



**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE**

September 18, 2024

**CONTACT:** Ashley Mirakian  
[ashley.mirakian@atlantasymphony.org](mailto:ashley.mirakian@atlantasymphony.org)

**ATLANTA SYMPHONY ORCHESTRA ANNOUNCES PANEL DISCUSSIONS FOR HBCU ACCESSFEST**

**Presented by Invesco QQQ and Delta Air Lines**

**ATLANTA** – The Atlanta Symphony Orchestra (ASO) is pleased to announce the lineup of events for its second-annual HBCU AccessFest on Saturday, September 21, from noon to 5 pm, at the Woodruff Arts Center. Presented by Invesco QQQ and Delta Air Lines, this free event includes a college fair, career fair, panel discussions, and a community festival outdoors on Callaway Plaza with DJs and Black-owned businesses and food trucks.

As part of the College Fair, students will have the opportunity to meet with representatives from the Atlanta University Center Consortium and about 30 Historically Black Colleges and Universities [list of colleges below]. As a part of the Career Fair, students will also have creative opportunities to interact with industry professionals and gain awareness of various career options and internships [list of partners below].

As a part of the Community Festival, internationally known DJ Salah Ananse, a Morehouse College Alum, will spin some tunes from 3:00 to 5:00 after a DJ from WVEE is on site from 12:30 to 2:15.

While the college and career fairs will be ongoing from noon to 5 pm, there will be panel discussions throughout the day, including key leaders in their fields offering insights on financial education, career advice, civic and cultural themes, and pathways into the arts.

Here is the schedule of the day's events:

12:30 – 1:00 PM / Galleria

**WELCOME AND OPENING REMARKS**

Introduction to HBCU AccessFest with welcome remarks, and a special performance by student musicians from the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra's Talent Development Program.

- Hala Modellmog, President and CEO of The Woodruff Arts Center
- Jennifer Barlament, Executive Director Atlanta Symphony Orchestra

1:15 – 2:15 PM / Atlanta Symphony Hall

### **HOW NOT TO SUCK AT MONEY: A Financial Education Conversation**

Sponsored by Invesco QQQ, this panel focuses on essential financial literacy skills for students. Learn about budgeting, investing, saving, and managing debt to build a strong financial foundation.

- **Taylor Rooks** (moderator) – Turner Sports and Amazon's Thursday Night Football broadcaster
- **Renee Montgomery** (panelist) - NCAA Champion and Co-Owner/VP of the Atlanta Dream
- **Bobby Kannady** (panelist) – Internal Market Consultant at Invesco, Morehouse Alum and Georgia Tech MBA
- **Jewel Burks Solomon** (panelist) – Howard University Graduate and Managing Partner of Collab Capital

2:30 – 3:15 PM / Atlanta Symphony Hall

### **STUDENT TRAJECTORIES: FROM HBCU TO CAREER SUCCESS**

Notable HBCU graduates share personal stories about how their education has influenced their career success, such as internships, networking, mentorship, and support systems.

- Moderator: Christopher Daniel | Atlanta Journal Constitution
- Panelist: Carla Sheilds Mills | Vice President, Human Resources at Avantor
- Panelist: Donae Burston | La Fête Wine Company Founder & CEO
- Panelist: Dr. Dr. Rahmelle Thompson | Executive Director & Assistant Dean of Pipeline Initiatives, Morehouse School of Medicine
- Panelist: Skánia Florestal | Founder and CEO, HBCUMADE
- La'Kerri Jackson | Global Director of Social Impact, UPS.

3:20 – 3:50 PM / Atlanta Symphony Hall

### **THURGOOD MARSHALL COLLEGE FUND**

Learn about how the Thurgood Marshall College Fund programs can shape your academic and career path with scholarships, and support services. Plus, there's an iPad giveaway!

- Host: DeShawn Spellman, Assistant Vice President of TCMF Ventures

4:00 – 4:45 PM / Atlanta Symphony Hall

### **THE BUSINESS OF CREATIVITY**

Highlighting the business side of the growing cultural boom in the Atlanta arts scene.

- Moderator: Bem Joiner, Principal/Cultural Conduit at Atlanta Influences Everything
- Theresa tha SONGBIRD, Musical, Lyrical, Theatrical Alchemist
- Okorie Johnson, Cellist-Composer, Looper, Improviser, Storyteller

- Melissa Mitchell, Artist & Founder of Abeille Creations

At this year's event, students will have a valuable new opportunity to broaden their educational prospects by applying to over 50 Historically Black Colleges and Universities (HBCUs) at **no cost** through a partnership with the Common Black College Application (CBCA).

