

NASHVILLE

AFRICAN AMERICAN
WIND SYMPHONY, INC.

THE CRESCENDO

NAAWS INAUGURAL *Fundraising Gala*

FEBRUARY 28, 2026

THE COWAN
500 COWAN STREET | NASHVILLE, TN

2026 SPONSORSHIP &
UNDERWRITING OPPORTUNITIES



Dear Community Partner,

The Nashville African American Wind Symphony, Inc. (NAAWS) is honored to invite you to partner with us as a corporate sponsor for our Inaugural Fundraiser Gala, *The Crescendo*, taking place on February 28, 2026 at The Cowan in Nashville, Tennessee. This milestone event marks the five-year anniversary of NAAWS — a celebration of music, community, and the transformative power of education and cultural excellence.

Founded and led by Dr. Bruce V. Ayers, Jr., NAAWS exists to Educate, Perform, Inspire, Create, and Cultivate change — our EPICC mission that guides every performance, program, and partnership. Over the past five years, NAAWS has become a vital voice in Nashville's cultural landscape, uniting artistry and advocacy through performances that uplift and initiatives that educate.

We are honored to announce Gina Miller as the Honorary Chair for *The Crescendo*. Ms. Miller's leadership, advocacy, and longstanding commitment to the arts and community make her an ideal ambassador for this historic evening. Her support underscores the significance of this moment and elevates the impact of our mission as we gather to celebrate legacy, excellence, and the future of music.

The Gala will not only raise awareness and critical funds to sustain our mission, but will also serve as a night to honor and celebrate community and industry musicians whose contributions have shaped the musical identity of Nashville. This annual celebration will pay tribute to those who continue to inspire excellence and open doors for the next generation of artists and educators.

Funds raised from this event will directly support:

- Educational Programming: Expansion of the NAAWS Youth Honor Band and student mentorship opportunities.



- Organizational Sustainability: Including venue and performance costs, community outreach, and instrument support.
- Community Impact Initiatives: Providing access to music education and performance experiences for underserved populations.

In addition to sponsorship opportunities, we will host a Silent Auction during the Gala, with proceeds benefiting NAAWS programs and outreach efforts. We welcome and deeply appreciate donations of items, experiences, or services from our community partners to make this effort a success.

Your partnership helps amplify our reach, strengthen our mission, and ensure that the sound of Black musical excellence continues to resonate across generations. Together, we can honor our past, uplift the present, and build a stronger future through music and community.

We thank you for considering this opportunity to invest in the next movement of musical and cultural excellence with the Nashville African American Wind Symphony.

With gratitude and anticipation,

Kendra Smith

Gala Co-Chair & Director of Operations
Nashville African American Wind Symphony, Inc.

Melaneice Gibbs

Gala Co-Chair & Director of Marketing
Nashville African American Wind Symphony, Inc.

Gina Miller

Gala Honorary Chair
Waters Edge Entertainment



NAAWS STAFF

Dr. Bruce V. Ayers, Jr.

