Long Bio

Jeri Lynne Johnson is a graduate of Wellesley College and the University of Chicago. In 1998 she won the Jorge Mester Conducting Scholarship to attend the Aspen Music Festival and her conducting mentors have included Sir Simon Rattle, Marin Alsop and Daniel Barenboim. Her broad and eclectic musical tastes have allowed her to perform world-premieres of MacArthur Genius Grant winning classical composers as well as a ground-breaking collaboration at Carnegie Hall with rapper Jay Z, singer/songwriter Alicia Keys, and hip hop band The Roots. Ms. Johnson was heralded as one of today’s leading young women conductors on the NBC Today Show and she has been featured in numerous magazines and newspapers as well as television and radio shows around the world including 20/20 and the “Tavis Smiley Show” on NPR. In 2005 Ms. Johnson made history as the first African-American woman to win an international conducting prize when she was awarded the Taki Concordia Conducting Fellowship. Since then, Ms. Johnson has broken barriers in Europe and the US as the first African-American woman on the podium for many orchestras and has conducted the Philadelphia Orchestra, Dallas Symphony, the Bournemouth Symphony (UK), the Weimar Staatskapelle (Germany) among others. In 2021-2022 her engagements include the Oregon Bach Festival, the National Symphony, Santa Fe Opera, Chicago Opera Theater, New Orleans Opera.

In 2008 she established her own orchestra in Philadelphia, [Black Pearl Chamber Orchestra](https://www.blackpearlco.org/), with some of the top musicians in the country from diverse cultures and ethnicities as a model for the 21st-century orchestra. Through Black Pearl, she pioneered a fresh new approach to community engagement that has been imitated and adopted by orchestras across the country. The world-class quality of her concert performances have earned Black Pearl numerous grants from the National Endowment for the Arts. And her innovative community engagement programs have made Black Pearl the only organization in the nation ever to win three prestigious Knight Foundation Arts Challenge grants. In January 2021, Black Pearl Chamber Orchestra had the honor of being the only orchestra in North America invited to participate in a virtual collaborative concert as part of the World Economic Forum at Davos. This inspiring event called [See Me!](https://youtu.be/fD5B9XXi4s4?t=719) A Global Concert involved filmmakers, visual artists, choirs, orchestras and musicians from around the world.

In 2016, Jeri put her 20 years of experience and insights as an African-American arts professional to work for others and founded [DEI Arts Consulting](https://www.deiartsconsulting.com/), to provide organizations with strategic advisory services grounded in the values of diversity, equity and inclusion. She is also civically engaged and has served on the Board of Directors of a number of organizations including the Greater Philadelphia Cultural Alliance, Einstein Health, and the Philadelphia Chapter of the National Academy of Recording Arts and Science (the “Grammys”. Currently she serves on the Boards of the Philadelphia Award and Philanthropi Charitable Foundation. Most recently, she was named the 2020-2021 Woman One honoree for Drexel University’s Institute for Women’s Health and Leadership. In her spare time, she enjoys playing golf, traveling, and spending time with her daughter, Evelyn.

Short Bio (One Paragraph)

Jeri Lynne Johnson is the Founder and Artistic Director of the Black Pearl Chamber Orchestra. She founded Black Pearl in Philadelphia, PA as a model for the 21st-century American orchestras combining artistic excellence with cultural diversity and meaningful community engagement.  Black Pearl has been recognized as a leading innovator in social justice and racial equity in classical music and in its brief time, Black Pearl has earned numerous grants from the National Endowment for the Arts and is the only organization in the US ever to win three prestigious Knight Arts Challenge grants. Based upon her work with Black Pearl, Ms. Johnson established DEI Arts Consulting in 2015 as a vehicle to offer strategic and creative solutions for cultural institutions seeking to create a culture of belonging. She holds a BA in Music and a BA in Religion from Wellesley College and a Master’s in Music History and Theory from the University of Chicago. In 1998 she won the Jorge Mester Conducting Scholarship to attend the Aspen Music Festival and her conducting teachers and mentors have included Sir Simon Rattle, Marin Alsop and Daniel Barenboim. In 2005 she made history as the first Black woman to win an international conducting prize when she was awarded the Taki Alsop Conducting Fellowship. Ms. Johnson has broken barriers in Europe and the US as the first African-American woman on the podium for many orchestras and has conducted the Philadelphia Orchestra, Dallas Symphony, the Bournemouth Symphony (UK), the Weimar Staatskapelle (Germany) among others. In 2021-2022 her engagements include the Oregon Bach Festival, the National Symphony, Santa Fe Opera, Chicago Opera Theater, New Orleans Opera,