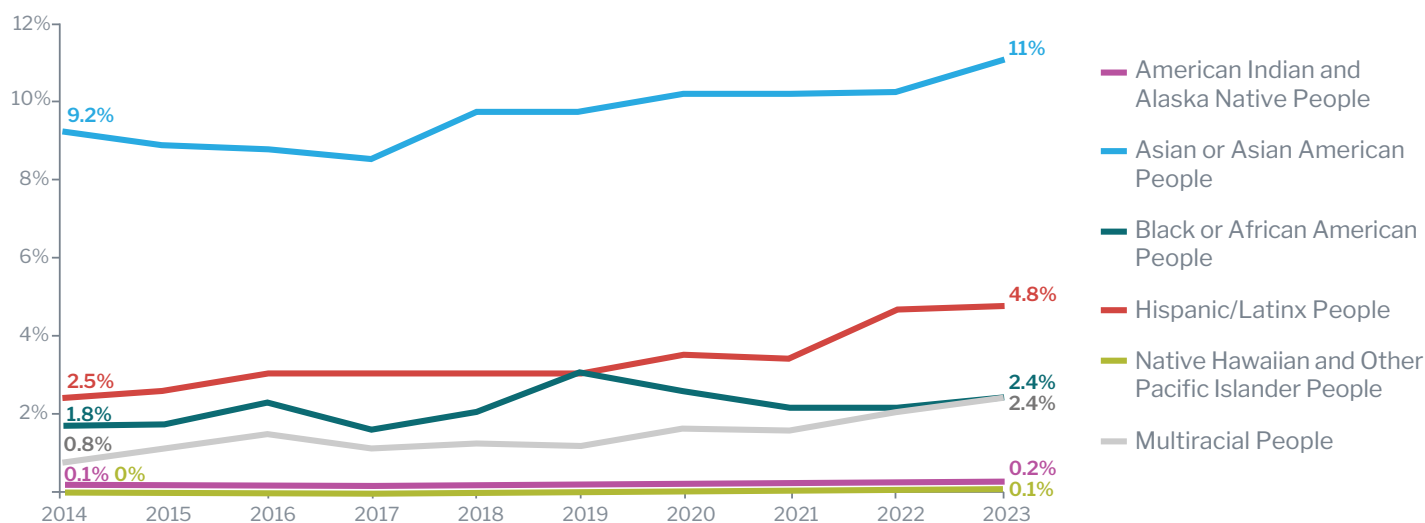
■ Orchestra population: 2022-2023 (%)

Racial/Ethnic Diversity

■ U.S. population: Census estimates as of July 2021 (%)

■ Orchestra population: 2022-2023 (%)

Musician Racial/Ethnic Diversity



Longstanding differences in representation between BIPOC groups have been upheld during the period 2013-14 to 2022-23.

Specifically, Black or African American, Hispanic/Latinx, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander, and American Indian and Alaska Native representation remains significantly lower among orchestra musicians than in the U.S. population overall.

- Black or African American musician representation improved only very slightly, continuing the trend seen in the previous reporting period (2006-14.)
- Hispanic/Latinx representation increased from 2.5% to 4.8%, accelerating during the pandemic years.
- Multiracial representation increased from 0.8% to 2.4%, also accelerating during the pandemic years to reach parity with the U.S. population.
- American Indian and Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander representation remained broadly static, at around 0.1%.¹

Conversely, the proportion of Asian or Asian American people working as orchestra musicians continues to remain higher than in the overall U.S. population, and higher than all other BIPOC groups combined.²

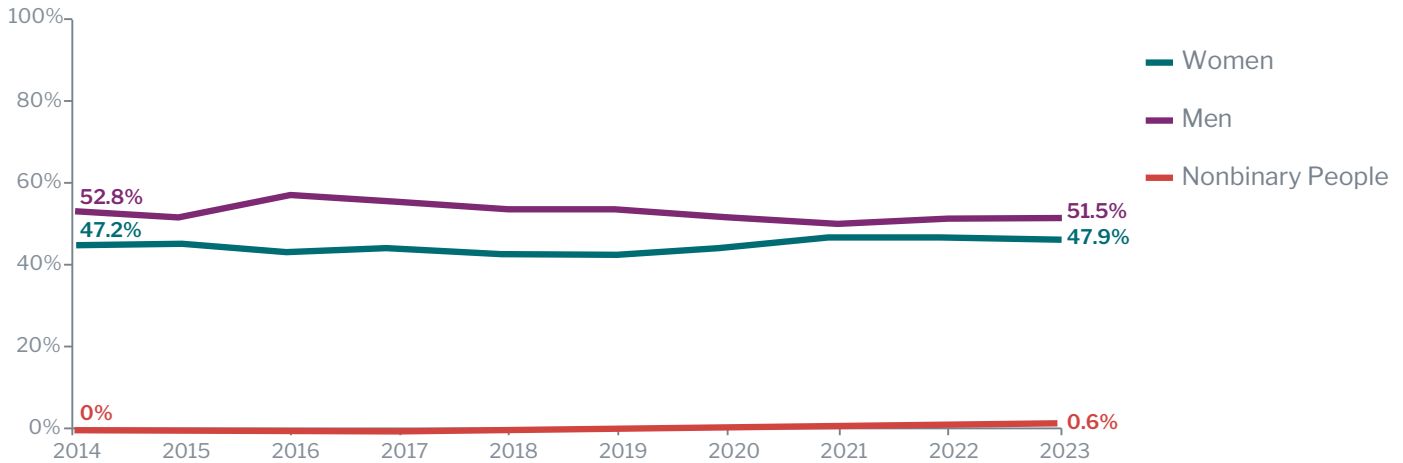
Asian or Asian American musician representation increased slightly more modestly than that of other BIPOC groups, from 9.2% in 2013-14 to 11% in 2022-2023, and growth took place entirely within larger budget orchestras. As a result, in the 2022-23 season Asian or Asian American musicians were around 1.5 times more likely to be working in larger budget orchestras than in their smaller-to-medium budget counterparts.

Throughout the ten-year period, and continuing a longstanding trend ([Doeser 2016](#)), Black or African American and Hispanic/Latinx musicians were almost twice as likely to be working in smaller-to-medium budget orchestras than in larger budget orchestras. Multiracial musicians were 1.5 times more likely to be working in smaller-to-medium budget orchestras. Representation by budget category did not significantly change.

¹ A small sample sizes prevent us from specifying the extent of this trend (please see Appendix 1: Methodology).

² Representation does not equate to power or influence, and Asian or Asian American musicians continue to suffer from racial oppression and discrimination ([Yoshihara, 2021](#); [Hernández, 2021](#)).

Musician Gender Diversity



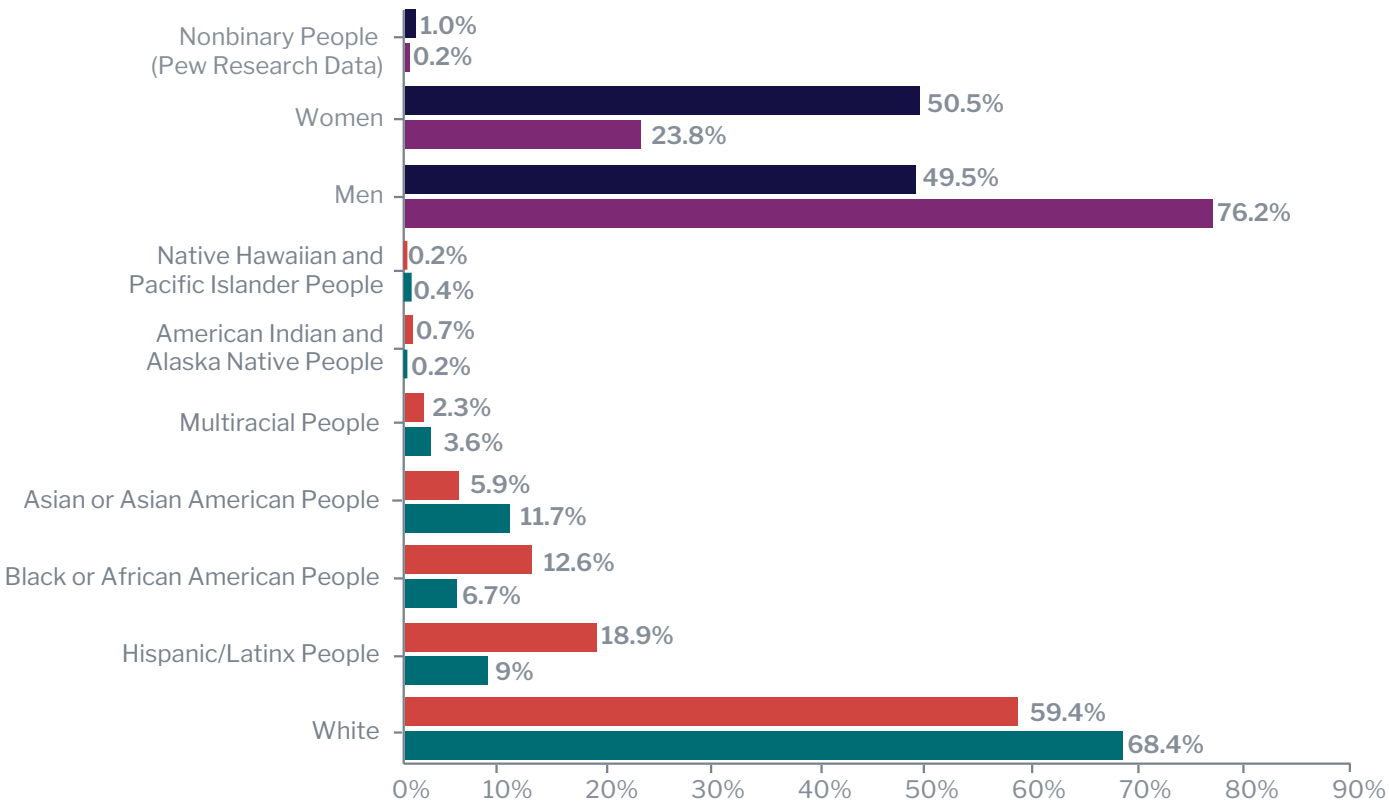
Throughout the ten-year period, women musicians consistently represented around 47% of the overall musician population (compared to 50.5% of the U.S. population). The proportion of women musicians working in larger budget orchestras remained broadly static,⁴ with women being roughly 20% more likely to be working in smaller-to-medium budget orchestras than in larger budget orchestras.

The proportion of nonbinary musicians remained broadly static, at around half the representation reported in U.S. adult population estimates ([Pew Research Center, 2022](#)).⁵

⁴ While our data indicates some fluctuation, the percentage increases and decreases are too small to be reported with confidence (see Appendix 1: Methodology).

⁵ This data is not yet collected by the U.S. Census.

Conductors, Including Assistant Conductors and Music Directors (2022-2023 Season)



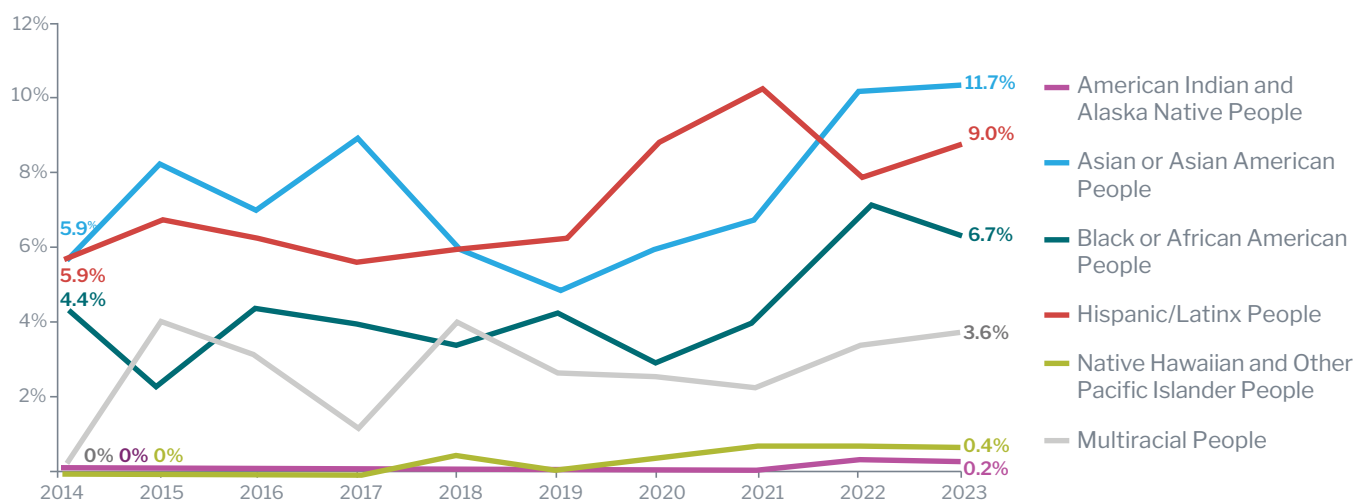
Gender Diversity

- U.S. population: Census estimates as of July 2021 (%)
- Orchestra population: 2022-2023 (%)

Racial/Ethnic Diversity

- U.S. population: Census estimates as of July 2021 (%)
- Orchestra population: 2022-2023 (%)

Conductor Racial/Ethnic Diversity



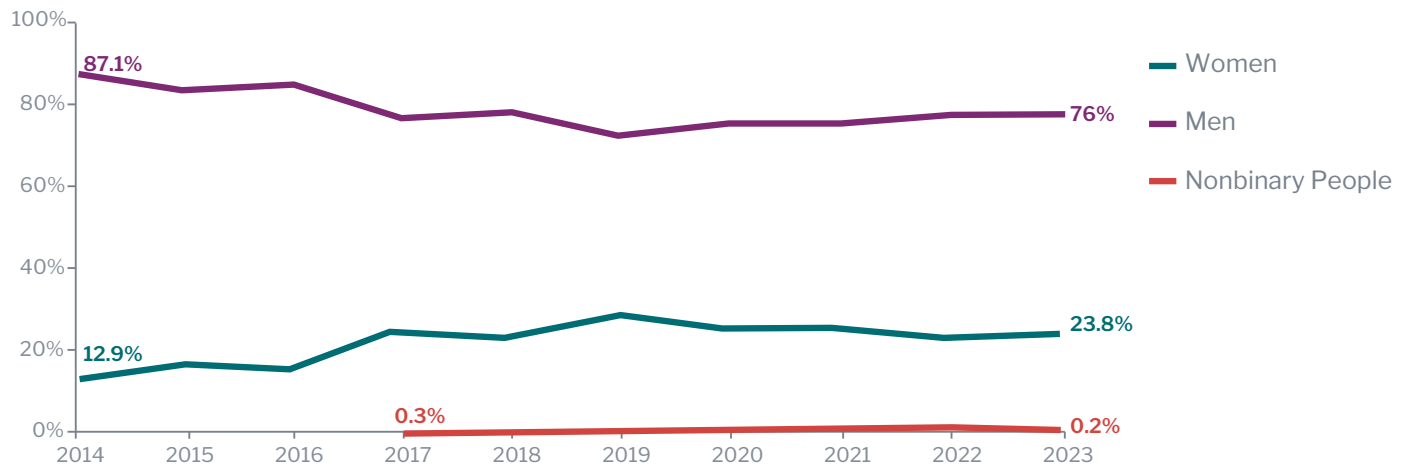
Note: Conductors who hold a Music Director position are represented in this analysis.

In the 2022-23 season, BIPOC people accounted for almost one third (31.7%) of conductors, including assistant conductors and music directors. As a result, overall BIPOC representation was stronger here than in any other orchestra role.

BIPOC representation almost doubled between 2013-14 and 2022-23, driven by notable growth in the proportion of Asian or Asian American and Hispanic/Latinx conductors.

- Asian or Asian American representation increased from 5.9% to 11.7%. By 2023, Asian or Asian American people were almost twice as well represented within the conductor population as in the U.S. population overall.
- Despite strong relative growth (from 5.9% to 9%), Hispanic/Latinx people remained only around half as well represented here as in the overall U.S. population.
- Black or African American representation increased more moderately, from 4.4% to 6.7%, with Black or African American people also remaining only half as well represented here as in the overall U.S. population.
- Multiracial representation increased from 0% to 3.6%, to exceed representation in the U.S. population. In the 2022-23 season, the proportion of Multiracial conductors was higher than in any other orchestra role.
- American Indian and Alaska Native and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander representation remained broadly static.

