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**ACSO'S 2020 AWARD WINNERS FIND SUCCESS DURING CHALLENGING TIMES**

Thursday, September 24, 2020 – The Association of California Symphony Orchestras (ACSO) announced today the winners of its 2020 Annual Awards, including the inaugural Executive Leadership Award, the inaugural Emerging Professional Awards, the fourth Kris Sinclair Leadership Award, and 24th Most Valuable Player Volunteer Awards. ACSO's annual awards program recognizes remarkable individuals and organizations within ACSO's membership network for their meaningful contributions to the orchestra field.

The **Kris Sinclair Leadership Award** is named in honor of Kris Sinclair, ACSO's longtime former executive director, and is given to an organizational member that demonstrates recent and measurable leadership initiatives by its staff and/or board in one or more of the following areas: finance, governance, staff development, audience development, education, or community engagement. This Sinclair Award comes with \$5,000 which must be used to invest back in the capacity and skill-building of the awardees' staff and board.

- Kris Sinclair Leadership Award Winner: **Auburn Symphony**

The **Emerging Professional Award and Executive Leadership Award** recognize individuals from both ends of the orchestra management spectrum – those who have demonstrated ability and impact early in their career, and those who have been advancing in leadership roles for many years and whose calculated risks, acumen for strategy, and program-building have propelled their organization to overcome challenges and find success.

- Executive Leadership Award Winner: **Stephen Wilson**, President & CEO, Fresno Philharmonic
- Emerging Professional Award Winner: **Tara Aesquivel**, Executive Director, American Youth Symphony
- Emerging Professional Award Winner: **Connor Bogenreif**, Manager of Operations & Education, Long Beach Symphony

The **Most Valuable Player Volunteer Award** was created in 1996 to recognize exemplary volunteers working to support California orchestras and classical music groups.

- Most Valuable Player Volunteer Award Winner: **Dr. Jay Fiene**, Board of Directors, San Bernardino Symphony Orchestra
- Most Valuable Player Volunteer Award Winner: **Mary Ann Orr**, Board of Directors and League Member, Santa Cruz Symphony

"In the midst of a global health crisis, natural disasters, and immense social change, it is even more important to honor those with the ability to navigate change and lead others through, to find opportunity in challenge, and to step up and serve one's community," said Sarah Weber, ACSO Executive Director. "We had opened all the awards just before the pandemic broke, including two new awards, and we briefly thought about cancelling this year because our members had so much on their plates. But in the end, we decided there is no better time to shine a light on some of the people and organizations within our membership who are doing extraordinary work, especially during tough times, because they become an inspiration to us all. We are so proud of the awardees."

To learn more about the 2020 Award Winners and their accomplishments, click [here](#).

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The Association of California Symphony Orchestras (ACSO), founded in 1969, is a member service organization representing 130 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. www.acso.org