Founder/CEO and Musical Director

Alexandro Nichols

Associate Music Director

Dr. Terrance Bankett

Chief Operating Officer

Rontrell Callahan

Director of Youth Initiatives & Programming. Assistant Music Director

Michelle Allen

Chief Financial Officer

Melaneice Gibbs

Director of Marketing

Kendra T. Smith

Director of Operations

Sydney Verge

Director of Communications



NAAWS BOARD OF DIRECTORS

Dr. Patrice Martin

President

Dr. Terrica Arnold

Secretary

Kimberly McLemore

Vice President

Jonathan Saad

Treasurer

John Richardson

Franklin Westbrook

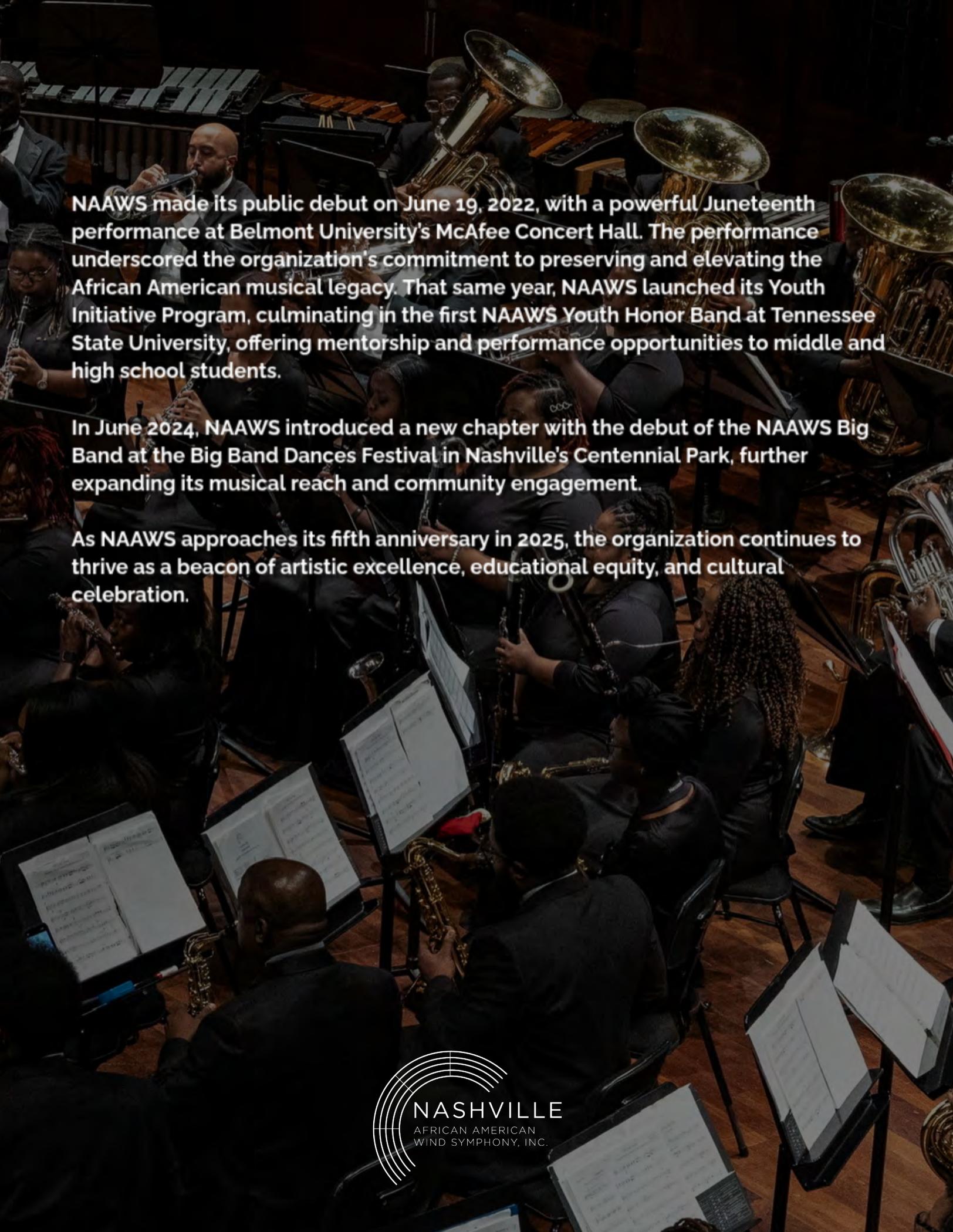
Dr. G. Preston Wilson, Jr.

OUR HISTORY

The Nashville African American Wind Symphony (NAAWS), Inc. was founded on September 19, 2020, by Dr. Bruce V. Ayers, Jr., as a platform for college-educated musicians with a passion for wind ensemble performance. Initially envisioned as a community band, the organization quickly evolved into a cultural institution with a broader mission. Ayers was soon joined by a core leadership team of music educators and visionaries, including Ashley Crawford, a Tennessee State University music professor and NAAWS's first president (2020–2024), Rontrell Callahan, and Dr. Terrance Bankett. Together, they shape the foundation of NAAWS, guiding the ensemble beyond performance into community impact and educational access. As NAAWS grew, it expanded beyond performance to address a critical gap in music education: the lack of African American representation in formal concert band settings. While marching bands flourish in many inner-city schools, concert ensemble opportunities often remain limited, leaving students without access to this important musical tradition. NAAWS, Inc. seeks to close this gap by providing representation, education, and performance access—showing young Black musicians that they, too, belong on the concert stage. To support this mission, a distinguished Board of Directors was assembled, including:

