



# Newark Symphony Hall

## **Newark Symphony Hall Creates Black-Led Investment Committee**

### **Legendary arts and entertainment venue forms seven-member, volunteer-based body with Black executives from Goldman Sachs, Facebook and AllianceBernstein**

NEWARK, N.J. – Oct. 20, 2020 – [Newark Symphony Hall](#), one of New Jersey’s oldest and largest arts and entertainment venues, has announced the creation of a volunteer-based, seven-member Investment Committee to shape oversight policy and provide fund-management guidance. Committee members come from companies such as Goldman Sachs and AllianceBernstein, among other financial entities, and will help the venue achieve fundraising milestones while supporting its various social and racial justice initiatives.

Committee members are:

- Ka’Neda Bullock, president, Master Plan Investment Group
- Kevin Clark, senior director of investment banking, Navatar
- Chidi Erike, client partner, Facebook
- Jerald Gooden, investment associate, AllianceBernstein
- Darren Harris, senior vice president, Goldman Sachs
- Kwame Marfo, board chair, Accompany Capital
- Crystal J. Mullins, vice president – public finance, FHN Financial

“As a Black-led institution, it was paramount for us to create a volunteer-based body that understands and supports our goals and mission,” said Taneshia Nash Laird, president and CEO of Newark Symphony Hall. “This team – comprised largely of millennials – will help our 95-year-old venue continue its unique programming and outreach initiatives.”

Nash Laird added: “Our committee members epitomize the concept of ‘Black Excellence,’ and will signal an important step toward ensuring the longevity and sustainability of our organization in New Jersey’s largest city.”

The committee will establish investment policies while setting goals, timeframes and restrictions. An initial fundraising goal includes the first phase of a \$40 million renovation slated to begin in early-2021.

Newark Symphony Hall Board Treasurer, Travis Reid, an ex-officio member of the committee, said, “The supplemental guidance provided by this committee will assure donors that their funds will be invested wisely. Our members have also expressed a willingness to support our many fundraising efforts.”

“I cannot express enough just how important Newark Symphony Hall is for the City of Newark. It has hosted legendary acts, served as a landmark for ‘Brick City’ and now aims to strengthen community economic development initiatives,” said Harris, a committee member who also serves on the venue’s board of directors. “I’m honored to be a part of the committee and to be in such good company.”

The venue is now also shifting from a first-come, first-served, multipurpose rental model to a more intentional framework that centers around the creation of opportunities for local performing artists and a home for creators of color, according to Nash Laird.

“The people of the Greater Newark region are from the African diaspora, of Portuguese descent, Hispanic/Latinx, and Asian and Pacific Islanders,” she added. “Our new programming will give these groups a place to see their culture celebrated.”

Newark Symphony Hall has developed four new community-based initiatives: the New Jersey Youth Poet Laureate, a program designed to maximize participation from young writers of color, “The Lab,” which will cultivate artistic career pathways for local residents, an Artist-in-Residence program, which will support individual artists of color from around the world, and the Greater Newark Performing Artist Registry, a virtual resource and platform for local, self-identifying performing artists.

The venue is owned by the City of Newark and operated by the nonprofit Newark Performing Arts Corporation.

Newark Mayor Ras J. Baraka recently appointed four new board members including the city’s Chief Financial Officer, Danielle Smith, Arts and Cultural Affairs Director, fayemi shakur, Keith Hamilton, of Newark’s Housing & Economic Development Department, and Goldman Sachs’ Darren Harris.

## **About Newark Symphony Hall**

Born in 1925, Newark Symphony Hall (NSH) has been the home of almost a century of arts and culture in what is now one of New Jersey’s oldest and largest arts and entertainment venues. NSH remains as committed as ever to providing an artistically rich experience for art lovers of all ages, while creating career pathways for people of color from around the world – and bettering both its community and the Greater Newark region. The venue recently began production on “[The Soul of Newark Symphony Hall](#),” its celebration of “Black Newark” developed by scholar and composer Guthrie Ramsey, told through narration, reenactments, music and cinematic and photographic montage. Its “Symphony of Survival,” a creative project led by Newark poet Jasmine Mans as part of the venue’s [#EmbraceNewark](#) initiative, features writings, footage and photos by 10 talented local Black artists documenting their pandemic experience. For more information, visit: [www.NewarkSymphonyHall.org](http://www.NewarkSymphonyHall.org).

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