



## FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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### **COLORADO SYMPHONY NAMED ONE OF THE INAUGURAL RECIPIENTS OF SCFD INNOVATION & COLLABORATION INCUBATOR GRANT**

*New Grant-Funded Collaboration with Phamaly Theater Company Brings Sensory-Friendly Performances and Disability in the Arts Programming to More Colorado Communities.*

Jun. 2, 2025 – Denver, CO – The Colorado Symphony is proud to announce it is one of the first recipients of the new SCFD Innovation & Collaboration Incubator Grant, which will fund an exciting and expanded collaboration with Phamaly Theatre Company, the nation's longest-running disability-affirmative theatre.



The SCFD Collaborative established the Innovation and Collaboration Incubator Grant to foster cross-organizational partnerships, develop innovative, dynamic programs that serve and expand community access across Adams, Arapahoe, Boulder, Broomfield, Denver, Jefferson, and Douglas Counties, and serve historically marginalized communities. This project embodies all three goals by deepening a unique partnership between two leading Colorado arts organizations and bringing their work to new and

more inclusive audiences. Grantees went through a rigorous review process and were selected by a peer review committee.

As a result of the grant, the Colorado Symphony and Phamaly will co-produce a series of relaxed, holiday-themed cabaret performances in December 2025, as well as a culminating Disability in the Arts panel discussion. Designed to expand access and uplift disabled voices and talent, this project builds on a successful pilot performance that took place in December 2024 at Lone Tree Arts Center in Douglas County featuring Colorado Symphony musicians Kate Arndt (Principal Second Violin), Catherine Beeson (Assistant Principal Viola), Owen Lin, and Adam Riggs.

"This collaboration with Phamaly Theatre Company is a powerful expression of our commitment to ensuring that orchestral music is accessible to everyone in our community," said Daniel Wachter, Colorado Symphony President & CEO. "At the Colorado Symphony, we believe that excellence in the arts is inclusive by design — it removes barriers and creates welcoming spaces where all people can



experience the joy of live performance. Initiatives like this not only extend our reach beyond the walls of Boettcher Concert Hall, but also inform how we must work to make Boettcher itself more inclusive and accessible for future audiences. We're honored to partner with Phamaly in elevating artist voices and expanding what it means to belong in Colorado's arts spaces."

With a shared goal of creating high-quality, accessible programming for people with disabilities, this initiative will feature a live string quartet of Colorado Symphony musicians performing alongside actors from Phamaly Theatre Company. Performances will be tailored to those in the community who benefit from a more sensorily relaxed environment, and will include a curated program of classic holiday music, heartwarming stories, and monologues that celebrate the season.

Audiences will benefit from comprehensive accessibility services, including:

- American Sign Language (ASL) interpretation
- Open captioning
- Audio description
- Braille and large print programs
- Sensory devices and quiet spaces
- Wheelchair-accessible venues
- Adapted programming
- Reduced capacity seating
- Glowed houselights throughout the performance

Two performances are planned: one at Lone Tree Arts Center on December 9, 2025, with a second performance to be booked at a venue in either Arapahoe or Jefferson County, extending geographic access and community impact.



The project will also feature the fourth presentation in the Colorado Symphony's In Conversation Panel Series, with a focus on Disability in the Arts. This engaging discussion will include disabled artists and community members—including a Phamaly actor, a visually impaired student from the Denver Young Artists Orchestra, and other artists across disciplines—to explore their lived experiences and the barriers they've overcome to thrive in the arts.

"The Colorado Symphony's community and education work is built on meaningful, reciprocal partnerships," said Breanna McCaughey, Director of Community Education for the Colorado Symphony. "We believe that expanding access to the arts means



collaborating with organizations and artists who reflect the identities and experiences of the communities we serve. This partnership with Phamaly Theatre Company exemplifies that approach—showcasing the extraordinary talent of disabled artists and creating space for shared artistry, deeper connection, and more inclusive representation across our programming. Receiving this grant affirms the importance of that work and encourages us to keep pushing toward a more equitable arts landscape.”