- Dr. Terrance Bankett (Administration)
- Rontrell Callahan (Assistant Director)
- Marissa King (Historian)
- Dr. Reginald McDonald (Chairman of the Board and Director)
- Alexandro Nichols (Assistant Director)
- Stephanie Richardson (Director of Communications)

The ensemble held its first rehearsal on September 19, 2021, at Tennessee State University—a symbolic full circle moment on the organization's first anniversary. Since then, NAAWS has become a vital voice in Nashville's cultural landscape, garnering support and recognition from the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), NewsChannel 5, WPLN/NPR, Relative Pitch podcast, and more.

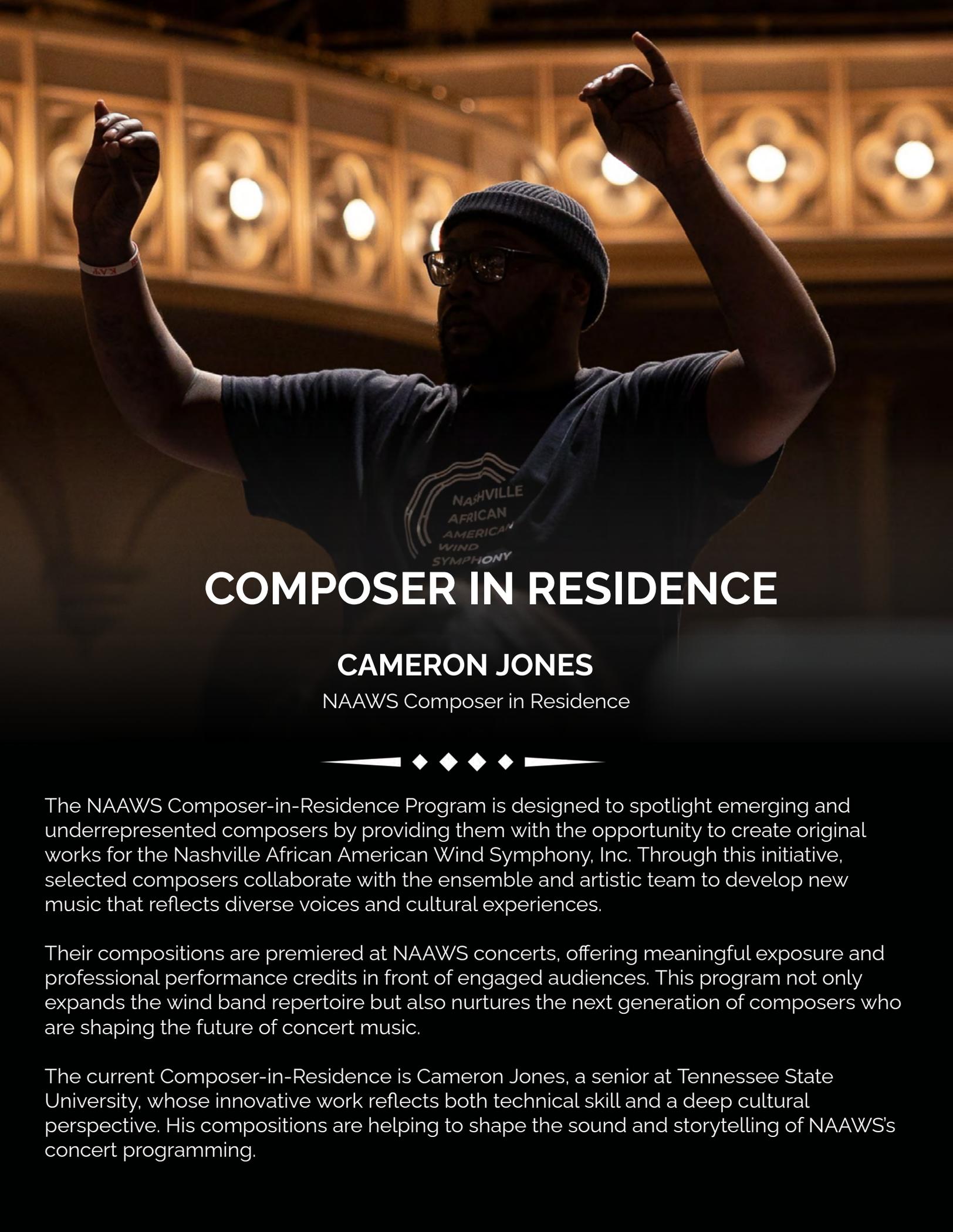


NAAWS made its public debut on June 19, 2022, with a powerful Juneteenth performance at Belmont University's McAfee Concert Hall. The performance underscored the organization's commitment to preserving and elevating the African American musical legacy. That same year, NAAWS launched its Youth Initiative Program, culminating in the first NAAWS Youth Honor Band at Tennessee State University, offering mentorship and performance opportunities to middle and high school students.

In June 2024, NAAWS introduced a new chapter with the debut of the NAAWS Big Band at the Big Band Dances Festival in Nashville's Centennial Park, further expanding its musical reach and community engagement.

As NAAWS approaches its fifth anniversary in 2025, the organization continues to thrive as a beacon of artistic excellence, educational equity, and cultural celebration.