Conductor Gender Diversity



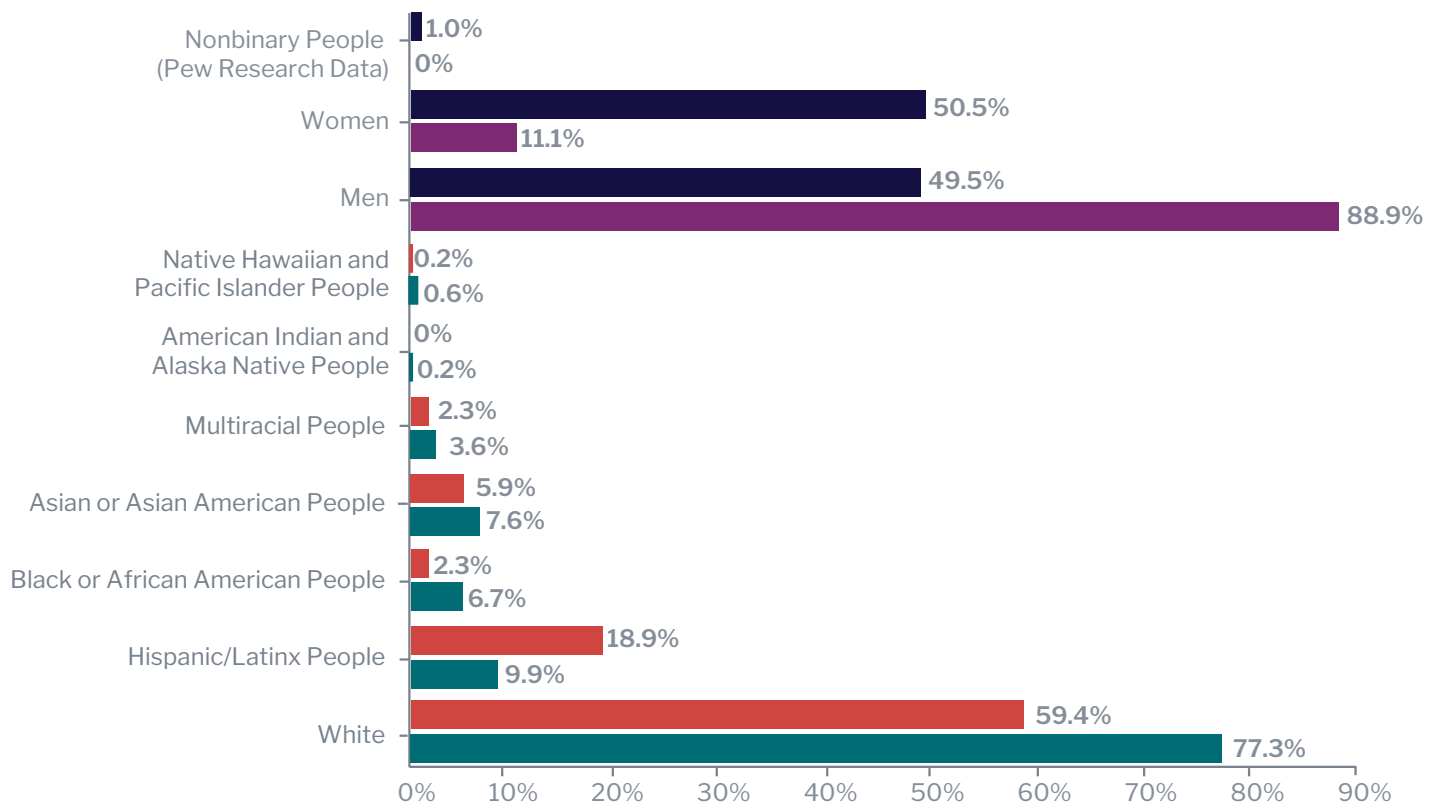
Having remained static from 2006 to 2014 (Doeser, 2016), the percentage of women conductors, including assistant conductors and music directors, almost doubled between 2014 and 2023 (from 12.9% to 23.8%), with growth driven mainly by an increase in representation within smaller-to-medium budget orchestras.

Despite this growth, however, in the 2022-23 season fewer than one in four conductors, including assistant conductors and music directors, were identified as women.

The proportion of nonbinary conductors remained broadly static.⁶

⁶While our data indicates some fluctuation, the percentage increases and decreases are too small to be reported with confidence (see Appendix 1: Methodology).

Music Directors⁷ (2022-2023 Season)



Gender Diversity

■ U.S. population: Census estimates as of July 2021 (%)

■ Orchestra population: 2022-2023 (%)

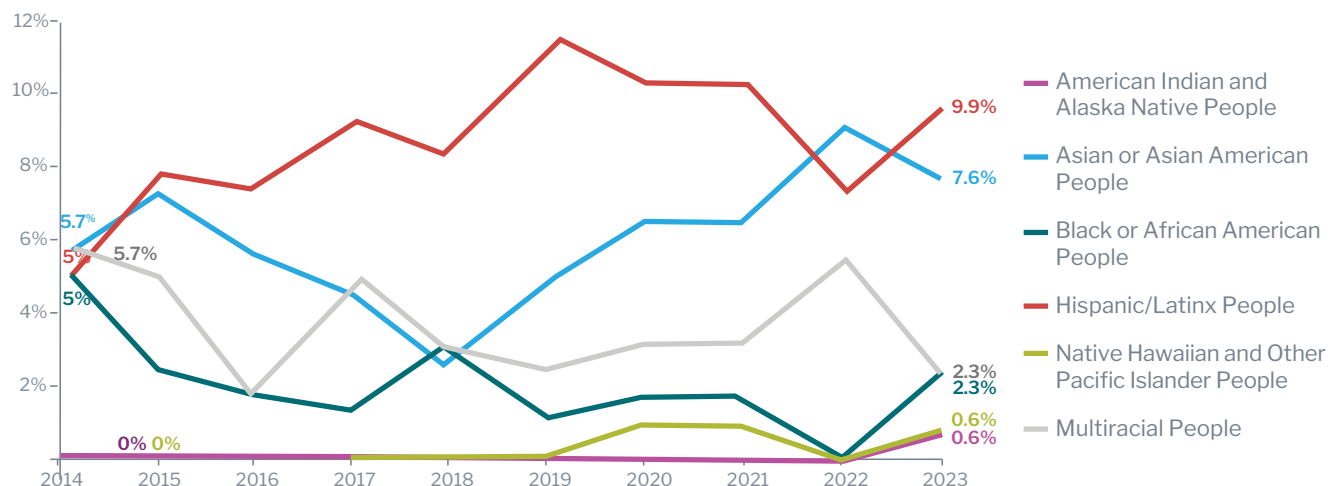
Racial/Ethnic Diversity

■ U.S. population: Census estimates as of July 2021 (%)

■ Orchestra population: 2022-2023 (%)

⁷Because we hold a relatively small dataset for music director and top executive roles, findings for these two roles are not broken down by orchestra budget category (please see Appendix 1: Methodology).

Music Director Racial/Ethnic Diversity



Music directors assume a higher level of artistic responsibility than other conductors and may also undertake a wider range of organizational duties, such as fundraising and media work.

BIPOC representation among music directors improved slowly overall, from 17.3% to 22.7%. It increased more rapidly in larger budget orchestras (from 13.5% to 25%) than in smaller-to-medium budget orchestras (from 19.2% to 22.1%).

Growth was mainly driven by a strong increase in the representation of Asian or Asian American music directors within larger budget orchestras, from 0% in 2013-14 to 7.7% in 2022-23. In 2023, Asian or Asian American people were better represented in the music director population than in the U.S. population as a whole.

Hispanic/Latinx music director representation also rose in both smaller-to-medium and larger budget orchestras, with overall representation doubling from 5% to 9.9% between 2013-14 and 2022-23.⁸ After an overall downturn between 2006 and 2014 (Doeser, 2016), this recent period of growth has led to stronger representation of Hispanic/Latinx people in the role of music director than of any other BIPOC group.

Growth of BIPOC representation was hindered by a decrease in Black or African American representation. During the pre-pandemic years, Black or African American representation among music directors more than halved overall (from 5% to 2.3%), exacerbating the already low representation of Black or African American people compared to other BIPOC groups.

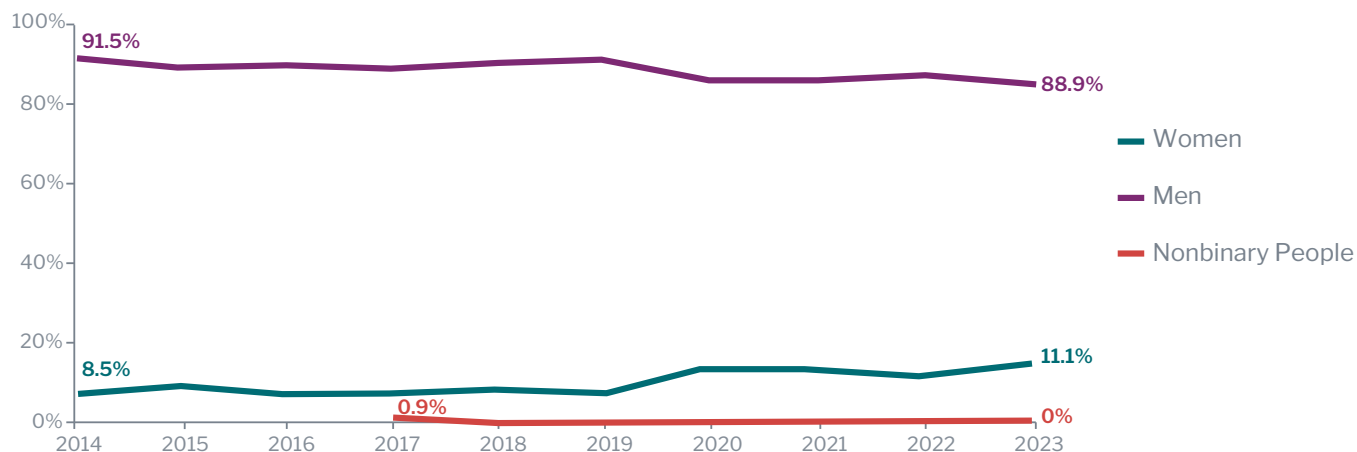
Multiracial representation also appeared to fall to a corresponding degree, from 5.7% in 2013-14 to 2.3% in 2022-23. However, we note that the reporting of Multiracial demographic data by administrators is vulnerable to error, and that the Multiracial music director trend line is unusually volatile, with 5.7% representing a high and 2.3% a low.

American Indian and Alaska Native representation increased in 2022-23, from 0% to 0.6%.

Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander in music director roles oscillated between 0% and 0.8%, a trend line that at its height exceeds representation in the U.S. population three-fold.

⁸ The relatively low music director sample size limits our ability to report on differences by budget group category. However, in this instance the difference in representation between larger and smaller-to-medium budget category orchestras is sufficiently large to create confidence (please see Appendix 1: Methodology).

Music Director Gender Diversity

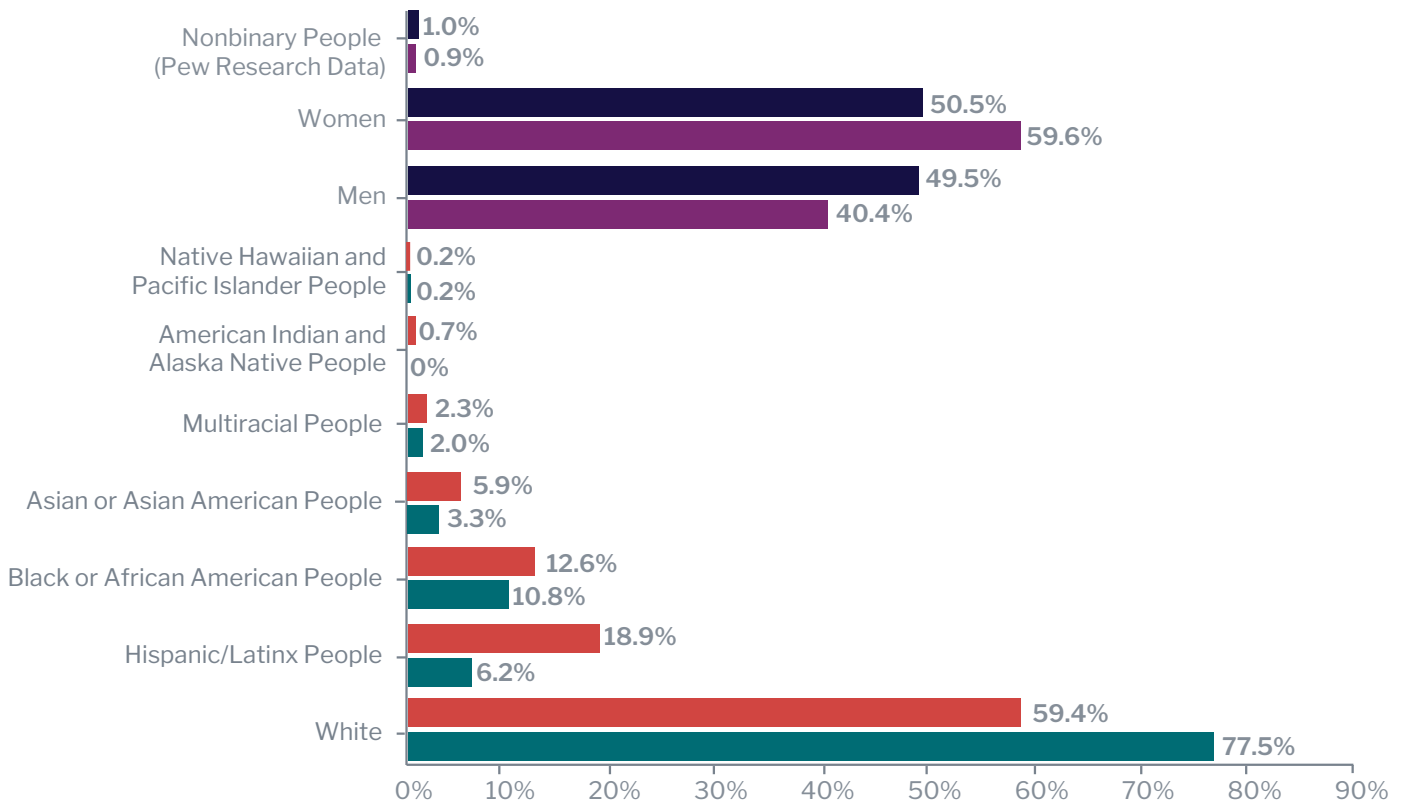


Women's representation among larger budget orchestra music directors fell by half (from 10.9% to 5.8%),⁸ while among smaller-to-medium budget orchestras it increased from 10.1% to 13.7%.

Mirroring the findings for nonbinary conductors, including assistant conductors and music directors, the percentage of nonbinary music directors remained broadly static.⁹

⁹ While our data indicates some fluctuation, the percentage increases and decreases are too small to be reported with confidence (see Appendix 1: Methodology).