“Phamaly’s work transforms expectations and artistic norms by centering disability as a creative asset,” said Corinne Melon, Managing Director of Phamaly Theatre Company. “We are thrilled to continue our collaboration with the Colorado Symphony and bring more radically inclusive programming to communities across the SCFD district.”

This project represents the latest example of the Colorado Symphony’s ongoing commitment to serving all communities across Colorado by creating inclusive, accessible, and artistically excellent programming. Whether through partnerships with organizations like Phamaly Theatre Company, performances in underrepresented neighborhoods, or bilingual educational initiatives that reach students across the state, the Symphony continues to expand the reach of orchestral music and ensure that people of all backgrounds and abilities can experience the transformative power of the arts.

For more information about the project, performance dates, or the Disability in the Arts panel, please visit [coloradosymphony.org](https://coloradosymphony.org) and [phamaly.org](https://phamaly.org). For more information about the Colorado Symphony, contact Nick Dobreff at 303.308.2477 or [ndobreff@coloradosymphony.org](mailto:ndobreff@coloradosymphony.org).

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For high-resolution, downloadable images of the Colorado Symphony,  
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Support for the 2024/25 Colorado Symphony Season is provided by: The Scientific & Cultural Facilities District (SCFD), Genesee Mountain Foundation, Denver Arts & Venues, Bonfils-Stanton Foundation, Chamber Initiatives, and the Colorado Symphony Guild.

#### **TICKETS:**

Tickets to Colorado Symphony events are available online at [coloradosymphony.org/tickets](https://coloradosymphony.org/tickets), by phone at 303.623.7876, and in person at the Boettcher Concert Hall Box Office, Denver Performing Arts Complex, 1000 14th Street. The Box Office is open Monday - Friday, 10 a.m. - 5 p.m., Saturday, noon – 5 p.m., and two hours prior to each performance.



### **ABOUT PHAMALY THEATER COMPANY**

Founded in 1989, Phamaly Theatre Company is the longest-running disability-affirmative theatre in the country. Known for producing professional, award-winning work performed exclusively by artists with disabilities, Phamaly radically redefines the theater experience by celebrating disability as an asset and vital part of the creative process. In 1989, PHAMALy (Physically Handicapped Amateur Musical Actors League) was founded by five students from the Boettcher School in Denver, all living with disabilities, who had grown frustrated with the lack of theatrical opportunities for people living with disabilities. In 1990 PHAMALy produced its first show - Guys and Dolls. PHAMALy's founders were ahead of their time in building an inclusive organization that directly served disenfranchised individuals with disabilities from all racial, ethnic, gender, and class identities. Throughout its history, Phamaly has maintained its dedication to this principle of inclusion while creating innovative reinventions of established works. Today, the organization has changed its name to Phamaly Theatre Company (PTC), but its dedication to exclusively featuring actors with disabilities continues. At every performance, you will see actors with all nature of disabilities: physical, cognitive, intellectual, and emotional. PTC gives actors a supportive space to explore and develop their craft, empowers artists within their disability identity, educates the community about access and inclusion, and entertains audiences with high-quality, award winning theatre.

### **ABOUT THE COLORADO SYMPHONY**

One of the leading orchestras in the United States, the Colorado Symphony Association is a not-for-profit 501 (c)(3) organization performing more than 150 concerts annually at Boettcher Concert Hall in downtown Denver and across Colorado. Led by Principal Conductor Peter Oundjian, the Colorado Symphony is home to eighty full-time musicians, representing more than a dozen nations, and regularly welcomes the most celebrated artists from the world of symphonic music and beyond. The orchestra celebrated its Centennial during the 2023/24 concert season. In the last year, the Colorado Symphony served over 340,000 people attending live performances at concert and non-traditional venues throughout Colorado's Front Range. Recognized as an incubator of innovation, creativity, and excellence, the Colorado Symphony continually expands its reach through in-person and virtual education programs, outreach, and programming. The Colorado Symphony partners with the state's leading musical artists, cultural organizations, corporations, foundations, sports teams, and individuals to expose diverse audiences to the transformative power of music. To learn more, visit [coloradosymphony.org](https://coloradosymphony.org).