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Montgomery Symphony Orchestra Awarded a National Endowment for the Arts Grant for America250: Arts Projects Honoring the National Garden of American Heroes

Montgomery, AL—Montgomery Symphony Orchestra is pleased to announce it is the recipient of a grant from the National Endowment for the Arts (NEA) for Celebrating America250: Arts Projects Honoring the National Garden of American Heroes. A grant of \$25,000 will support *A Time for Jubilee*, a new orchestral work by composer Dr. Nkeiru Okoye.

NEA Senior Advisor Mary Anne Carter said, “As our nation approaches its 250th anniversary, the National Endowment for the Arts is honored to support communities across the country in recognizing the individuals whose contributions have defined our history. Montgomery Symphony Orchestra’s project in Montgomery plays a significant role in commemorating these heroes’ legacies while affirming the enduring role of the arts in shaping America’s future.”

“*A Time for Jubilee* is an incredible new work that tells the story of one of the most significant events in American history,” said Jamie Reeves, Music Director and Conductor of Montgomery Symphony Orchestra. “Nkeiru Okoye’s music gives voice to the courage, faith, and perseverance that defined the Selma-to-Montgomery marches, and bringing this work to life with our orchestra and young singers from local college choirs is a profound honor and a defining moment for the Montgomery Symphony Orchestra as an organization.”

Nkeiru Okoye, inaugural William Levi Dawson Composer-in-Residence, said, “I’m deeply honored that *A Time for Jubilee* has been recognized by the National Endowment for the Arts, and grateful to the Montgomery Symphony Orchestra for championing a work that reflects both the hard truths of our history and the collective hope that carries us forward.”

Montgomery Symphony Orchestra will present the world premiere of *A Time for Jubilee* on February 9, 2026, a newly commissioned oratorio by composer Dr. Nkeiru Okoye honoring the legacy of Dr. Martin Luther King Jr. and commemorating the 60th anniversary of the Selma-to-Montgomery marches. Featuring the Montgomery Symphony Orchestra, soprano Laquita Mitchell, and student choirs from Alabama State University, Tuskegee University,

and Huntingdon College, the performance at Troy University's Davis Theatre for the Performing Arts will unite professional and student artists in a powerful reflection on civil rights, community, and the ongoing pursuit of justice.

The NEA was named as a key partner in President Trump's "Celebrating America's 250th Birthday" [Executive Order](#), which calls for the establishment of the Garden of Heroes. The National Endowment for the Humanities is supporting the design and creation of the statues that will make up the National Garden. The 50 NEA-supported Arts Projects Honoring the National Garden of American Heroes will honor these individuals highlighted through a variety of artistic disciplines.

For more information on other projects included in the NEA's grant announcement, visit [arts.gov/news](https://www.arts.gov/news).