Media partners include Davis Broadcasting's Smooth Jazz 100/101, Orange Barrel Media + Ike Smart City, V-103 The People's Station, Atlanta's Jazz Station WCLK, and Rolling Out Magazine.

Admission is free and tickets for the HBCU AccessFest are not required. RSVP is encouraged.

Additional details are available at [aso.org/hbcu](http://aso.org/hbcu).

Hours after the HBCU AccessFest ends, the ASO's season-opening concert begins, featuring Music Director Nathalie Stutzmann conducting music by Mahler and Schumann, featuring cellist Edgar Moreau.

### **Participating Schools**

- Alabama A&M University
- Albany State University
- Alcorn State University
- Bowie State University
- Cheyney University
- Claflin University
- Dillard University
- Elizabeth City State University
- Florida A&M
- Fort Valley State University
- Grambling State University
- Howard University
- Jackson State University
- Kentucky State University
- Mississippi Valley State University
- Morehouse School of Medicine
- Morris Brown College
- Norfolk State University
- North Carolina A&T State University
- Savannah State University
- Simmons College of Kentucky
- South Carolina State University
- Southern University and A&M College
- Spelman College
- Tennessee State University
- Tougaloo College

- University of the Virgin Islands
- Virginia State University
- Wilberforce University
- Xavier University of Louisiana

### **Career Fair Companies**

- Advocate Home Loans
- Atlanta Hartsfield Jackson International Airport, Department of Aviation
- Invesco
- Keller Williams Realtors
- PNC Bank
- US Soccer
- Usher's New Look
- Woodruff Arts Center

### **Community Resources**

- Air Force ROTC
- Alliance Theatre
- Atlanta HBCU Alumni Alliance
- City of Atlanta Housing Help Center
- Atlanta Symphony Orchestra
- HBCU Cultured Dance & Arts Society
- HBCUMADE
- Lupus Foundation of America
- MASTERS Plus Tutoring Program
- NFL Alumni of Georgia / Walgreens
- NSBE Atlanta Professionals
- Nu Lambda Omega Chapter of Alpha Kappa Alpha, Inc.
- Peace Corps
- Performance Hypothesis
- Protect the Vote GA
- Steve Brown Academy
- Thurgood Marshall College Fund (TMCF)
- Travel to HBCUs Children's Book
- United Negro College Fund (UNCF)
- Woodruff Arts Center

### **Community Partners**

- 100 Black Men of Atlanta/E100/Collegiate 100
- Atlanta Influences Everything
- Common Black College Application

- Mayor Andre Dickens' ATL Year of the Youth
- Orange Barrel Media + Ike Smart City
- Russell Innovation Center for Entrepreneurs (RICE)

### **About the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra**

Under the leadership of Music Director Nathalie Stutzmann, the Atlanta Symphony Orchestra (ASO) offers live performances, media initiatives, and learning programs that unite, educate and enrich our community through the engaging and transformative power of orchestral music experiences. The ASO engages the diverse international community of our city, bringing people together in harmony—including our youngest citizens, with extensive opportunities for youth and families to fall in love with music. Two of the hallmark education programs just celebrated anniversaries: the Atlanta Youth Symphony Orchestra celebrated 50 years, and the Talent Development Program turned 30.

The Orchestra's range and depth are featured in more than 150 concerts each year, including the flagship Delta Classical Series, Movies in Concert, Family Concerts, Coca-Cola Holiday series, and many community and education concerts. In addition, the ASO presents many vibrant, wide-ranging events and artists through its Delta Atlanta Symphony Hall Live presentations. The ASO also performs with the ASO Chorus, originally founded by Robert Shaw, and currently under the direction of Norman Mackenzie. The Chorus is featured on nine of the ASO's 27 Grammy® Award-winning recordings.

### **About Invesco QQQ**

Invesco QQQ is an exchange-traded fund (ETF). As the Official ETF and financial education provider of the NCAA, Invesco QQQ is committed to educating the next generation of investors. Learn more about the new program and play at no cost by visiting [HNTSAM.com](https://www.hntsam.com).

###