Staff Members, Including Top Executives (2022-2023 Season)



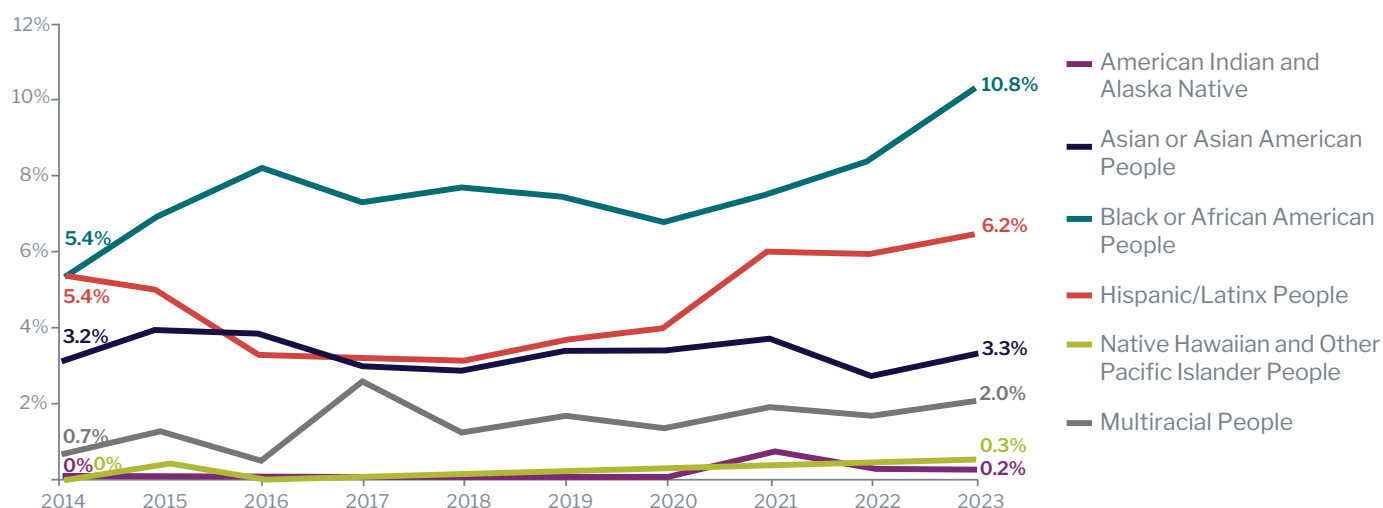
Gender Diversity

- U.S. population: Census estimates as of July 2021 (%)
- Orchestra population: 2022-2023 (%)

Racial/Ethnic Diversity

- U.S. population: Census estimates as of July 2021 (%)
- Orchestra population: 2022-2023 (%)

Staff Racial/Ethnic Diversity



Overall BIPOC representation among orchestra staff grew relatively strongly in comparison to other orchestra roles. It increased from 14.8% in 2013-2014 to 22.8% in 2022-23, with growth taking place relatively evenly across budget groups. By 2023, BIPOC representation was significantly higher only among conductors.

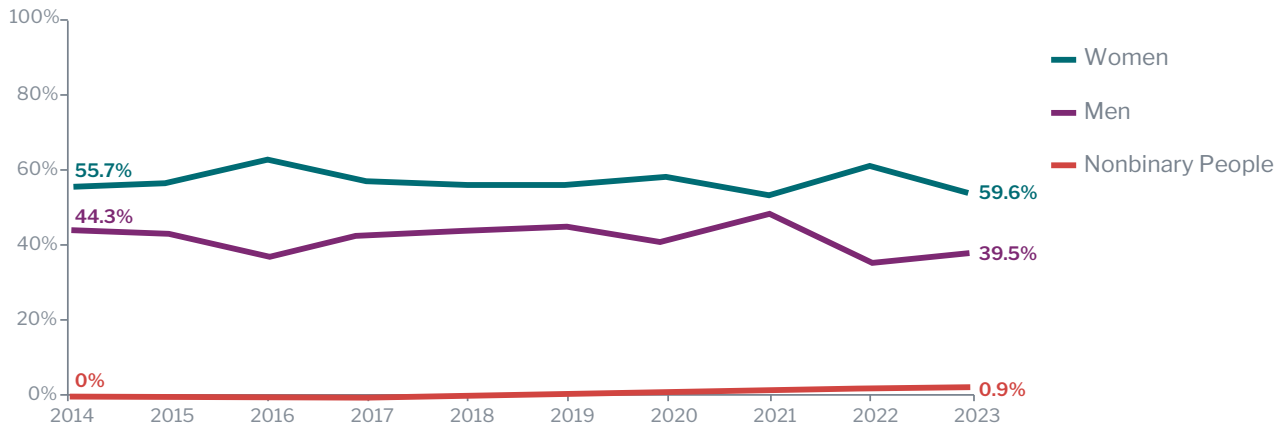
This growth was largely driven by an increase in the proportion of Black or African American staff members (including top executives). Representation grew from 5.4% in 2014 to 10.8% in 2023. While this growth accelerated during the pandemic years, Black or African American people were represented more strongly on staff than in any other orchestra role throughout the entire ten-year period.

Multiracial representation grew more significantly (by a factor of 20), but from a much lower starting point, increasing from 0.1% to 2%. In contrast, Asian or Asian American representation remained relatively flat between 2013-14 and 2022-23, increasing only in smaller-to-medium budget orchestras. In the 2022-23 season, Asian or Asian American representation was lower in staff, including top executive, roles than in any other orchestra role.

While American Indian and Alaska Native representation increased briefly in 2020-21, it decreased again in 2021-22.

Despite the strong overall growth compared to other orchestra roles, by 2023 BIPOC representation among orchestra staff had only just reached equivalency with that of opera staff ([OPERA America, 2022](#)) and continued to lag far behind the 40.6% of the U.S. population identified as BIPOC.

Staff Gender Diversity



Nonbinary people saw a greater increase in staff representation in any other orchestra role, increasing representation from 0.1% in 2014 to 0.9% in 2023 compared to an estimated 1% across the U.S. population as a whole (Pew Research, 2022).^{10 11}

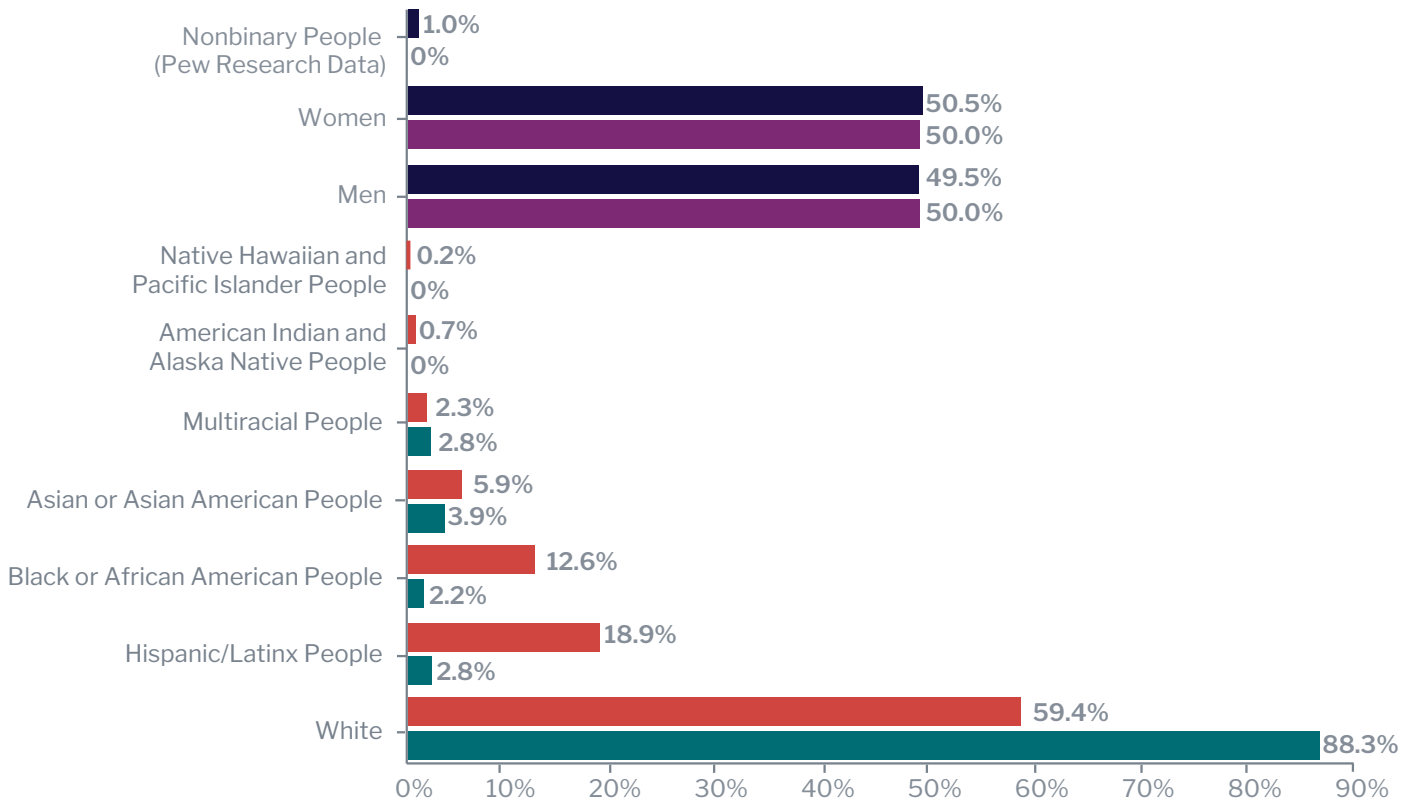
Women’s representation remained broadly static over time.¹² The percentage of women on staff in the 2022-23 season (59.6%) was higher than the U.S. population average but comparative with the percentage of all opera administrators identifying as women (60.8%).

¹⁰ This data is not yet collected by the U.S. Census.

¹¹ This increase may in part be accounted for by improved quality of data collection during the period 2013-14 to 2022-23.

¹² While our data indicates some fluctuation, the percentage increases and decreases are too small to be reported with confidence (see Appendix 1: Methodology).

Top Executives¹³ (2022-23 Season)



Gender Diversity

■ U.S. population: Census estimates as of July 2021 (%)

■ Orchestra population: 2022-2023 (%)

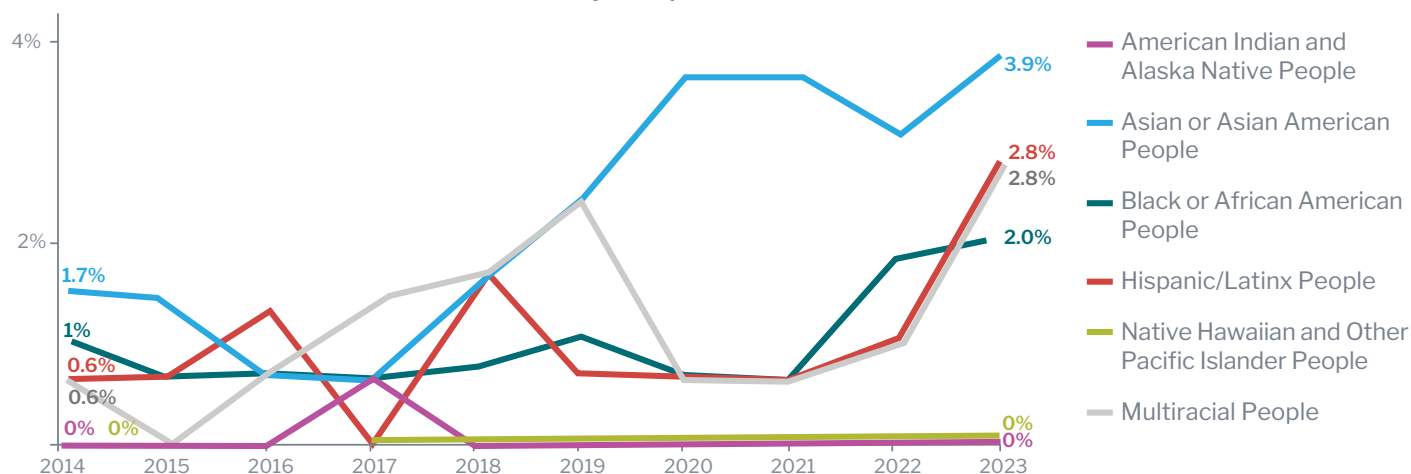
Racial/Ethnic Diversity

■ U.S. population: Census estimates as of July 2021 (%)

■ Orchestra population: 2022-2023 (%)

¹³Because we hold a relatively small dataset for music director and top executive roles, findings for these two roles are not broken down by orchestra budget category (please see Appendix 1: Methodology).

Top Executive Racial/Ethnic Diversity



Despite relatively strong growth specifically during the pandemic years, top executive racial/ethnic diversity both began and ended the ten-year period low relative to other orchestra roles. Increasing from 4% in 2014 to 11.8% in the 2022-23 season, BIPOC top executive representation also remained somewhat lower in orchestras than across the nonprofit sector as a whole,¹⁴ itself recognized as poorly representative of the U.S. population as a whole.

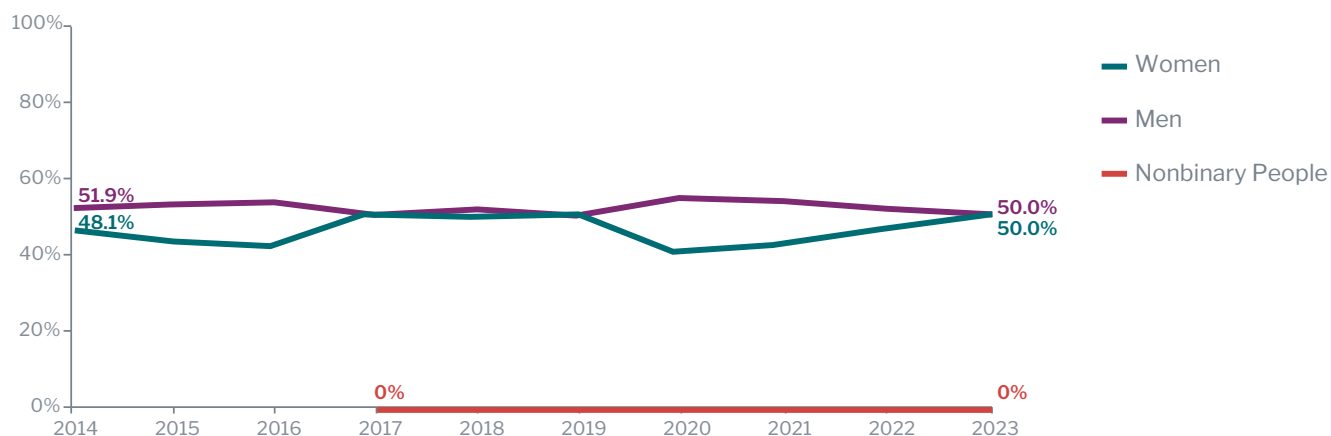
Growth was focused within larger budget orchestras. Across budget categories, it was driven by increases in Asian or Asian American, Hispanic/Latinx, and Multiracial representation. Specifically:

- Multiracial representation grew more rapidly than for other BIPOC groups, from 0.6% to 2.8%. By 2023, Multiracial representation was slightly stronger among orchestra top executives than in the U.S. population as a whole.
- Other BIPOC groups saw improvements to representation, while remaining less well-represented than in the U.S. population as a whole. Specifically, an increase from 1.7% to 3.9% resulted in a higher proportion of Asian or Asian American people working as top executives than any other BIPOC group and Hispanic/Latinx top executive representation grew from 0.6% to 2.8%.
- The proportion of Black or African American, and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander top executives remained broadly static.¹⁵
- While American Indian and Alaska Native representation increased in 2016-17, it decreased again in 2017-18.

¹⁴ Thirteen percent (13%) of nonprofit chief executives were identified as BIPOC in 2021 ([BoardSource, 2021](#)).

¹⁵ While our data indicates some slight increases, the percentage increases and decreases are too small to be reported with confidence (see Appendix 1: Methodology).

