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**MAY STEARMAN RECEIVES ACSO'S EMERGING PROFESSIONAL AWARD**

**Thursday, June 20, 2024** – The Association of California Symphony Orchestras (ACSO) announced today that **May Stearman**, Community Engagement Program Manager at the San Francisco Symphony (SFS), received the 2024 Emerging Professional Award that comes with an honorarium and will be presented at ACSO's 2024 Annual Conference in San Francisco from July 25-27.

The ACSO Emerging Professional Award recognizes the current contributions and the future potential of an individual who has been in the orchestra/classical music field within their first five years but who has already made significant contributions to their organization and has demonstrated the potential for leadership and continuing professional growth. This individual has experienced early career success in the field, has helped elevate the mission of their organization, and thus is actively making an impact in the community.

Stearman was nominated by Laura Bergmann, Associate Director of Advocacy & Community Engagement and the San Francisco Symphony for her extraordinary work with the symphony's community partners, civic leaders, and elected officials on initiatives such as the Free Community Ticket Program, the Music in Wards Program, and Día de los Muertos and All San Francisco concerts. Stearman's approach to her community work is praised for being rooted in curiosity, research, and empathy, and bolstered by enthusiasm for music across genres.

"May's strategic, efficient approach and problem-solving skills combined with her intrinsic ability to connect with people makes her a natural leader," said Bergmann. "I wish I could keep track of how many people share with me how much they enjoy working with May but the list is simply too long. The respect people have for her both within and outside our organization speaks volumes. May would be an amazing partner at any organization, and we are extremely fortunate to call her a colleague at the San Francisco Symphony."

ACSO executive director, Sarah Weber, said "ACSO recognizes how important it is to invest in the future of the classical music field by identifying and encouraging those who are challenging the status quo, bringing new ideas, working collaboratively, and invigorating their organizations. May embodies these ideals, and we are proud to honor her with this award."

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The San Francisco Symphony is an award-winning symphony, led by Music Director Esa-Pekka Salonen, and exists to inspire and serve audiences and communities throughout the Bay Area and the world through the power of musical performance. [www.sfsymphony.org](http://www.sfsymphony.org)

The Association of California Symphony Orchestras (ACSO), founded in 1969, is a member service organization representing 120 classical music organizations and their 2,000 board and staff in its network. ACSO's members are comprised of professional, academic, youth, and community-based orchestras, choruses, and festivals in California and the western region. ACSO's annual awards program recognizes remarkable individuals and organizations for their meaningful contributions to the orchestra field. To read about all our 2024 award winners, click [here](http://www.acso.org). [www.acso.org](http://www.acso.org)