COMPOSER IN RESIDENCE

CAMERON JONES

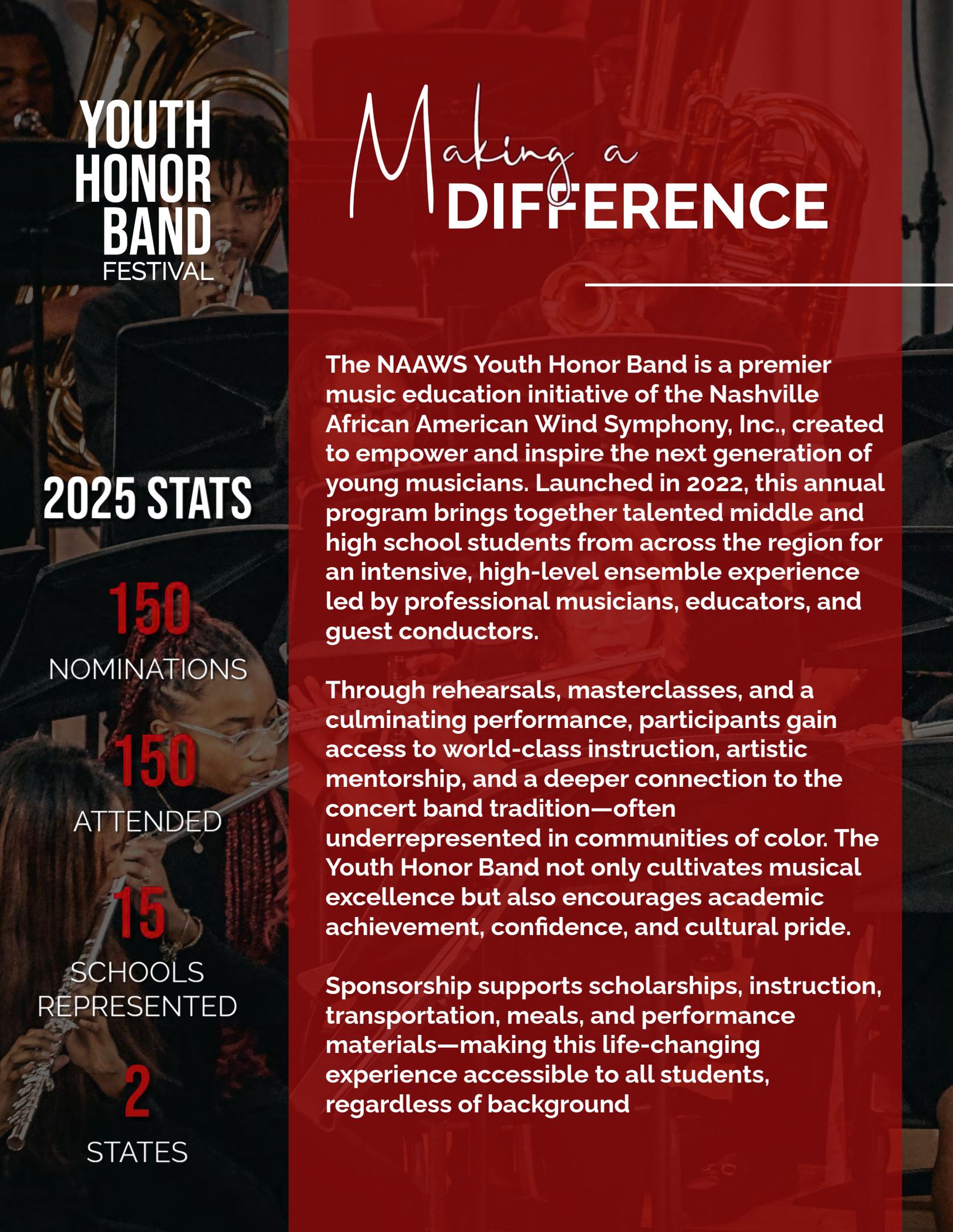
NAAWS Composer in Residence



The NAAWS Composer-in-Residence Program is designed to spotlight emerging and underrepresented composers by providing them with the opportunity to create original works for the Nashville African American Wind Symphony, Inc. Through this initiative, selected composers collaborate with the ensemble and artistic team to develop new music that reflects diverse voices and cultural experiences.

Their compositions are premiered at NAAWS concerts, offering meaningful exposure and professional performance credits in front of engaged audiences. This program not only expands the wind band repertoire but also nurtures the next generation of composers who are shaping the future of concert music.

The current Composer-in-Residence is Cameron Jones, a senior at Tennessee State University, whose innovative work reflects both technical skill and a deep cultural perspective. His compositions are helping to shape the sound and storytelling of NAAWS's concert programming.