Top Executive Gender Diversity



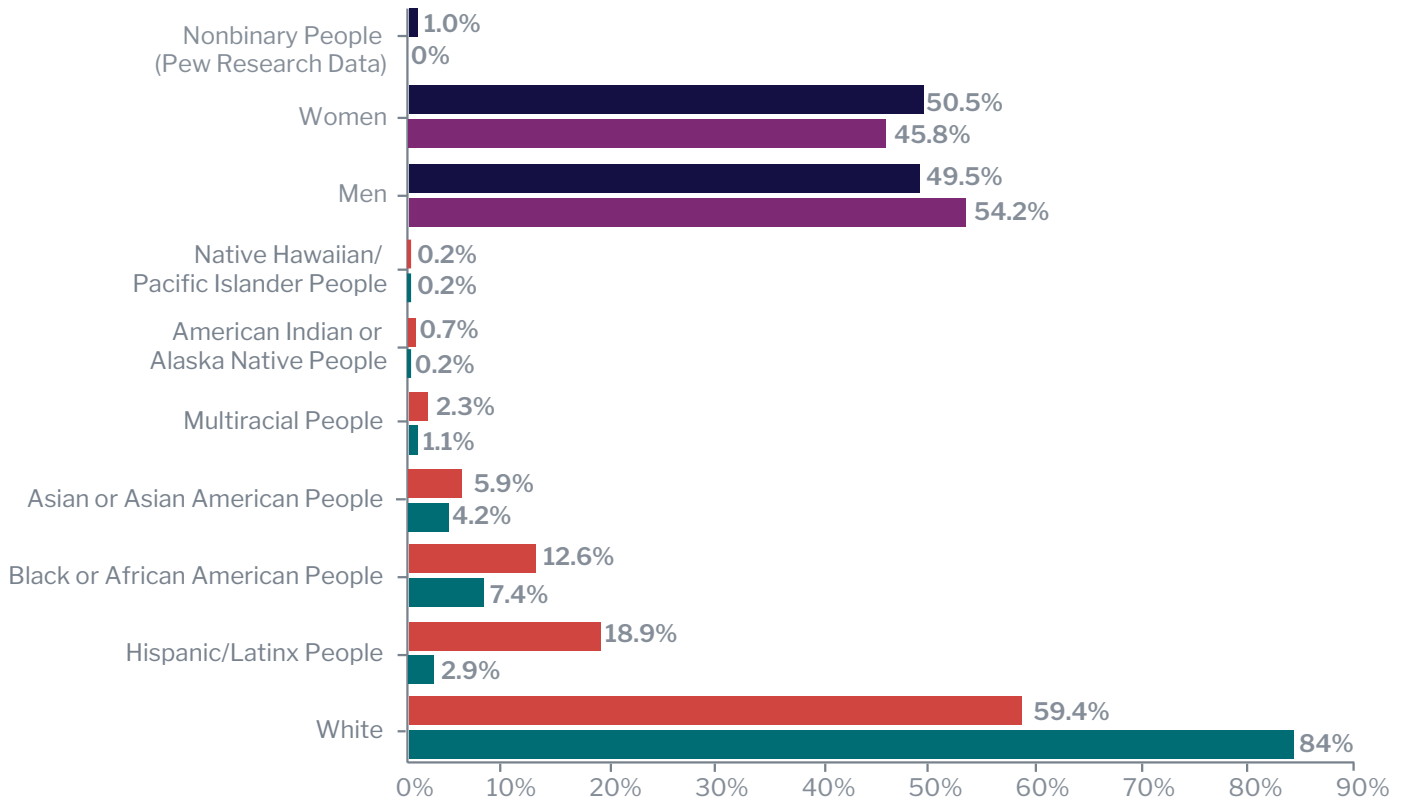
Women's representation at the top executive level is almost equal to representation in the U.S. population. However, it compares unfavorably with the wider nonprofit sector; in 2021, 74% of nonprofit chief executives were women ([BoardSource, 2021](#)).

Women's representation at the top executive level remained broadly static between 2013-14 and 2022-23.¹⁶ The proportion of women top executives in larger budget orchestras increased from 24.1% to 30.9% during the ten-year period. Nonetheless, in 2022-23, over two thirds (69.2%) of larger budget top executives were men, compared to less than half (45%) in smaller-to-medium budget orchestras.

In contrast to the growing nonbinary representation observed among all orchestra staff, no nonbinary top executives were reported between 2014 and 2023. For comparison, 0.3% of chief executives from across the nonprofit sector identified as nonbinary in 2021 ([BoardSource, 2021](#)).

¹⁶ While our data indicates some fluctuation, the percentage increases and decreases are too small to be reported with confidence (see Appendix 1: Methodology).

Board Members (2022-2023 Season)



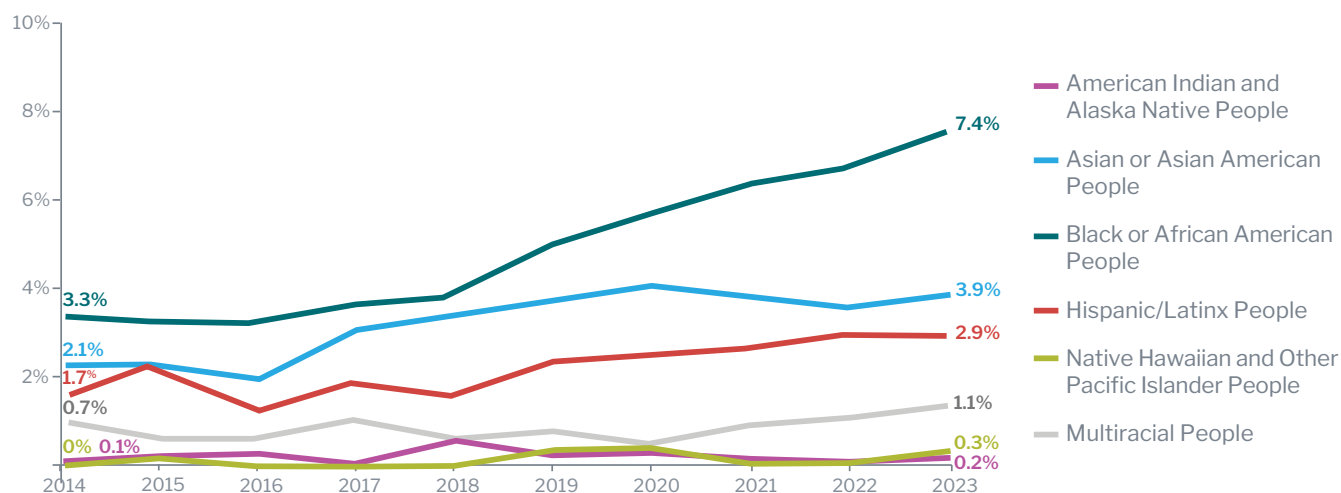
Gender Diversity

- U.S. population: Census estimates as of July 2021 (%)
- Orchestra population: 2022-2023 (%)

Racial/Ethnic Diversity

- U.S. population: Census estimates as of July 2021 (%)
- Orchestra population: 2022-2023 (%)

Board Racial/Ethnic Diversity



Among board members, BIPOC representation lags behind the nonprofit sector as a whole, itself recognized as poorly representative of the U.S. population. In 2023, 15.9% of orchestra board members identify as BIPOC, compared to 22% of nonprofit board members in 2021 ([BoardSource, 2021](#)) and 18.4% of opera board members in 2021 ([OPERA America, 2022](#)).

Only Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander people are equally or better represented on orchestra boards compared to in the U.S. population as a whole, with representation remaining broadly static throughout the ten-year period.¹⁷ The proportion of all other BIPOC groups represented on orchestra boards remains below that found in the overall U.S. population.

Nonetheless, from a low starting point and despite having remained static since 2010 or earlier ([Doeser, 2016](#)), BIPOC board representation began to improve in 2014. It more than doubled by 2023, with growth taking place relatively evenly across budget groups.

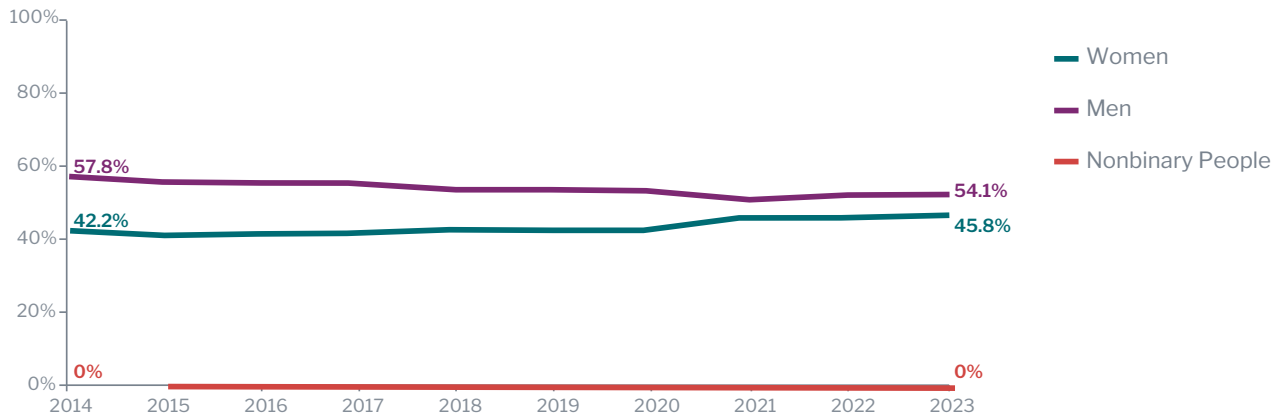
This growth was largely driven by increased representation by Black or African American board members, which increased from 3.3% to 7.4% between the 2013-14 and 2022-23 seasons. At the same time, Asian or Asian American representation doubled, from 2.1% to 4.2% overall, despite remaining broadly static¹⁸ during the pandemic years.

The representation of American Indian and Alaska Native, Hispanic/Latinx, and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander board members all remained broadly static,¹⁹ with Hispanic/Latinx representation remaining notably low in comparison to the U.S. population as a whole.

¹⁷ While our data indicates some fluctuation, the percentage increases and decreases are too small to be reported with confidence (see Appendix 1: Methodology).

¹⁸ While our data indicates some increase, the percentage increases and decreases are too small to be reported with confidence (see Appendix 1: Methodology).

Board Gender Diversity



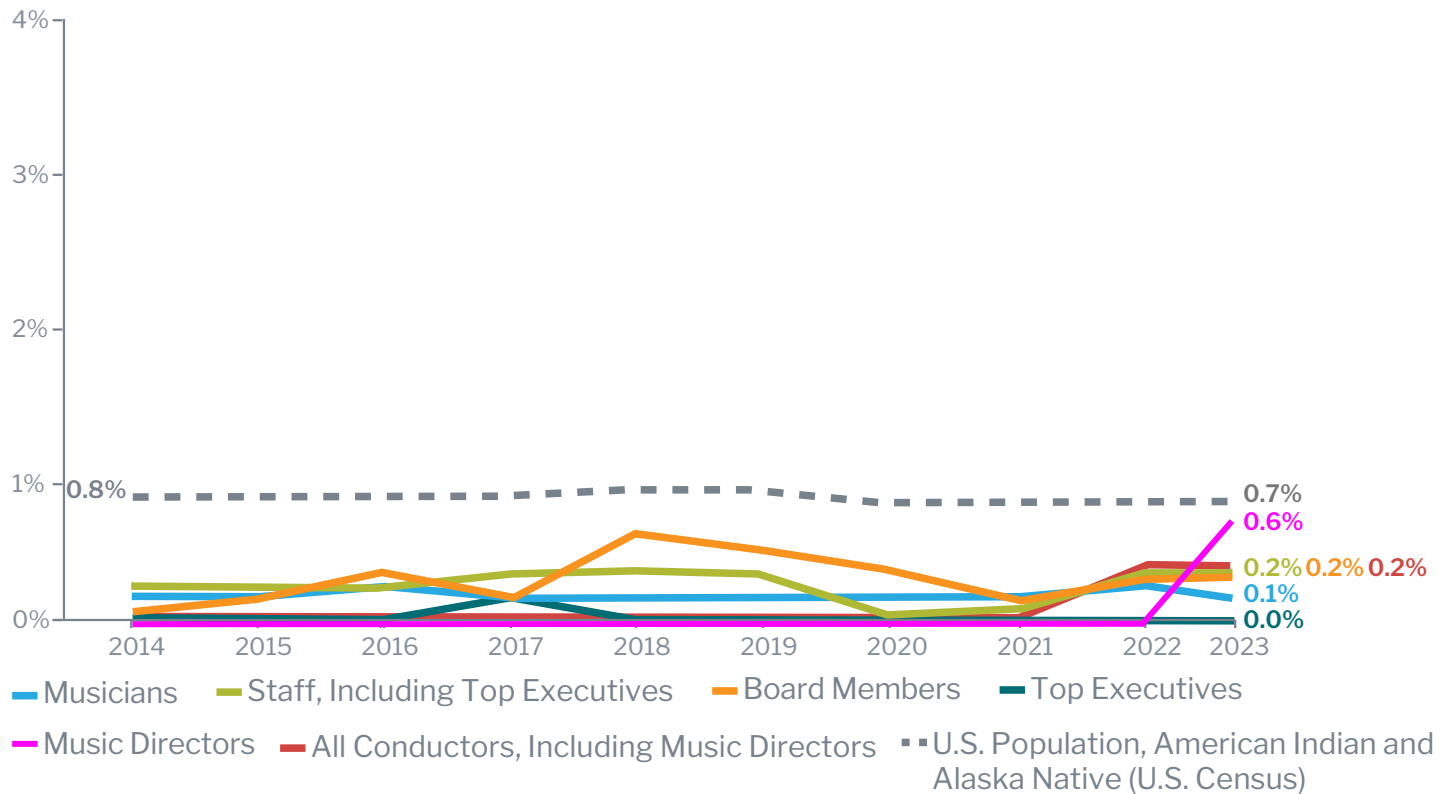
The percentage of women board members remained broadly static, continuing a gradual trend dating back to 2014. By 2023, 50% of smaller-to-medium budget orchestra board members were women. A gender gap remained on larger budget orchestra boards, whose members were 57.5% men and 42.5% women.

Up to 0.1% of all orchestra board members were identified as nonbinary during the ten-year period. This figure is comparable with the wider nonprofit sector in 2021 ([Boardsource, 2021](#)), yet falls far short of 1% estimated nonbinary representation across the U.S. population as a whole ([Pew Research, 2022](#)).

Detailed Analyses

Analysis 2: By Demographic Group

American Indian and Alaska Native People



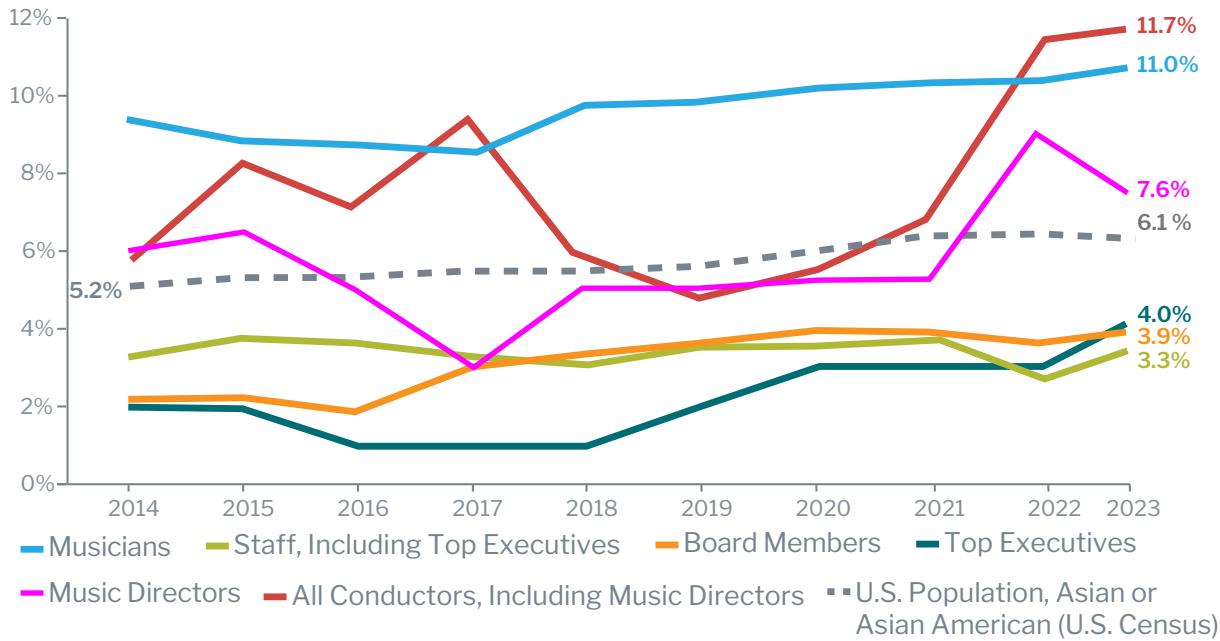
0.7% of the U.S. population identified as Asian or Asian American in 2021 (U.S. Census, 2022)

Overall, American Indian and Alaska Native representation remained lower in all orchestra positions than in the U.S. population throughout the ten-year period.

Some positive increases in representation occurred among top executives in 2016-17, board members in 2017-18, staff in 2020-21, and music directors in 2022-23. As of 2023, however, there is no evidence that these increases have been sustained.

We recognize that the significant variations in American Indian and Alaska Native representation between states make any analysis of national level data difficult. Analysis by state or by region is unfortunately beyond the scope of this research.

