

NEWS RELEASE

Media Contact

Christina Rae

Buzz Creators, Inc. for Orchestra Lumos

914-358-5080

crae@buzz-creators.com



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

ORCHESTRA LUMOS ANNOUNCES WALKER BEARD AS ITS NEW SUSANAH AND NAEEM FAYYAZ PRESIDENT AND CEO

Beard's Return to Connecticut Signals the Next Chapter of Fairfield County's Preeminent Music Organization

STAMFORD, CT (November 17, 2025) —Building upon a remarkable period of growth and renewal, Orchestra Lumos is poised to enter its next chapter of creative momentum. In a seamless passing of the torch, Board of Directors President Thomas Herbig and Search Committee Co-Chair John Jove are pleased to announce the appointment of Walker Beard as the organization's new Susanah and Naeem Fayyaz President and CEO to succeed Russell Jones beginning January 1, 2026.

Beard is a highly respected arts industry leader whose passion is met with extensive experience, a strong vision and a commitment to artistic excellence, community engagement, and organizational growth. Beard currently serves as Director of Operations at The Dallas Opera leading all aspects of artistic administration, production, artist development, and digital initiatives. By strategically aligning artistic and development efforts, he has led numerous initiatives that have helped strengthen the organization's fundraising capacity and increased support from donors and foundations. Prior to his time in Dallas, Beard also led operations at prestigious arts organizations including managing the Mostly Mozart Festival, Great Performers series, and White Light Festival at Lincoln Center for the Performing Arts and the Trinity Baroque Orchestra, NOVUS New York, and the GRAMMY-nominated Choir of Trinity Wall Street at Trinity Church Wall Street. Beard has long-established ties to the music community in Connecticut, having pursued graduate studies at the University of Connecticut and having served on the faculty of Sacred Heart University.

"I'm deeply honored to join Orchestra Lumos, an organization whose artistry, innovation, and community spirit I have long admired. The Orchestra has achieved extraordinary growth with Russell Jones at the helm, and I'm excited to build on the solid foundation he has secured while exploring new opportunities for creativity, connection, and community," said **Walker Beard**. "Having completed my doctoral coursework at the University of Connecticut, I was very much aware of the then-Stamford Symphony's status as a leading ensemble. Little could I have imagined that I would one day return to Connecticut to run the organization now known as Orchestra Lumos. It's truly a full-circle moment, and I'm thrilled to begin this new chapter with Michael Stern, the musicians, the board, the staff and the Stamford community."

Following the visionary tenure of Russell Jones, current Susanah and Naeem Fayyaz President and CEO of Orchestra Lumos, Beard is positioned to guide the organization into its next exciting new chapter defined by a continued dedication to the Orchestra's artistic achievements and expanding its impact in the community. Under Jones' leadership, Orchestra Lumos experienced the most artistically dynamic and financially successful period in its history. Beard will build upon the transformative work catalyzed by Jones and is charged with expanding Orchestra Lumos' footprint while strengthening philanthropy, audience development, and financial reserves.

"It was very clear to all of us that Walker Beard would be the perfect partner to join Orchestra Lumos at this important transitional moment. I am thrilled that I will have the opportunity to partner with Walker, and that together we all will continue the trajectory of excellence and artistic aspiration that Russell Jones has built so tirelessly over these past years," said **Michael Stern, Music Director of Orchestra Lumos**. "Working with Russell has been a privilege; he set a high bar, and it raised the stakes for us in our search. For myself and the organization, I was hoping for someone with real artistic vision, a clear optimism to advocate for music and the arts in our community, a true musician, and a leader ready to move Orchestra Lumos forward — and we found all of that in Walker Beard. I welcome him to Orchestra Lumos, and I can't wait to begin our journey together," added Stern.

"After a thorough and thoughtful search process, the Board is confident that Walker Beard is the right leader to guide Orchestra Lumos into its next era," said **Thomas Herbig, Chair of the Board of Directors for Orchestra Lumos**. "While we will miss Russell Jones' visionary leadership and the remarkable progress achieved under his tenure, we're equally excited to welcome Walker Beard and the fresh perspectives he brings. We are grateful that Russell will remain involved in a consulting capacity, ensuring a smooth and thorough transition as we continue building on the Orchestra's incredible momentum."

"The musicians are excited to welcome Walker Beard to our Lumos family. His ideas will bring a fresh perspective to our work, while continuing the sense of collaboration and excellence that defines who we are as musicians," said **Susan Lorentsen, violinist and Chair of the Musicians' Committee at Orchestra Lumos**. "We're deeply grateful for the vision and opportunities that Russell Jones has created for both musicians and our audiences, and we look forward to building on that legacy together under this new chapter of leadership."

Jones, who announced his pending departure earlier this year, will transition into a consulting capacity to ensure a seamless transition of leadership. This is a rare and valued arrangement in the orchestra field, as outgoing executives are often not available for ongoing guidance. This collaborative approach reflects Orchestra Lumos' deep commitment to continuity and shared vision, maintaining the organization's core values, elevating artistic momentum, and fostering institutional growth.

"Steering Orchestra Lumos through eight incredible seasons has been the privilege of a lifetime. I am proud of everything we have accomplished together and confident that the Orchestra is well positioned for an exciting new chapter. I could not be more delighted at the appointment of Walker Beard; he will bring us great vision and a passion for music and community. I look forward to his development of the organization and taking us to higher and greater levels of service to our Fairfield County community," said **outgoing President and CEO Russell Jones**.

Beard was selected following a formal search process that began in June 2025 and his appointment was approved unanimously in October 2025 by a full Board of Directors vote. Search Committee members were Orchestra Lumos Board Chair Thomas Herbig and Board Members John Jove, Deborah Stern, and Dale Todaro; Music Director Michael Stern; Orchestra Musicians Susan Lorentsen and John Dent; and staff members Tony Melone and Lisa Rich.

The executive search was led by Catherine French of The Catherine French Group.

Follow us on social media @orchestralumos



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.

###



Photo: Aviva Maller