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Newark Symphony Hall Awarded \$750K Grant from N.J. Historic Trust Toward \$40M Planned Renovation

Legendary arts & entertainment venue earns 'Preserve New Jersey' grant; funds will be applied to exterior façade, site repairs

TRENTON, N.J. – Oct. 30, 2020 – [Newark Symphony Hall](#) (NSH), one of New Jersey's oldest and largest arts and entertainment venues, has been recommended for a \$750,000 grant from the Preserve New Jersey Historic Preservation Fund – to renovate and restore the 95-year-old regional landmark. The capital funds will be applied to a three-phase, five-year, \$40 million renovation for NSH slated to begin in early-2021. The approval comes from the [New Jersey Historic Trust](#), an affiliate of the New Jersey Department of Community Affairs (DCA).

"We are thrilled to have received these grant funds from the Historic Trust. This capital grant of the maximum-possible award demonstrates the state's confidence in Newark Symphony Hall as a cultural and historic landmark," said Taneshia Nash Laird, president and CEO of Newark Symphony Hall. "This award will help bring Newark Symphony Hall back to its prominence as a first-class performing and community arts center."

The venue, located at 1020 Broad St. in Newark, was built in 1925 and added to the National Register of Historic Places in 1977. It is owned by the City of Newark and operated by the nonprofit Newark Performing Arts Corporation. Some of the Symphony Hall's legendary acts over the years have included Placido Domingo, The Rolling Stones, Jimi Hendrix, Bob Dylan, Tony Bennett and Aretha Franklin, among others.

Funding earned in the 2020 round will support the restoration of NSH's exterior façade. As the building envelope and interior finishes are rapidly deteriorating due to water infiltration, restoration is required to prevent further damage. This includes mortar work, stucco repairs, structural damage repair, restoration of limestone near the main entrance façade and repairs to the rooftop ductwork. All work will be undertaken in compliance with the historic preservation standards and guidelines set by the National Park Service in consultation with the state's Historic Preservation Office.

Nash Laird added: "A fully renovated and active Newark Symphony Hall is envisioned as an anchor in our Lincoln Park neighborhood – as part of a restored artist district historically known as 'The Coast.' Overall, our venue will continue to serve as the major arts and entertainment venue at the southern gateway to Newark's downtown."

The Broad Street-based venue, along with the Lincoln Park Coast Cultural District and Newark Arts – as part of a collective called the Lincoln Park Alliance – are also working to restore the neighborhood's artist district with vibrant, locally owned retail, artist housing and restaurants.

The state's Historic Trust approved a total of \$10,227,499 in grant recommendations for 50 preservation planning, heritage tourism and capital projects to save and promote historic sites. Newark Symphony Hall is one of only four projects to receive maximum funding.

“Investing in historic properties is key to preserving our past, present and future,” said New Jersey Lt. Governor Sheila Oliver, who serves as DCA Commissioner. “Each project represents a piece of New Jersey’s rich history. Restoring and preserving these properties will allow for the continued use of these structures and ensure that they continue to enrich and benefit the communities in which they are located.”

Commenting on the grant awards, New Jersey Historic Trust Executive Director, Dorothy Guzzo, said, “We’re happy to recommend this year’s grants, which will help to provide the financial and technical support needed to stabilize and revitalize historic properties throughout the state. We will continue to advance historic preservation and ensure that our historic treasures are available for future generations.”

The grant recommendations, which have been approved by the New Jersey Historic Trust Board, will be presented to the Garden State Preservation Trust at its next meeting and require a legislative appropriations bill and Governor Phil Murphy’s approval before funds are made available. Funding for the current grant round is dedicated from a voter-approved constitutional amendment that created the Preserve New Jersey Historic Preservation Fund.

Newark Symphony Hall recently formed a Black-led, seven-member, volunteer-based Investment Committee to shape oversight policy and provide fund-management guidance. The venue also 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, also features writings, footage and photos by 10 talented local Black artists documenting their pandemic experience.

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.

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