Asian or Asian American People



5.9% of the U.S. population identified as Asian or Asian American in 2021 (U.S. Census, 2022)

The proportion of Asian or Asian American people working in each of the three major orchestra artistic roles (musician, conductor, and music director) is higher than the proportion of Asian or Asian American people in the U.S. population as a whole.

Specifically, the proportion of Asian or Asian American people working as orchestra musicians remains higher than in the estimated U.S. population as a whole, and higher than all other BIPOC groups combined.¹⁹

Overall increases in conductor racial/ethnic diversity were partially driven by growth in the proportion of Asian or Asian American conductors, whose representation increased from 5.9% to 11.7%. By 2023, Asian or Asian American people were almost twice as well represented within the conductor population as in the U.S. population overall.

While Asian or Asian American musician representation increased slightly more modestly than that of other BIPOC groups, from 9.2% in 2013-14 to 11% in 2022-2023, growth took place entirely within larger budget orchestras. As a result, in the 2022-23 season, Asian or Asian American musicians were around 1.5 times more likely to be working in larger budget orchestras than in their smaller-to-medium budget counterparts.

Similarly, among music directors overall Asian or Asian American representation increased more modestly than for other BIPOC groups (from 5.7% to 7.6%). Again, the increase was focused entirely within larger budget orchestras,²⁰ resulting in stronger representation for Asian or Asian American people in music director roles than in the U.S. population as a whole.

Asian or Asian American representation in administrative and governance roles was relatively low in comparison to representation in artistic roles and was lower than in the U.S. population as a whole. Indeed, Asian or Asian American representation was lower in staff, including top executive, roles than in any other orchestra role, remaining broadly static during the ten-year period.²¹ Nonetheless, Asian or Asian American people were better represented in top executive roles than any other BIPOC group, increasing in representation from 1.7% to 3.9%, and driving growth in BIPOC representation in this area.

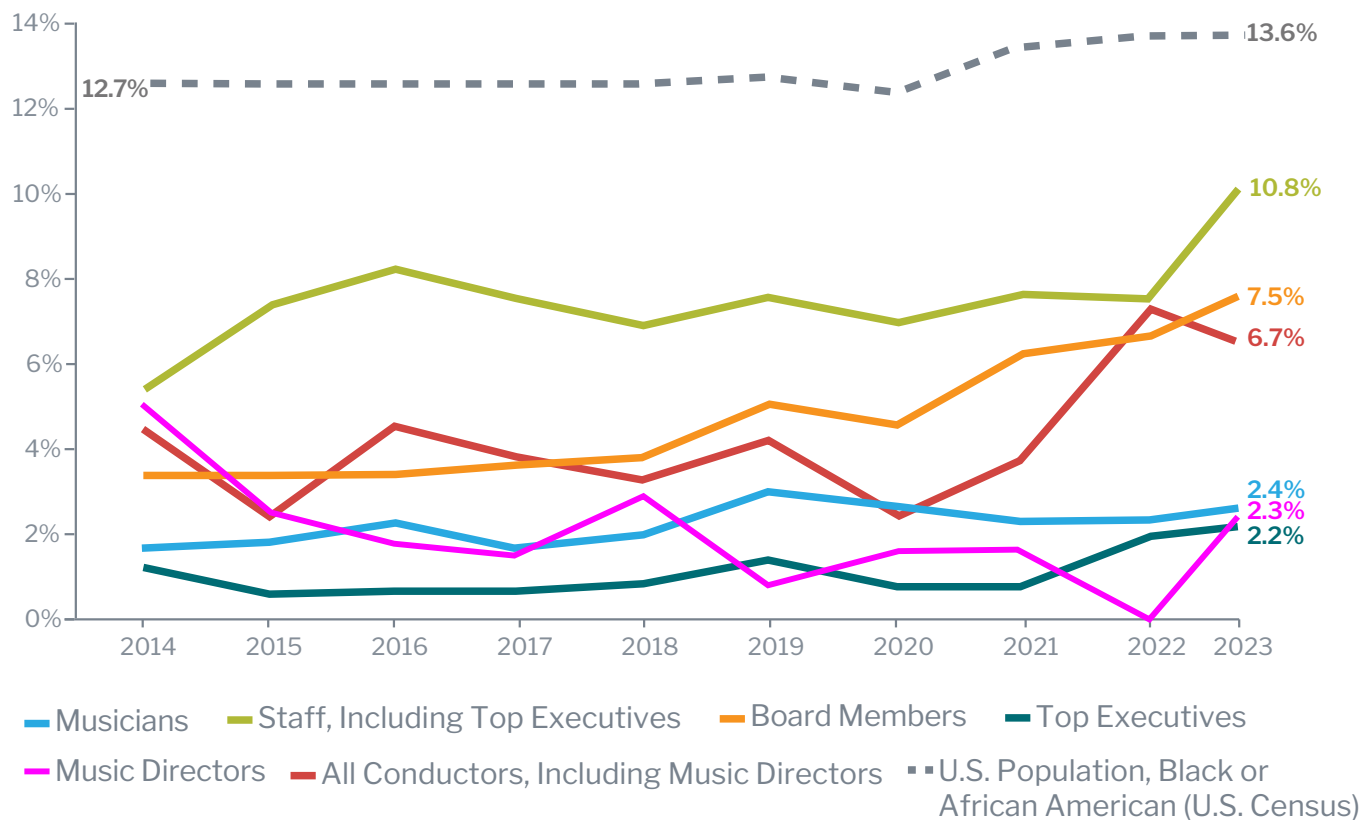
Despite being less well represented as board members than in the U.S. population as a whole, Asian or Asian American people were better represented as board members than any other BIPOC group with the exception of Black or African American people.

¹⁹Representation does not equate to power or influence, and Asian or Asian American musicians continue to suffer from racial oppression and discrimination (Yoshihara 2021, Hernández 2021).

²⁰The relatively low music director sample size limits our ability to report on differences by budget group category. However, in this instance the difference in representation between larger and smaller-to-medium budget category orchestras is sufficiently large to create confidence (please see Appendix 1: Methodology).

²¹While our data indicates some slight increase, the percentage increases and decreases are too small to be reported with confidence (see Appendix 1: Methodology).

Black or African American People



12.6% of the U.S. population identified as Black or African American in 2021 (U.S. Census, 2022)

Black or African American representation is significantly lower among orchestra musicians than in the U.S. population overall, having improved only very slightly since data collection began in 2010. In addition, throughout the ten-year period Black or African American musicians were almost twice as likely to be working in smaller-to-medium budget orchestras than in larger budget orchestras, again continuing a longstanding trend (Doeser, 2016).

Black or African American people remain only half as well represented in the conductor population as in the overall U.S. population, despite representation increasing from 4.4% to 6.7% between 2013-14 and 2022-23.

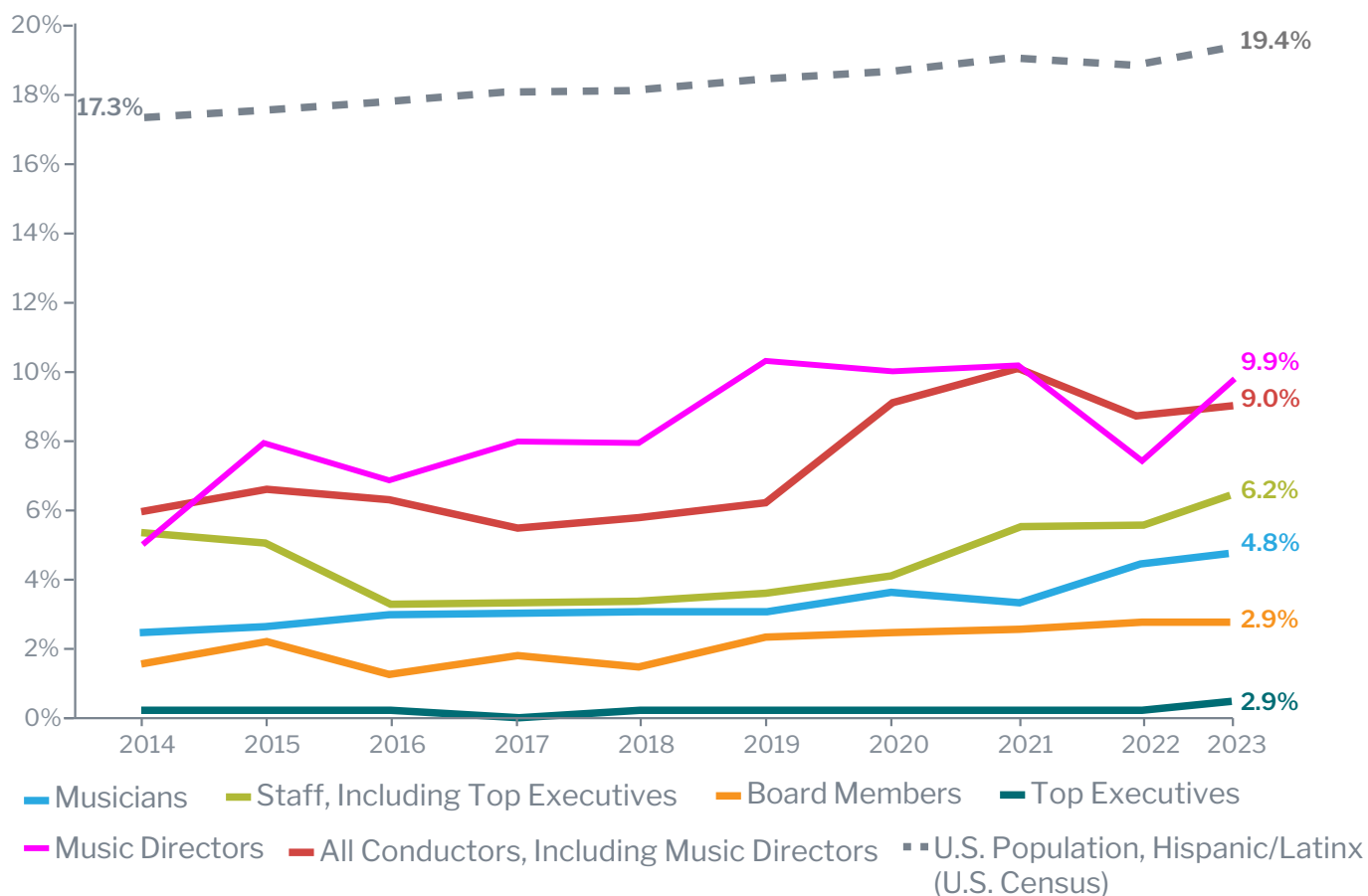
The proportion of Black or African American people working as orchestra music directors more than halved overall (from 5% in 2013-14 to 2.3% in 2022-23), exacerbating the already low representation of Black or African American people in music director roles, compared to other BIPOC groups.

Black or African American people were represented more strongly on staff than in any other orchestra role throughout the ten-year period, with an acceleration in representation during the pandemic years driving the moderate growth we see in staff racial/ethnic diversity overall.

Growth in the overall racial/ethnic diversity of boards was largely driven by increased representation by Black or African American board members, which increased from 3.3% to 7.4% between the 2013-14 and 2022-23 seasons.

Note: The reported proportion of Black or African American musicians working as musician fellows each year averaged 3.5%. The conclusion that Black or African American musician representation improved only slightly during the 10 year period is unaffected when musician fellows are excluded from our analysis.

Hispanic/Latinx People



18.9% of the U.S. population identified as Hispanic/Latinx in 2021 (U.S. Census, 2022)

Hispanic/Latinx representation among musicians increased from 2.5% to 4.8%, accelerating during the pandemic years.

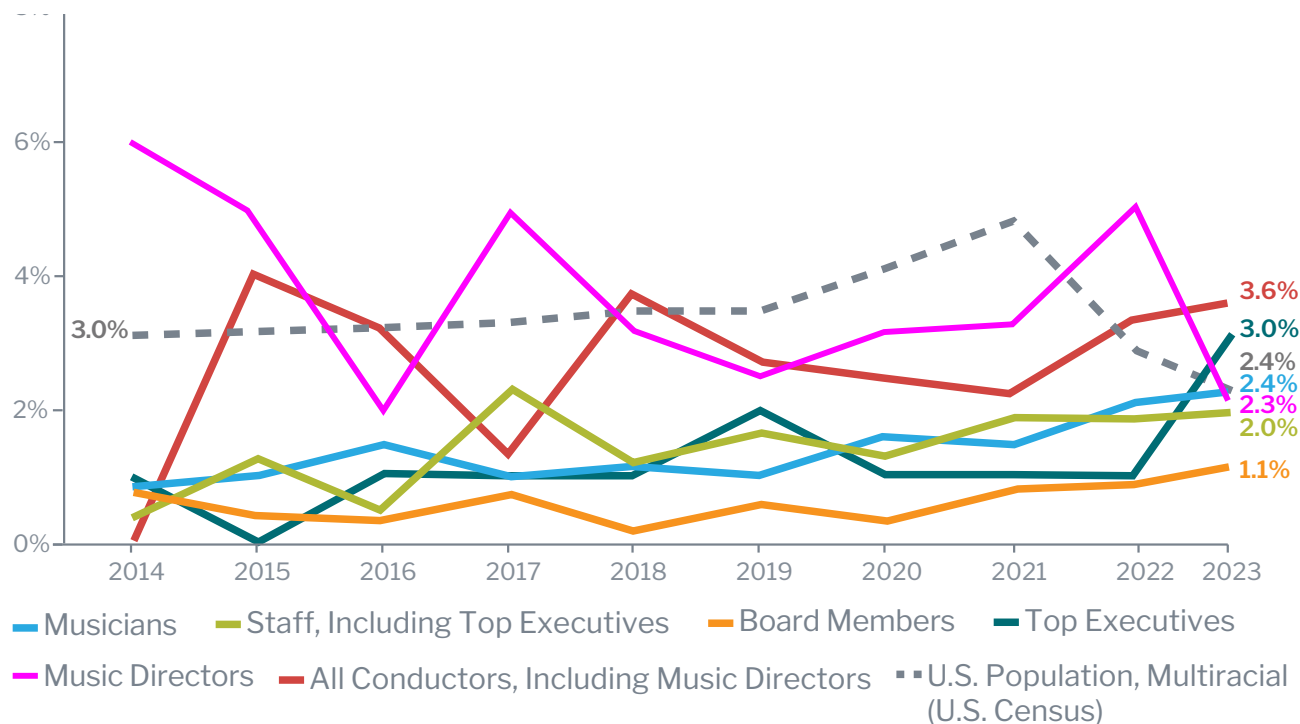
The overall growth in racial/ethnic diversity among both conductors and music directors was partially driven by an increase in the proportion of Hispanic/Latinx conductors. Specifically, Hispanic/Latinx conductor representation increased from 4.9% to 9% while music director representation doubled from 5.3% to 9.9%, between 2013-14 and 2022-23. This growth took place across both budget categories, resulting in a stronger representation of Hispanic/Latinx people as music directors than of any other BIPOC group for the majority of the ten-year period.

During the same time period, Hispanic/Latinx representation among staff members increased somewhat from 5.4% to 6.2% while top executive representation grew from 0.6% to 2.8%.

Hispanic/Latinx board member representation increased from 1.7% to 2.9%, remaining notably low in comparison to the U.S. population as a whole.

Note: The reported proportion of Hispanic/Latinx musicians working as musician fellows each year averaged 0.1%. The conclusions about Hispanic/Latinx musician representation are unaffected when musician fellows are excluded from our analysis.

Multiracial People



2.3% of the U.S. population identified as Multiracial in 2021 (U.S. Census, 2022)

As noted in Appendix 1 (Methodology), in orchestras where demographics data is supplied by an administrator, individuals identifying as Multiracial may have been wrongly gendered.

Overall, the trendlines representing Multiracial people fluctuate to a greater extent than trendlines for other racial/ethnic groups, and especially for music director and conductor roles.

At 1.1%, Multiracial representation on orchestra boards is half that seen in the U.S. population. In all other orchestra roles, Multiracial representation is close to or somewhat exceeds representation in the U.S. population.

Multiracial representation increased among musicians (from 0.8% to 2.4%), accelerating during the pandemic years to reach parity with the U.S. population.

Multiracial representation compared to the overall U.S. population is also notable among conductors, including assistant conductors and music directors, where it increased from 1.7% in 2013-14 to 3.6% in 2022-23 to exceed representation in the U.S. population. In 2022-23, the proportion of Multiracial conductors was higher than in any other orchestra role.

