

NEWS RELEASE

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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

Orchestra Lumos Reflects on Russell Jones' Eight Years of Transformational Leadership as He Prepares to Step Down as Susanah and Naeem Fayyaz President and CEO



STAMFORD, CT (October 22, 2025) — As Russell Jones, Susanah and Naeem Fayyaz President and CEO of [Orchestra Lumos](#), prepares to conclude his tenure at the end of December, the organization reflects on an era of exceptional leadership marked by artistic innovation, institutional renewal, and community expansion. During his eight years at the helm, Mr. Jones has guided Orchestra Lumos to new heights, establishing it as a leading cultural institution across Fairfield County and beyond.

"As I reflect on eight incredible seasons leading Orchestra Lumos, the time has come for me to explore the next chapter of my career. I will hand the reins over to a new leader with fresh energy to guide Orchestra Lumos to even greater heights," said Russell Jones, President and CEO of Orchestra Lumos.

"I am proud of all we have achieved, particularly the creation of our Education, Community, Engagement, and Inclusion department, our *Small Space* concerts, and bringing top international artists to Stamford. We are all custodians of our institutions with a duty to hand them onto our successors in a better state than we found them, which I hope I have done. I am deeply grateful to our subscribers, donors, board, staff, and especially Michael Stern and the extraordinary musicians of Orchestra Lumos, for letting me have so much fun. It's been quite a fantastic ride," concluded Jones.

"I agree totally with Russell's acknowledgment of having fun – it is always energizing to work like mindedly with someone who loves music as much as he does. His commitment to Orchestra Lumos has been steadfast. Above all, he has unwaveringly supported our musicians and what music can mean for a community, and his vision for

expanding the Orchestra's reach will have a lasting impact. I am grateful for the work we have shared, and I wish Russell only the best in his next chapter – which happily, will still include Orchestra Lumos in different ways," said Michael Stern, Music Director of Orchestra Lumos.

Under Jones' leadership, Orchestra Lumos experienced the most artistically dynamic and financially successful period in its history. He oversaw the appointment of the renowned conductor Michael Stern as Music Director, navigated the challenges of the COVID-19 pandemic with strategic vision, and led the organization's rebranding from Stamford Symphony to Orchestra Lumos. This evolution broadened the Orchestra's geographic reach and deepened engagement with audiences across Fairfield County, strengthening its identity as a regional cultural beacon.

The vehicle for the delivery of these achievements was the creation of *The Crescendo Fund for the Future of Orchestra Lumos*, launched in 2020. This transformative fundraising initiative raised \$4 million from 40 extraordinary donors, increasing the annual budget from \$1.5 million to \$2.5 million, the largest in the Orchestra's history. With this critical support, the Orchestra was able to create a sustainable framework for the Orchestra's future and a significant expansion of its mission-driven activities: artistic, educational, and community engagement.

Performances by the Orchestra remain at the heart of its work and during this period audiences experienced extraordinary collaborations with internationally renowned artists, including cellist Yo-Yo Ma and violinist Joshua Bell, among others. In addition, the Orchestra introduced its popular music-and-film series, performing live scores to beloved films such as *Bugs Bunny at the Symphony* (2024), *Toy Story in Concert* (2025), and *Fantasia in Concert* (February 2026), bringing hundreds of families to experience the Orchestra for the first time and deepening its connection with audiences across Fairfield County.

"As a musician, I have deeply appreciated Russell's leadership and vision for Orchestra Lumos. His dedication to artistic excellence and community engagement has elevated our orchestra," said Susan Lorentsen, violinist and Chair of the Musicians' Committee at Orchestra Lumos. "Through Russell's efforts, we have been able to bring incredible and varied music to audiences across Fairfield County. I am grateful for the opportunities he has created for both musicians and the community, and for cultivating a spirit of respect and cooperation for everyone involved."

Jones was instrumental in enabling members of the Orchestra, in small ensembles, to deliver the popular, county-wide *Small Space* series, which brings intimate performances to libraries, places of worship and community venues throughout Fairfield County, allowing audiences to experience the Orchestra up close and fostering deeper engagement with local neighborhoods.

The *Play, Sing, Listen Fund* saw over \$1 million dollars deliver a hugely increased education and community engagement program. Initiatives with after-school programs such as the Greater Connecticut Youth Orchestras, INTEMPO and PROJECT MUSIC, plus annual visits to several school districts. The *Reading and Rhythm* program presented in Fairfield County libraries in partnership with *Music Together*, has been a great success for children under 5 years of age.

Orchestra Lumos further strengthened its community presence through initiatives such as Artists in the Community, featuring ensembles like the Dalí Quartet in bilingual performances and student residencies; new commissions and performances that highlight contemporary composers; and enhanced diversity, equity, and inclusion efforts supported by the *League of American Orchestras' Catalyst Fund*. These initiatives reflect a sustained commitment to ensuring that the Orchestra's programming, leadership, and partnerships mirror the diversity of the communities it serves.

Jones will remain with Orchestra Lumos through December 2025 and will continue to serve in a consultative capacity thereafter. The Board of Directors is conducting a thoughtful and comprehensive search to identify the next Susanah and Naeem Fayyaz President and CEO, ensuring a seamless transition that maintains the Orchestra's artistic momentum and fosters organizational growth.

"Russell's tenure has been transformational for Orchestra Lumos. His vision, creativity, energy, optimism, and human warmth have brought the Orchestra to a new level of artistic range and achievement as well as a broader connection to the community, all while creating a strong financial foundation for the organization. On behalf of the Board of Directors of Orchestra Lumos and the entire orchestra family, I extend our deepest gratitude to Russell for his outstanding leadership and dedication. While we are sad to see Russell step down from his current role later this year, we are looking forward to his continued contributions on a consultative basis," said Thomas Herbig, Chair of the Board of Directors for Orchestra Lumos.

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About Orchestra Lumos

Formerly known as Stamford Symphony, Orchestra Lumos is the preeminent orchestra serving all of Fairfield County CT. We are expanding in multiple dimensions, bringing more of the music you love throughout Fairfield County. Our mission is to present exceptional musical experiences, from awe-inspiring concerts with world-renowned soloists to family-friendly programs that captivate all ages. We're also expanding our reach with intimate performances in smaller spaces, hands-on education programs, and community presentations across the county. While our home base is The Palace Theatre in Stamford, you can also experience our music in venues from Greenwich to Bridgeport, including local libraries, schools, museums, breweries, places of worship, and community centers. For more information, please visit: www.orchestralumos.org.

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