YOUTH HONOR BAND FESTIVAL

Making a DIFFERENCE

2025 STATS

150

NOMINATIONS

150

ATTENDED

15

SCHOOLS
REPRESENTED

2

STATES

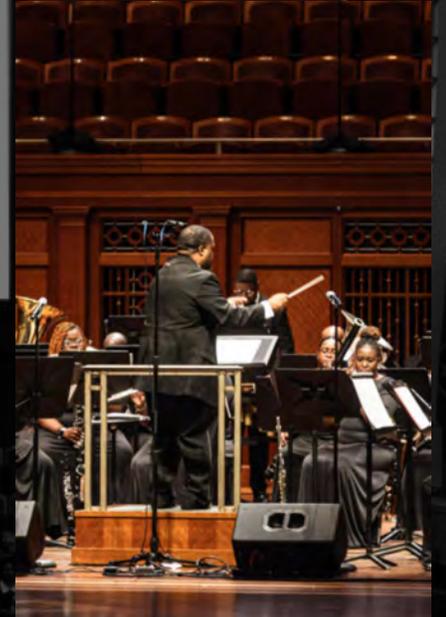
The NAAWS Youth Honor Band is a premier music education initiative of the Nashville African American Wind Symphony, Inc., created to empower and inspire the next generation of young musicians. Launched in 2022, this annual program brings together talented middle and high school students from across the region for an intensive, high-level ensemble experience led by professional musicians, educators, and guest conductors.

Through rehearsals, masterclasses, and a culminating performance, participants gain access to world-class instruction, artistic mentorship, and a deeper connection to the concert band tradition—often underrepresented in communities of color. The Youth Honor Band not only cultivates musical excellence but also encourages academic achievement, confidence, and cultural pride.