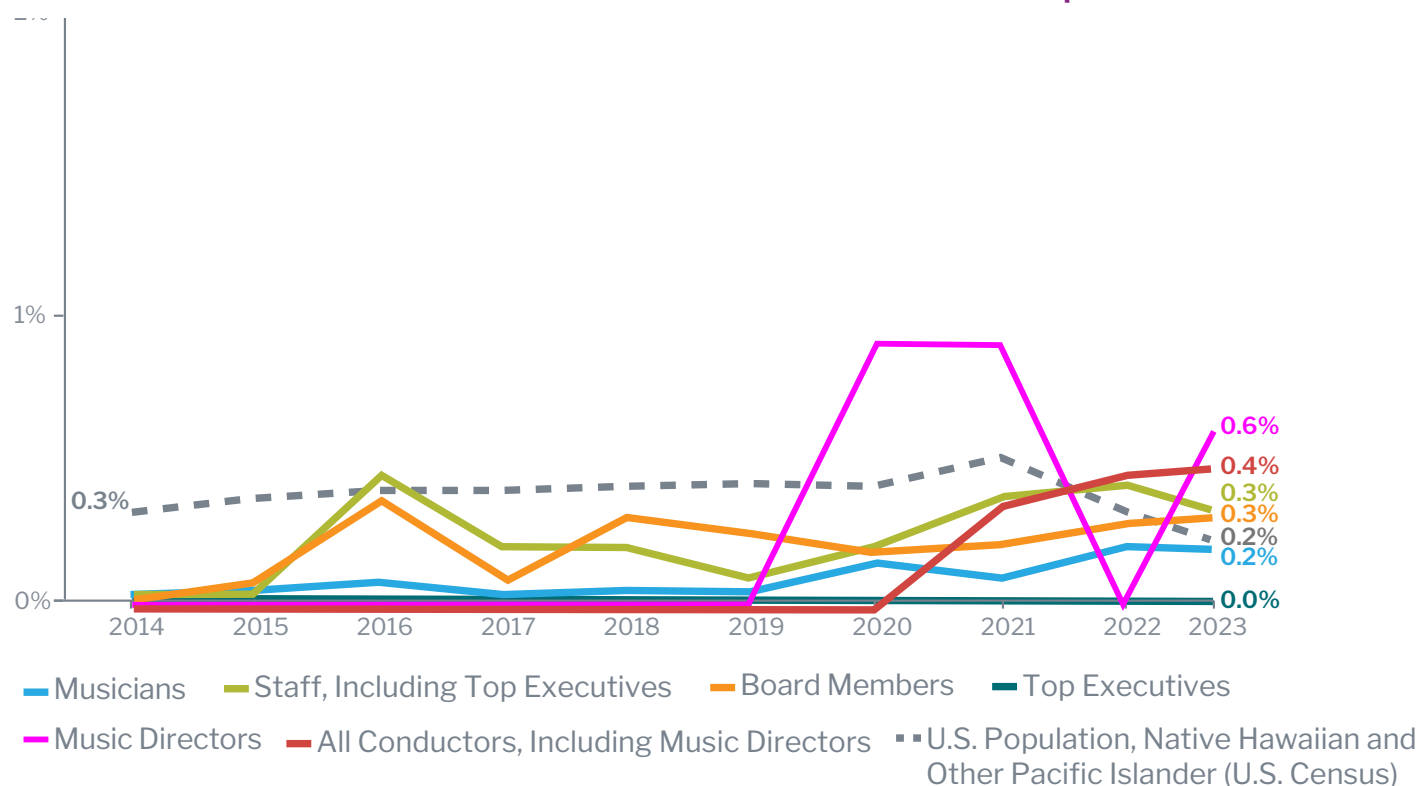
Multiracial music director representation fell, from 5.7% in 2013-14 (a high point within the fluctuating trend line) to 2.3% in 2022-23 (a low point).

Multiracial staff representation on orchestra staff grew significantly (by a factor of 20) from a very low starting point, from 0.1% to 2%.

Multiracial top executive representation grew more rapidly than for other BIPOC groups, from 0.6% to 2.8%: by 2023, Multiracial representation was slightly stronger among orchestra top executives than in the U.S. population as a whole.

Note: The Multiracial response option was introduced to the Orchestra Statistical Report for the 2017-18 season, to correct the previous misrepresentation of Multiracial people as “Other.” The pre-2017-18 trend data shown in this report reflects data previously collected using the “Other” response option.

Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander People



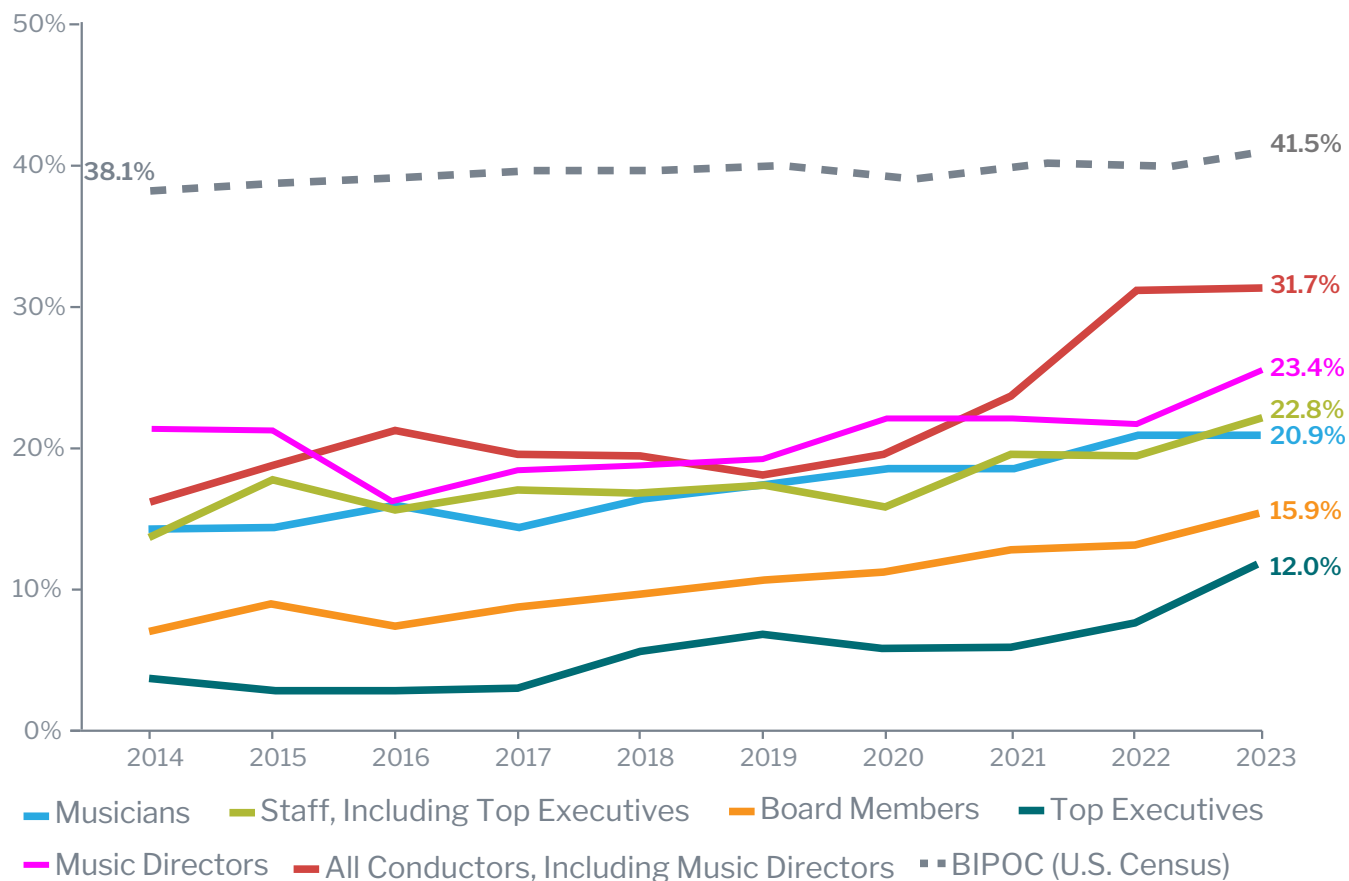
0.2% of the U.S. population identified as Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander in 2021 (U.S. Census, 2022)

Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander in music director roles oscillated between 0% and 0.8%, a trend line that at its height exceeds representation in the U.S. population three-fold.

Otherwise, Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander representation remained broadly static and broadly consistent with the Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander population (as reported within the U.S. Census), throughout the ten-year period.

Note: The Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander response option was introduced in the Orchestra Statistical Report for the 2013-14 season, to correct the misrepresentation of Native Hawaiian people from the previous response option, "Asian American and Pacific Islander."

BIPOC People Overall



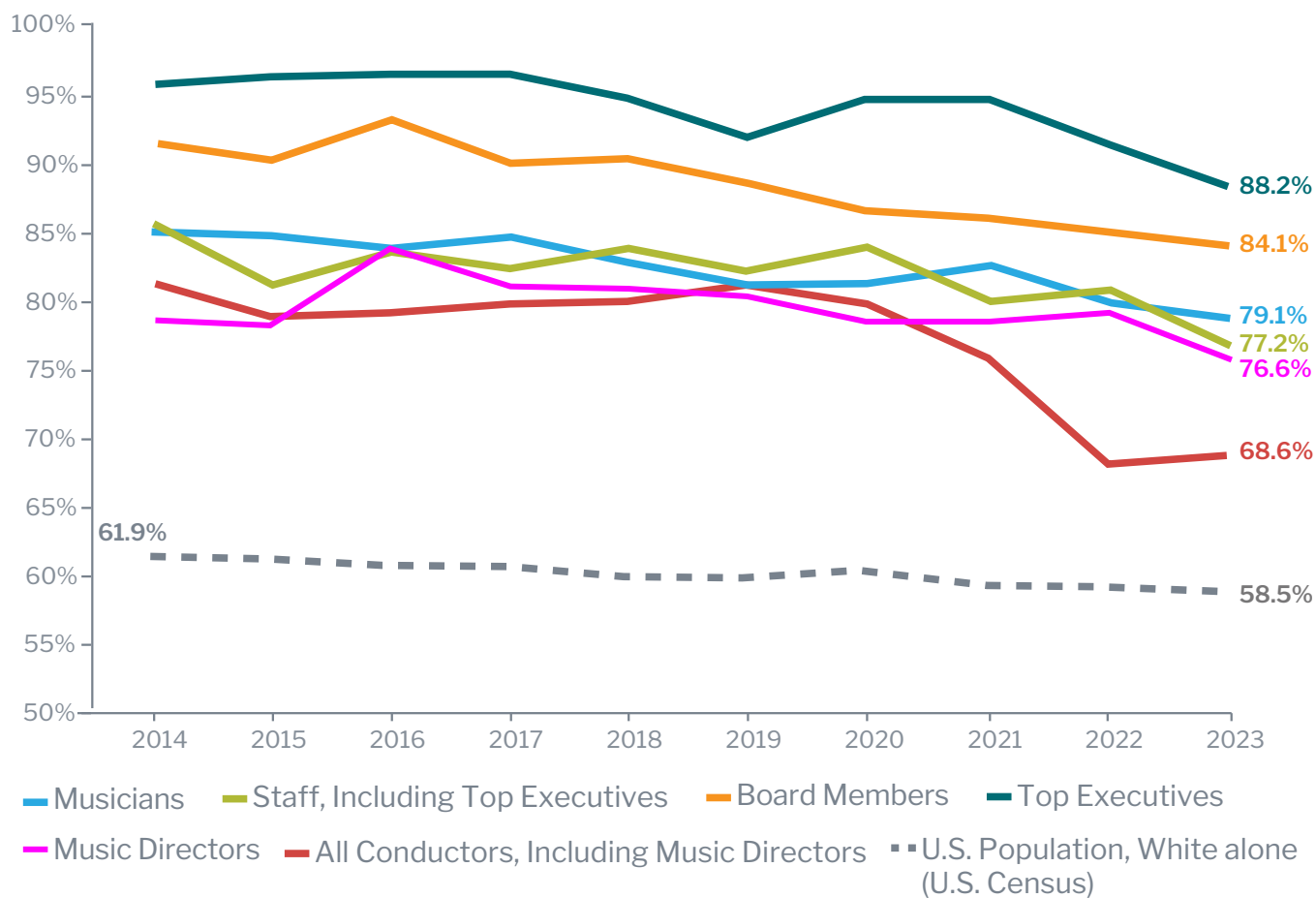
41.9% of the U.S. population identified as BIPOC in 2021 (U.S. Census, 2022)

As noted in the data equity section of this report’s Technical Notes, analysis of Black, Indigenous, and People of Color as a collective whole level masks significant differences in experience between individual racial/ethnic groups.

BIPOC representation remained lower in all orchestra positions than in the U.S. population, throughout the ten-year period.

Overall, in the 2022-23 season the proportion of BIPOC people is lowest in the organizational leadership roles of top executives and board members and highest in conductor roles.

White People



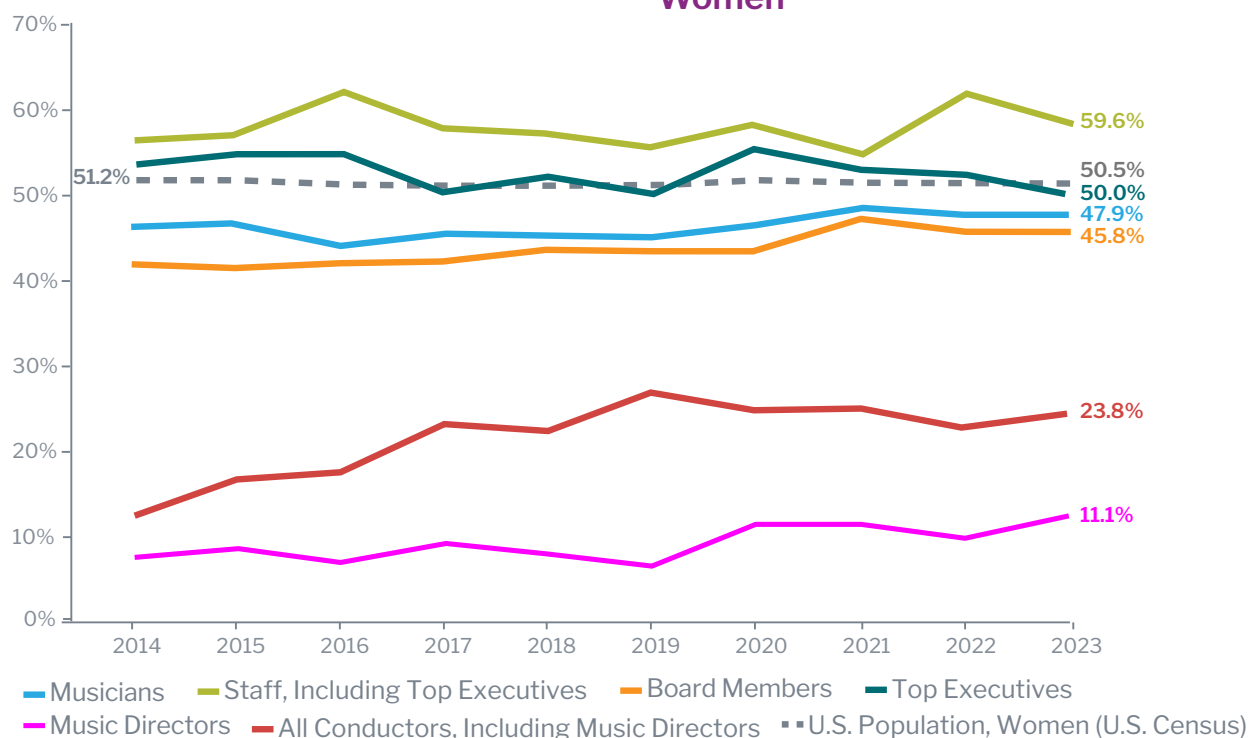
58.1% of the U.S. population identified as White in 2021 (U.S. Census, 2022)

As noted elsewhere, the inclusion of Arab, West Asian, and North African people in the category “White” fails to recognize the unique experiences of people identifying as Arab, West Asian, and North African.

