

# YOUNG PROFESSIONAL OF THE YEAR AWARD FINALISTS

## Teddy Abrams,

Music Director, The Louisville Orchestra

Teddy Abrams, *Musical America's* 2022 Conductor of the Year, is now in his tenth season as Music Director of the Louisville Orchestra (LO). As profiled by the *New York Times*, *CBS Sunday Morning*, the *New Yorker*, NPR, *Opera News*, the *Wall Street Journal*, PBS's *Articulate*, and PBS *NewsHour*, he has been the galvanizing force behind the orchestra's extraordinary artistic renewal and commitment to innovative community engagement since his appointment in September 2014. Abrams's 2023- 24 season with the LO begins with a tour with mandolinist, vocalist, and composer Chris Thile that features his new song cycle *ATTENTION!*, co- commissioned by the LO. This continues the LO's historic multi-season state tour – "In Harmony – The Commonwealth Tour of the Louisville Orchestra" – that began last season. Other season highlights include music of Gabriel Kahane and John Adams; Mahler's "Tragic" Symphony No. 6; and "Creators Fest" concerts featuring world premieres of works from the second round of composers participating in the Louisville Orchestra Creators Corps. This trailblazing initiative provides a fully funded residency for three composers who receive local housing, a salary, health benefits and dedicated workspaces.



## Why Should This Nominee Be Recognized as Kentucky's Young Professional of the Year?

Teddy Abrams needs no introduction to Louisvillians involved in the city's rich and vibrant musical community, and thanks to his efforts over the past decade, he and the Louisville Orchestra are at the forefront of cutting-edge ensembles on the U.S. orchestral and classical music scene. In a recent Arts & Leisure featured profile in the *New York Times*, the headline read: "In Kentucky, a Maestro of the People," followed by, "Teddy Abrams, the 36-year-old Music Director of the Louisville Orchestra, has embedded himself in his community, breaking the mold of modern conductors." The Louisville Orchestra (LO) – an ensemble that, in the middle of the 20th century, made a name for itself by commissioning over 132 scores, and who recorded over 100 of those scores on their own record label – had reached a low point in 2010 when the group filed for bankruptcy. It seemed that the orchestra's days as a source of civic pride were over, and the ensemble's future was in jeopardy. Enter 26-year-old Teddy Abrams, then assistant conductor of the Detroit Symphony, a protégé of conductor Michael Tilson Thomas, and a native of San Francisco, was appointed Music Director Designate in October 2013. Teddy's first plan of action was to move to Louisville full-time to immerse himself in a new community and live among the musicians he was selected to lead as Music Director. Since moving to Derby City, Teddy has become a prominent local figure, as well as friends and musical partners with fellow artists Jack Harlow, Jecorey Arthur, and Jim James, with whom he and members of the LO performed on *The Tonight Show with Jimmy Fallon* in October 2019. Abrams and Councilman Arthur collaborated with Hip-Hop N2 Learning to start the Louisville Orchestra Rap School.