Sponsorship supports scholarships, instruction, transportation, meals, and performance materials—making this life-changing experience accessible to all students, regardless of background



Celebration
OF **FREEDOM**
JUNETEENTH CONCERT



THE CRESCENDO

NAAWS INNAUGURAL FUNDRAISING GALA

\$10,000

PLATINUM SPONSOR

10 Reserved tickets with table signage (2 of the 10 tickets sponsor a student musician)
Bottle of wine
Acknowledgement from the podium
Full page advertisement in digital gala program
Digital ad to be displayed during gala
Business logo on all Gala marketing and NAAWS website
One minute advertising video to be played during the gala
Business logo on gala step & repeat
5 tickets to NAAWS Juneteenth Concert

\$7,500

GOLD SPONSOR

10 Reserved tickets with table signage (2 of the 10 tickets sponsor a student musician)
Bottle of wine
Acknowledgement from the podium
Full page advertisement in digital gala program
Digital ad to be displayed during gala
Business logo on all Gala marketing and NAAWS website
5 tickets to NAAWS Juneteenth Concert

\$5,000

SILVER SPONSOR

5 Reserved tickets with signage
Acknowledgement during the benefit dinner
Half-page advertisement in digital gala program
Business logo on all Gala marketing and NAAWS website

\$2,500

BRONZE SPONSOR

3 Reserved tickets with signage
Acknowledgement during the benefit dinner
Half-page advertisement in digital gala program
Business logo on all Gala marketing and NAAWS website

THE CRESCENDO

NAAWS INAUGURAL FUNDRAISING GALA

INDIVIDUAL & TABLE TICKET PURCHASES

\$150

INDIVIDUAL TICKET

\$600

HALF TABLE
(Seats 5)

\$1,200

FULL TABLE
(Seats 10)

DIGITAL ADVERTISEMENTS

All ads must be created by the sponsor and submitted by the February 15th deadline. Dimensions and file types will be emailed to sponsors upon ad donation.

ROTATING STILL AD IMAGE \$200

Still image graphic that will rotate screens throughout the night

A MAGICAL CHRISTMAS

2024 BENEFIT CONCERT



Sleep in heavenly peace,
Sleep in heavenly peace.



NASHVILLE AFRICAN AMERICAN WIND SYMPHONY

PRESENTS

THE CRESCENDO

NAAWS INAUGURAL *Fundraising Gala*

*Celebrating 5 Years of Musical Excellence
Honoring Nashville's Music Industry Icons & Change makers*

FEB 28 2026

6 PM COCKTAIL HOUR & SILENT AUCTION | 7 PM DINNER

THE COWAN
500 Cowan Street, Nashville, TN 37207

EMAIL PROGRAMS@NAAWSMUSIC.ORG
FOR SPONSORSHIP OPPORTUNITIES

Nashville African American Wind Symphony

Inaugural Fundraiser Gala — Corporate Sponsorship Form

February 2026 | Celebrating 5 Years of Excellence

Sponsor Information

Business / Organization Name:

Contact Person:

Title / Position:

Mailing Address:

City:

State:

Zip:

Phone:

Email:

Website:

Sponsorship Level

- Platinum Sponsor – \$10,000
- Gold Sponsor – \$7,500
- Silver Sponsor – \$5,000
- Bronze Sponsor – \$2,500
- Silent Auction Item Donation (please describe below)

Silent Auction Item Description:

Payment Method

- Check Enclosed
- Pay Online at: www.naawsmusic.org
- Wire Transfer (Submit form and you will be contacted by the NAAWS CFO with instructions)

Make checks payable to: Nashville African American Wind Symphony Mail completed form and payment to:

The Nashville African American Wind Symphony, Inc. Attn: Michelle Allen

PO BOX 290321 | NASHVILLE, TN 37229

Sponsorship Benefits & Silent Auction Details

Sponsorship Benefits Summary

Platinum Sponsor – \$10,000

- Recognition as Presenting Sponsor at Gala and on all event materials
- Full-page color ad in Gala program
- Premium logo placement on NAAWS website and social media
- 8 VIP Gala tickets and reserved seating

Gold Sponsor – \$7,500

- Recognition as Gold Sponsor on event signage and website
- Half-page color ad in Gala program
- 6 VIP Gala tickets

Silver Sponsor – \$5,000

- Recognition as Silver Sponsor in Gala program and social media
- Quarter-page ad in Gala program
- 4 VIP Gala tickets

Bronze Sponsor – \$2,500

- Recognition as Bronze Sponsor in Gala program
- 2 VIP Gala tickets

Silent Auction Donation Form

Donor / Business Name: _____

Contact Person: _____

Item Description: _____

Estimated Value: _____ Restrictions (if any): _____

Pickup / Delivery Instructions: _____