White representation remained significantly higher in all orchestra positions than in the U.S. population throughout the ten-year period.

White representation remained highest in the organizational leadership roles of board members and top executives.

Women



50.5% of the U.S. population identified as women in 2021 (U.S. Census, 2022)

Throughout the ten-year period covered by this report, women musicians consistently represented around 47% of the overall musician population (compared to 50.5% of the U.S. population).²² The proportion of women musicians working in larger budget orchestras remained broadly static,²³ with women roughly 20% more likely to be working in smaller-to-medium budget orchestras than in larger budget orchestras.

Women's representation among larger budget orchestra music directors fell by half (from 10.9% to 5.8%),²³ while across all budget groups it remained broadly static overall.²⁴

After remaining static from 2006 to 2014 (Doeser, 2016), the percentage of women conductors, including assistant conductors and music directors, almost doubled between 2014 and 2023 from 12.9% to 23.8%. Despite this growth, in the 2022-23 season still fewer than one in four conductors, including assistant conductors and music directors, were women.

Women's representation among orchestra staff members remained broadly static over time. The percentage of women on staff in the 2022-23 season (59.6%) was higher than the U.S. population average but comparable with the percentage of all opera administrators identifying as women (60.8%).

Women's representation at the top executive level is almost equal to representation in the U.S. population. However, it compares unfavorably with the wider nonprofit sector; in 2021, 74% of nonprofit chief executives were women (BoardSource, 2021). Women's overall representation in top executive roles remained broadly static between 2013-14 and 2022-23²⁴ despite an increase in the proportion of larger budget orchestra top executive positions held by women (from 24.1% to 30.9%).

The percentage of orchestra board members identified as women remained broadly static throughout the ten-year period, continuing a gradual trend dating back to 2014. By 2023, 50% of smaller-to-medium budget orchestra board members were women but a gender gap remained on larger budget orchestra boards, whose members were 57.5% men and 42.5% women.

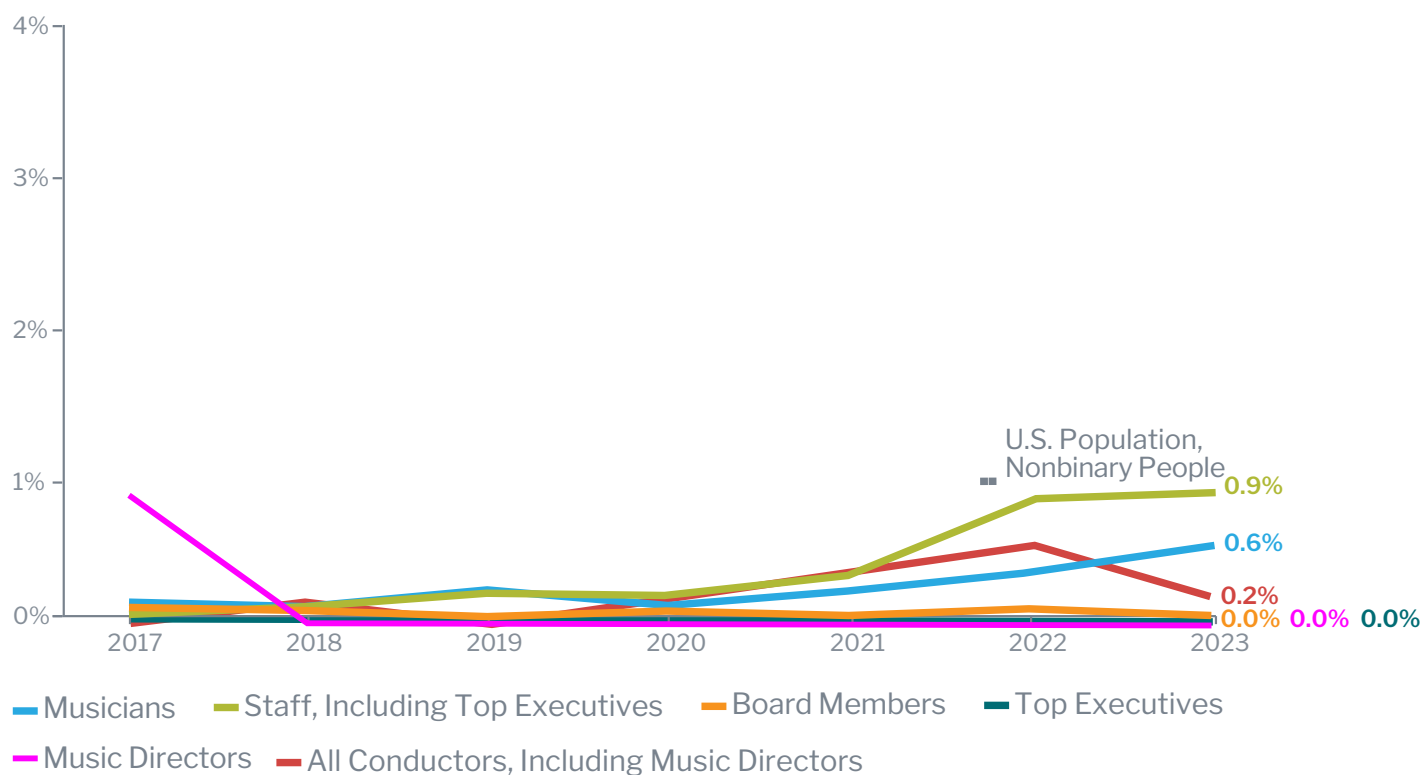
Note: Because the majority of our dataset is not self-reported, we are unfortunately not able to analyze it for intersectionality between racial/ethnic and gender groups.

²²While our data indicates some fluctuation, the percentage increases and decreases are too small to be reported with confidence (see Appendix 1: Methodology).

²³The relatively low music director sample size limits our ability to report on differences by budget group category. However, in this instance the difference in representation between larger and smaller-to-medium budget category orchestras is sufficiently large to create confidence (please see Appendix 1: Methodology).

²⁴The relatively low top executive sample size limits our ability to report on differences by budget group category. However, in this instance the difference in representation between larger and smaller-to-medium budget category orchestras is sufficiently large to create confidence (please see Appendix 1: Methodology).

Nonbinary People



Note: U.S. overall trended data is not available for the non-binary population between 2010-2023.

While nonbinary data is not yet collected by the U.S. Census, estimates suggest that the proportion of the U.S. adult population identifying as nonbinary is 1%

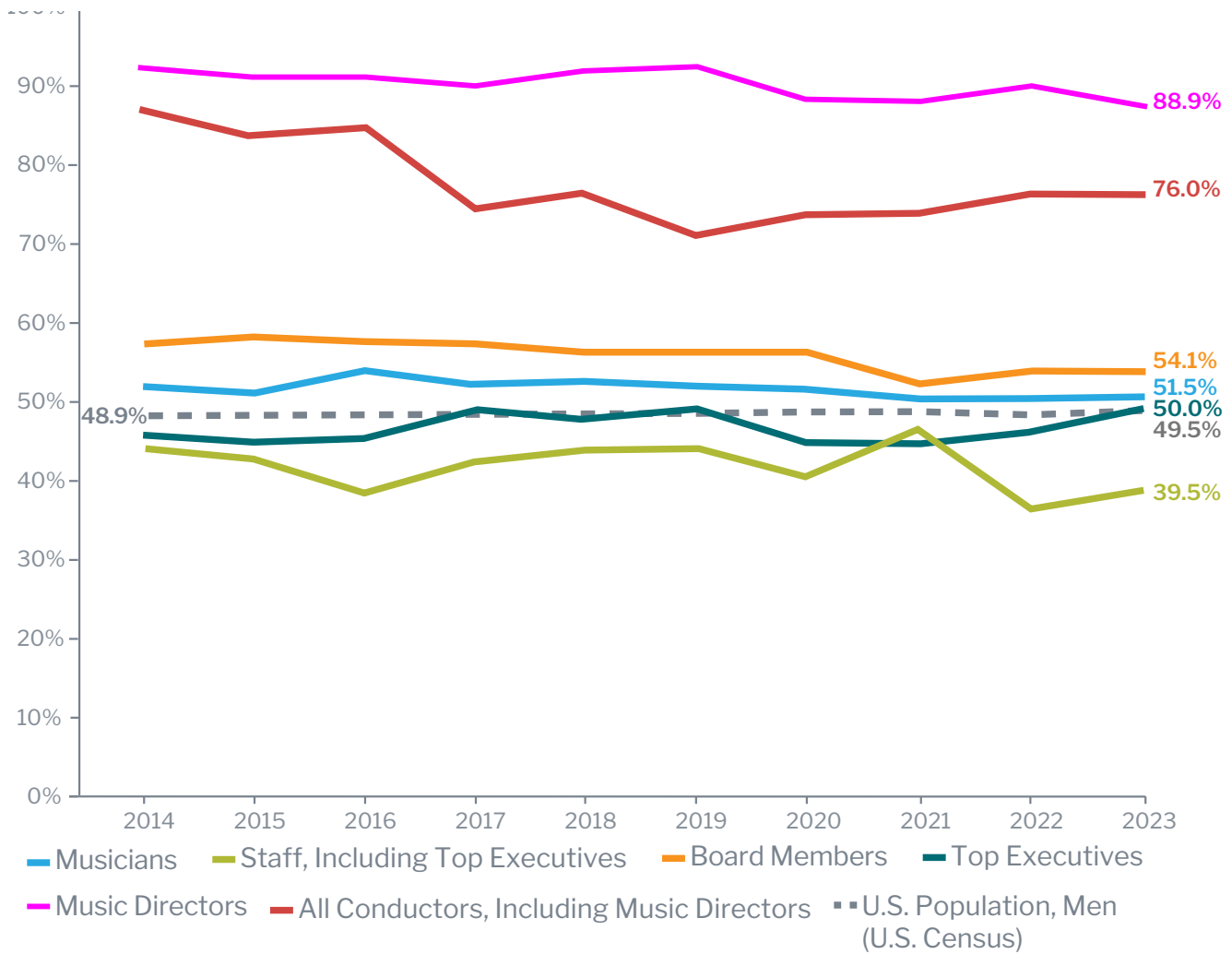
As noted in Appendix 1 (Methodology), in orchestras where demographics data is supplied by an administrator, individuals identifying as nonbinary may have been wrongly gendered.

The proportion of nonbinary staff and musicians increased between 2016-17 and 2022-23, reaching 0.9% and 0.8% respectively by 2022-23. No reported board members or top executives were reported as nonbinary during this time.

Nonbinary representation among conductors and music directors fluctuated, remaining broadly static with the exception of a decrease in music director representation in 2017-18.

Note: A nonbinary response option was introduced to the Orchestra Statistical Report in 2017, to correct the misrepresentation of nonbinary people in previous reports.

Men



50.5% of the U.S. population identified as men in 2021 (U.S. Census, 2022)

Throughout the ten-year period, the proportion of men in all orchestra roles other than staff remained higher than in the U.S. population.

While men's and women's representation in top executive roles was broadly similar over time, men's representation was substantially higher than across the nonprofit sector as a whole.

As musicians, as staff members, as top executives, as conductors, as music directors, and as board members, the proportion of men is higher in larger budget orchestras than in smaller-to-medium budget orchestras.

Detailed Analyses

Analysis 3: By Role and Budget Size

From the 2013-14 season through the 2022-23 season, distinctive differences emerged in representation within smaller-to-medium and larger budget orchestras.

Musicians

Asian or Asian American musician employment was focused within larger budget orchestras, where it continued to grow throughout the ten-year period (from 9.4% to 14.1%). Asian or Asian American musician employment in smaller-to-medium budget orchestras remained constant at 8.8%. As a result, in 2022-23, Asian or Asian American musicians were around 1.5 times more likely to be working in larger budget orchestras than in their smaller-to-medium budget counterparts.

Black or African American, Multiracial, and Hispanic/Latinx musician employment, conversely, was focused within smaller-to-medium budget orchestras and progressed roughly equally across budget categories. Throughout the ten-year period, and continuing a longstanding trend (Doeser, 2016), Black or African American and Hispanic/Latinx musicians were almost twice as likely to be working in smaller-to-medium budget orchestras than in larger budget orchestras. Multiracial musicians were 1.5 times more likely to be working in smaller-to-medium budget orchestras. Representation by budget category did not significantly change.

Throughout the ten-year period, the proportion of women musicians working in larger budget orchestras remained broadly static,²⁵ with women being roughly 20% more likely to be working in smaller-to-medium budget orchestras than in larger budget orchestras.

Our sample size for nonbinary people is too small to be analyzed by orchestra budget category.

Conductors, Including Assistant Conductors and Music Directors

Throughout the ten-year period, the proportion of BIPOC conductors was higher in larger budget orchestras than in smaller-to-medium budget orchestras.

Larger and smaller-to-medium budget orchestras made comparable progress towards diversity of representation among conductors during this period. By 2022-23, 34.8% of larger budget orchestra and 23.5% of smaller-to-medium budget orchestra conductors, including assistant conductors and music directors, were BIPOC.

After remaining static from 2006 to 2014 (Doeser, 2016), the percentage of women conductors, including assistant conductors and music directors, almost doubled between 2014 and 2023 (from 12.9% to 23.8%), with growth driven mainly by an increase in representation within smaller-to-medium budget orchestras.

Our sample size for nonbinary people is too small to be analyzed by orchestra budget category.

Music Directors

BIPOC representation among music directors improved slowly overall, from 17.3% to 22.7%, driven by increasing Asian or Asian American music director representation in larger budget orchestras.

Women's representation among larger budget orchestra music directors fell by half (from 10.9% to 5.8%),²⁶ while among smaller-to-medium budget orchestras it increased from 10.1% to 13.7%.

Our sample size for nonbinary people is too small to be analyzed by orchestra budget category.

²⁵While our data indicates some fluctuation, the percentage increases and decreases are too small to be reported with confidence (see Appendix 1: Methodology).

²⁶The relatively low music director sample size limits our ability to report on differences by budget group category. However, in this instance the difference in representation between larger and smaller-to-medium budget category orchestras is sufficiently large to create confidence (please see Appendix 1: Methodology).

Staff Members, Including Top Executives

Overall progress towards improved staff racial/ethnic diversity took place relatively evenly across smaller-to-medium and larger budget orchestras. The representation of individual BIPOC groups progressed at comparable rates, with the exception of Asian or Asian American staff members, whose representation increased only in smaller-to-medium budget orchestras.

Women's representation remained broadly static over time. The percentage of women on staff in the 2022-23 season (59.6%) was higher than the U.S. population average but comparative with the percentage of all opera administrators identifying as women (60.8%).

The gender gap between men and women was highest in smaller-to-medium budget orchestras. In larger budget orchestras, men's representation was stronger than in smaller-to-medium budget orchestras.

Our sample size for nonbinary people is too small to be analyzed by orchestra budget category.

Top Executives

Larger and smaller-to-medium budget orchestras each ended the ten-year period with 9.1% BIPOC representation in top executive roles. Larger budget orchestras made more progress towards racial/ethnic diversity than smaller-to-medium budget orchestras, having begun the period with a lower proportion of BIPOC representation in top executive roles.

Women's representation at the top executive level remained broadly static between 2013-14 and 2022-23. The proportion of women top executives in larger budget orchestras increased from 24.1% to 30.9% during the ten-year period. Nonetheless, in 2022-23, over two thirds (69.2%) of larger budget top executives were men, compared to less than half (45%) in smaller-to-medium budget orchestras.

Our sample size for nonbinary people is too small to be analyzed by orchestra budget category.

Board Members

Overall progress towards improved board racial/ethnic diversity took place relatively evenly across smaller-to-medium and larger budget orchestras. The representation of individual BIPOC groups progressed at comparable rates, with the exception of American Indian and Alaska Native board members, whose representation increased only within smaller-to-medium budget orchestras.

The percentage of women board members remained broadly static, continuing a gradual trend dating back to 2014. By 2023, 50% of smaller-to-medium budget orchestra board members were women. A gender gap remained on larger budget orchestra boards, whose members were 57.5% men and 42.5% women.

Our sample size for nonbinary people is too small to be analyzed by orchestra budget category.

Detailed Analyses

Analysis 4: Focus on the Pandemic Years

From 2020 to 2023, we see some uptick in Hispanic/Latinx and Multiracial representation, a continuation of the progress towards improved board member diversity, and an acceleration in diversity of racial/ethnic representation among staff members, top executives, and conductors and music directors.

- **Musicians:** The proportion of Black or African American, American Indian and Alaska Native, and Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander musicians remained broadly static through the pandemic years.²⁷ Hispanic/Latinx and Multiracial musician representation accelerated somewhat; while Asian or Asian American representation continued to grow, without any notable acceleration.
- **Staff Members, Including Top Executives:** BIPOC representation among orchestra staff notably increased overall during the pandemic years, driven by an increase in the proportion of Black or African American and Hispanic/Latinx staff members during this time. In contrast, previous growth in the proportion of Asian or Asian American staff members ceased during the pandemic years, instead remaining broadly static.²⁹
- **Top Executives:** BIPOC representation among top executives also notably increased, driven by increases in the proportion of Asian or Asian American, Black or African American, and Multiracial top executives.
- **Conductors and Music Directors:** The representation of all BIPOC groups in the roles of conductor and music director gathered pace, driven largely by increases in Asian or Asian American representation.
- **Board Members:** The gradual trend towards increased overall board member diversity appeared unaffected and incremental progress continued with no acceleration during these years.

²⁷While our data indicates some fluctuation, the percentage increases and decreases are too small to be reported with confidence (see Appendix 1: Methodology).

Appendices

Appendix 1: Methodology

No dataset is fully representative, and all statistics are subjective: conventions and biases inform the way we collect, analyze, and interpret quantitative data. Here, we outline the methods and definitions that have shaped the study and explain the steps we have taken to minimize harm.

Data sources

This report uses annual data collected mostly from the League's Orchestra Statistical Report (OSR), with some data drawn from its Salary and Benefits Survey.

151 adult U.S. orchestras participated in OSR20, representing 29.9% of the 523 League of American Orchestras' adult orchestra members.

180 U.S. orchestras completed a separate Demographics Survey in January 2023, which captured staff, musician, board, and conductor gender and race/ethnicity demographics as of December 31, 2021 and December 31, 2022. Twenty-four of these orchestras are youth orchestras, which were excluded from the analysis on musicians, staff, and board to remain consistent with OSR data, leaving a data cohort of 156 orchestras.

The League's Orchestra Statistical Report and Demographics Survey both collect data from orchestra administrators. Orchestra administrators are encouraged to collect demographics data direct from staff, board members, musicians, music directors and conductors in order to optimize inclusion and data accuracy. In the 2022-2023 season, between 36% and 50% of the demographics data received by the League was self-reported by individuals in this way. We refer in the report to individuals "identified as" rather than "identifying as" because in many cases individuals were assigned racial/ethnic and gender categories to them. The League is working to encourage all orchestras to collect self-reported demographics data.

Because the majority of data is not self-reported, we are not able to make any analysis of the intersectionality between racial/ethnic and gender identities, or to report on the intersections between different racial and ethnic identities.

Definitions

Please see the definitions outlined at the beginning of this report.

Data Representativeness

We are confident that the data included in this report is representative of the League’s membership overall, when disaggregated by two budget categories (larger budget and smaller-to-medium budget orchestras). With a response rate of 29.9% from the League’s 523 adult orchestra members in FY20, the estimates meet the recommended sample size for a 95% confidence level, which is advisable in ensuring representativeness of the sample.²⁹

The representation of smaller-to-medium budget orchestras within the League datasets improved significantly between 2014 and 2023. Survey improvements since 2014 increased the sample representation of smaller-to-medium budget orchestras and by the 2019-2020 survey the representation of smaller-to-medium budget orchestras had increased by 13 percentage points since 2014. The representation of smaller-to-medium budget orchestras increased still further when, for the years 2022-2023, the League used a new survey that separated orchestras demographics from the financial and operational data collected in the OSR.

Budget Size	OSR14 Survey	OSR20 Survey	Demographics Survey 2023	League Population FY20
Larger Budget Orchestras (Groups 1 to 3) (16% of League Member Population, 2020)	53%	40% (-13 pct. points)	35%	16%
Smaller-to-Medium Budget Orchestras (Groups 4 to 8) (84% of League Member Population, 2020)	47%	60% (+13 pct. points)	65%	84%
Total Respondents	106 Adult Orchestras	151 Adult Orchestras	156 Adult Orchestras	523 Adult Orchestras

For certain populations within our dataset, our sample size is relatively small. These populations include people identified as nonbinary, as American Indian and Alaska Native, and as Native Hawaiian and Other Pacific Islander. The relatively small sample sizes of each of these populations means that they often go unreported, and that they consequently suffer a loss of power. For this report, we decided to include statistics for each group, for each orchestra role, while avoiding further disaggregation by budget category. We also stated and accepted that lower data confidence in the reporting of each of these demographic groups is a reasonable cost of ensuring representation.

Our sample size is also relatively small for two of the orchestra role populations in our dataset: music directors and top executives. For these two orchestra roles, we have protected data confidence by largely excluding budget group analyses.

The total League membership of 523 adult orchestras in FY20 does not represent the entire U.S. orchestra field. However, the activity of League member orchestras (programming, labor force, revenue, expense) can be considered representative of all U.S. orchestra activity, since the vast majority of non-member orchestras report annual expenses to the IRS that indicate a very small scale of operations.

²⁹FY20 was used as a basis for calculating the overall confidence level because it was the final year of data collection within the Orchestra Statistical Report.

Analytical approach

Data can be subverted through its analysis and interpretation, inadvertently perpetuating harmful stereotypes. The steps we have taken to minimize harm in the writing of this report include the following:

- Acknowledging that diversity of representation is only one aspect of inclusion.
- Centering the experiences of all historically marginalized racial/ethnic and gender groups in our analyses and reporting.
- Being clear where our small sample size inhibits our ability to disaggregate data or report on trend lines.
- Introducing U.S. population comparators.
- Consulting widely with orchestra community members who identify with a wide range of racial/ethnic and gender identities.

Within this framework, having aggregated the data using Stata software, we conducted a range of analyses including the following:

- **Descriptive analysis.** These results described and summarized data, in order to show patterns in the racial/ethnic and gender diversity of the orchestra field, including strengths and weaknesses in representation, and differences between larger and smaller-to-medium budget orchestras.
- **Constant sample analysis.** A constant sample analysis of 55 orchestras taking part in the OSR in 2010, 2015, and 2020 helped to validate the results of the descriptive research, as the cohort of orchestras supplying data had shifted over time.
- **Comparative analysis.**
 - a. Throughout the report, we compare the representation of particular racial/ethnic and gender groups in certain orchestra roles with the U.S. population. These comparisons are not necessarily intended as strategic benchmarks, but rather as a constant unit of comparison that aids future interpretation. To supplement the U.S. population data comparators, we identify peer art form and nonprofit sector comparisons wherever possible. In many cases, differences in data categories prevent comparison.
 - b. We also compare the representation of particular racial/ethnic and gender groups in certain orchestra roles, distinguished by orchestra budget category. We recognize that smaller-to-medium budget orchestras employ fewer staff than larger budget orchestras, and the musicians they employ may work for multiple orchestras; only larger budget orchestras are typically able to provide full-time musician employment. Larger budget orchestras typically have the financial leverage needed to pay higher salaries and to hire consultants. Smaller-to-medium budget orchestras typically operate within local hiring markets, whereas larger budget orchestras typically operate within national hiring markets.

- **Longitudinal trend analysis.** Trend analyses for all orchestra roles, broken down by orchestra budget group wherever sample size permitted, allowed us to assess representation growth and decline over time. Trends were considered sufficiently meaningful to be eligible for reporting in the text when they met the following criteria:
 - For populations with a proportion of 0% to 2.9% relative to the total sample, a 0.5-percentage point change triggered a mention in the text.
 - *Example: From 2014 to 2023, the proportion of nonbinary musicians increased by 0.6 points, from 0.0% to 0.6%.*
 - For populations with a proportion of 3% to 9.9% relative to the total sample, a 1.5-percentage point change triggered a mention in the text.
 - *Example: From 2014 to 2023, large increases in Hispanic/Latinx (2.5% to 4.8%) and Multiracial (0.8% to 2.4%) musicians.*
 - For populations with a proportion of 10% to 29% relative to the total sample, a 3-percentage point change triggered a mention in the text.
 - *Example: From 2014 to 2023, the proportion of women conductors increased meaningfully by 10.9 points, nearly doubling from 12.9% to 23.8%.*
 - For populations with a proportion of 30% or higher relative to the total sample, a 5-percentage point change triggered a mention in the text.
 - *Example: From 2014 to 2023, the proportion of women top executives slightly decreased by 1.9 percentage points, from 51.9% to 50.0%. However, women top executives grew meaningfully by 6.8 percentage points in larger budget orchestras, from 24.1% to 30.9%.*

Appendices

Appendix 2: Stories of Progress in Orchestras

During the period covered by this research, 65 symphony orchestras undertook structured programs to build EDI culture and capacity as grantees of the League’s Catalyst Fund and 117 symphony orchestras signed up as Annual Partners in the [National Alliance for Audition Support](#). By the 2021-22 season, notable progress had been made by the field as a whole in the representation of composers of color within orchestra programming (Deemer and Meals, 2022). In other areas, however, the work of challenging conventions, systems, and processes calls for significantly increased investment and coalition building.

We appreciate the magnitude of the work ahead to improve diversity of representation both on stage and off. At the same time, we lift up and applaud the work of the many orchestras who have demonstrated their commitment to this journey. While not an exhaustive inventory of work underway nationwide, the following list provides examples of actions that are being taken.

- The New Haven Symphony Orchestra discusses the steps it has taken to center new and diverse voices at the board table, and how the orchestra has benefited as a result: [Catalyst Snapshots: EDI Case Studies from American Orchestras](#).
- The Reno Philharmonic’s work showcasing the work of women conductors and composers is highlighted in [Symphony: Women Conductors and Composers Breaking Classical Music’s Glass Ceiling](#).
- The San Francisco Symphony discusses the importance of EDI Training in retaining new and more diverse musicians, board members, and staff members: [Catalyst Snapshots: EDI Case Studies from American Orchestras](#).
- Albany Symphony discusses how its partnership with the National Alliance for Audition Support, backed up by internal change work, aims to diversify its musician demographics: [Albany Symphony’s Inclusion, Diversity, Equity, and Access task force gets to work](#).
- The Dallas Symphony Orchestra has convened an annual Women in Classical Music Symposium since 2019.
- Rhode Island Philharmonic reports on increasing the number of BIPOC artists hired from 20% to 50% between the 2017-18 and 2021-22 seasons: [Rhode Island Philharmonic to expand diversity, equity, and inclusion initiatives in music education](#).
- The Detroit Symphony reflects on its long journey in EDI work: [How Far We’ve Come: What’s Working and What Isn’t](#).
- Mwakudua waNgure and Maalik Glover speak about their appointment as new Columbus Symphony violinists, and the state of diversity in the orchestra field: [“We Can Always Do More”: New Columbus Symphony Musicians on Diversity and Inclusion at Orchestras](#).
- The Kennett Symphony shares its perspective on beginning an EDI journey: [Getting Started on the EDI Journey with the Kennett Symphony](#).
- The Hartford Symphony Orchestra’s Steve Collins outlines the orchestra’s work to attract racially and ethnically diverse board members, staff members, and musicians: [Hartford Symphony administrative restructuring, reflecting focus on diversity and inclusion](#).
- The Seattle Symphony took part in the Seattle Arts Fellowship, offering placements to support emerging arts administrators and leaders of color: [Seattle Arts Fellowship announces recipients of year-long placements in administrations of Seattle Symphony, Seattle Opera, Pacific Northwest Ballet](#).
- The Black Pearl Chamber Orchestra, Hartford Symphony Orchestra, Richmond Symphony Orchestra, and Reno Philharmonic all participated in a Taki Alsop Conducting Fellowship Global Concert Series featuring women conductors during the 2022-23 season: [Nine women conductors to lead Taki Alsop concerts in U.S. and internationally in 2022-23](#).

- The St. Louis Symphony Orchestra's IN UNISON program partners with 33 churches to provide a chorus dedicated to the preservation of music with African and African-American origins, coupled with mentoring, coaching, and college assistance: SLSO IN UNISON.
- The Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra shares its EDI journey: Accelerating Change.
- The Dallas Symphony's Employee Resource Groups aim to build community among musicians, staff, and chorus members, and are profiled here: Dallas Symphony Community Groups (ERGs).
- The Chicago Philharmonic Society's Terell Johnson outlines the orchestra's work to highlight diverse voices, both on stage and behind the scenes: At Chicago Philharmonic, diversity is a priority.
- The New World Symphony, Oakland Symphony, and Phoenix Symphony discuss their implementation of the new NAAS Audition and Tenure Guidelines: Orchestrating a Better Future with New Audition and Tenure Guidelines from NAAS.
- The Chicago Symphony Youth Orchestras outline a Youth Orchestra's approach to EDI work: Catalyst Snapshots: EDI Case Studies from American Orchestras.
- The following orchestras are among those who ran Fellowship Programs for BIPOC musicians during the period 2012-13 to 2022-23.
 - Chicago Sinfonietta and Grant Park Music Festival: Chicago Sinfonietta and Grant Park Music Festival's "Project Inclusion" fellowships.
 - Chicago Symphony Orchestra: Chicago Symphony Orchestra Fellowship Program Now Accepting Applications for 2023-24 Season.
 - Cincinnati Symphony: Cincinnati Symphony and CCM announce Diversity Fellowship Program achievements.
 - Dallas Symphony Orchestra: Dallas Symphony Announces New Fellowship Program for Underrepresented Musicians.
 - Greater New Haven Youth Orchestra and New Haven Symphony Orchestra: New Haven Symphony and Neighborhood Music School create orchestral fellowship.
 - The Handel and Haydn Society: Applications Open for Handel and Haydn Society's Fellowship for Musicians from Historically Underrepresented Groups.
 - Houston Symphony and Rice University's Shepherd School of Music: Houston Symphony's music-education fundraiser, plus new musician fellowship program with Shepherd School of Music.
 - IRIS Orchestra: IRIS Orchestra's new Artist Fellows program for African-American and Hispanic musicians.
 - Los Angeles Philharmonic: Catalyst Snapshots: EDI Case Studies from American Orchestras.
 - Memphis Symphony: Memphis Symphony's new fellowship program for African American and Latinx musicians gets underway.
 - Minnesota Orchestra: Minnesota Orchestra names first two Rosemary and David Good Fellows: a trombonist and a tubist.
 - New Jersey Symphony: New Jersey Symphony accepting applications for Colton Fellowship for early-career Black and Latinx musicians.

- New York Philharmonic: New York Philharmonic and Music Academy of the West’s 2017 Fellows.
- Orpheus Chamber Orchestra: Performance Fellowship.
- Atlanta Symphony Orchestra: Atlanta Symphony Orchestra Launches New Fellowship Program.
- Pittsburgh Symphony: Pittsburgh Symphony expands program for pre-professional Black musicians.
- The Virginia Symphony: Virginia Symphony adds fellowship program for Black string musicians, in partnership with Old Dominion University.
- The following orchestras are among those who ran Fellowship Programs for BIPOC or women conductors during the period 2012-13 to 2022-23.
 - Chicago Sinfonietta: Chicago Sinfonietta expands fellowship to include emerging conductors.
 - Spokane Symphony: Spokane Symphony adds music director fellowship program.
 - Georgia Symphony in partnership with Girls Who Conduct: Georgia Symphony partners with Girls Who Conduct for 2021-22 fellowships for women conductors.
- The following orchestras are among those who ran programs to build pathways into professional practice for young musicians during the period 2012-13 to 2022-23.
 - Dallas Symphony Orchestra Young Strings Program: Dallas Symphony’s long-running Young Strings program, providing career pathways for underrepresented students.
 - St. Louis Symphony Youth Orchestra: Peer to Peer and SLSO College Connections.
 - Chicago Symphony Orchestra, in partnership with Chicago Musical Pathways Initiative: About CMPI.
 - The Inner City Youth Orchestra of Los Angeles and the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, in partnership with USC Thornton School of Music: Orchestrating change with the Los Angeles Orchestra Fellowship.
 - Seven symphony orchestras have joined Equity Arc, an organization dedicated to advancing racial equity in classical music by developing new pathways for BIPOC instrumentalists to pursue their passions: Equity Arc: Advancing Equity & Social Justice.

Appendices

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