

League of American Orchestras
Rachelle Schlosser
Director of Media Relations
rschlosser@americanorchestras.org
646 822 4027
Twitter: @rschlosserpr,
@OrchLeague

EarShot
Christina Jensen PR
christina@christinajensenpr.com
646 536 7864
Twitter: @AmerCompOrch

**League of American Orchestras,
American Composers Orchestra, and EarShot
Announce Commissions
in Program Supporting Women Composers**

New York, NY (October 1, 2014) – **Julia Adolphe** and **Melody Eötvös** will receive orchestral commissions of \$15,000 each as part of a new initiative to increase opportunities for women composers, the League of American Orchestras, American Composers Orchestra, and EarShot have announced. Partnering orchestras will be announced at a later date.

The initiative, made possible by the generous support of the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation Program for Commissioning Women in the Performing Arts, featured a series of readings with the Berkeley Symphony Orchestra (CA), Detroit Symphony Orchestra, New York Philharmonic, and American Composers Orchestra (NY), including career development workshops and mentoring opportunities with established composers. A total of six female composers participated in the readings, which were administered by American Composers Orchestra on behalf of EarShot, the National Orchestral Composition Discovery Network. Adolphe and Eötvös were selected by a composer panel to receive the commissions.

Jesse Rosen, the League's President and CEO, said, "We are proud to be putting our support behind two gifted composers through these commissions. The creation of new work is the lifeblood of our field, and we are grateful to the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation."

"Julia and Melody are two incredible talents identified among the six outstanding women composers we were fortunate enough to work with in the EarShot readings this year," said Michael Geller, President & CEO, American Composers Orchestra. "Getting to know them and their music was tremendously exciting. The fact that they are now going on to major commissions, after a comprehensive process of career support and cultivation, is a true success story. We can't wait to see what's next for both of them!"

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Photo: Martin Chalifour

Julia Adolphe was born in 1988 in New York and is now based in Los Angeles. She is a composer, writer, and soprano whose music embraces diverse artistic and sociological influences, unfolding intricate emotional narratives. Adolphe has received the Theodore Front Prize from the International Alliance for Women in Music, the Jimmy McHugh Composition Prize, John James Blackmore Prize, and John S. Knight Prize. She is currently pursuing a DMA from the USC Thornton School of Music studying composition with Stephen Hartke, and holds a MM in music composition from USC and a BA in music composition and literary theory from Cornell University.

In a review Julia Adolphe's *Dark Sand, Sifting Light*, her piece performed by the New York Philharmonic in the EarShot reading during the orchestra's Biennial festival this spring, Alex Ross wrote in *The New Yorker*, "Adolphe's work was alive with invention. Plaintive strands of near-tonal melody floated in an eerie, wide-open space defined at its edges by groaning bass timbres, wayward piano figures, and the rustlings of maracas, vibraslap, snare drum, and other percussion. It felt like an encampment encircled by watchful eyes, and toward the end a violent frenzy broke out. Adolphe is in the doctoral program at U.S.C., and this is her first full-orchestra piece. It is remarkably assured and, like the Biennial itself, seems an upbeat to something grander." The work imagines a piano playing in the distance, overheard through an open apartment window. As the listener poised beneath the window begins to daydream, the piano sounds take on larger orchestral colors.



Photo: Grant Heger

Melody Eötvös was born in 1984 in Australia and is now based in Bloomington, Indiana. Her work draws on both multimedia and traditional instrumental contexts, as well as substantial extra-musical references to a broad range of philosophical topics and late 19th century literature. She has studied with composers including Gerardo Dirié, Simon Bainbridge, Claude Baker, Jeffrey Hass, John Gibson, and Alicyn Warren. Eötvös has been the recipient of various awards including the 3MBS National Composers Award (Australia 2009), an APRA PDA (Australia 2009), and the Soundstream National Composer Award (2012). Her music has been performed by ensembles and orchestras including

the London Sinfonietta, BBC Singers, Tasmanian Symphony Orchestra, and the Australian String Quartet. She holds a DM (2014) from Indiana University Jacobs School of Music and a MM (2008) from the Royal Academy of Music, London.

Melody Eötvös's work *Beetles, Dragons, and Dreamers* was called "simmering" by the *New York Times*' Zachary Woolfe when it was performed by the American Composers Orchestra this spring during ACO's 23rd annual Underwood New Music Readings, which this year were part of the New York Philharmonic's *Biennial* festival. The work draws its inspiration from the concept of four mythological or ancient relics that, over the ages, have been carried into the present time but with transformed meanings. In the words of music blog *Lucid Culture*, "An 'inherent sense of creepiness,' as Eötvös put it, permeated her quartet *Beetles, Dragons & Dreamers*. With its relentless unease and occasional explosiveness, it made for a sensationally good centerpiece. The opening theme, "Draconian Measures," had a tense lushness, rippling cascades and then what was by now the expected pursuit segment. "Lilith, Begone" was both the most accessible and menacing piece on the bill, followed by a restless tone poem, "The Inanimate Spider" and then a lingering, knife's-edge conclusion, "Trojan Horse." Over and over, Eotvos punctured shifting, atmospheric sheets from the strings with sudden, jagged motives from throughout the orchestra to max out the suspense factor."

EarShot, a nationwide network of new music readings and composer-development programs, is the nation's first ongoing, systematic program for identifying emerging orchestral composers. EarShot provides professional-level working experience with orchestras from every region of the country and increases awareness of the participating emerging composers and access to their music throughout the industry. Recent and upcoming Earshot programs have included the Detroit, Berkeley, La Jolla, Nashville, Memphis, Colorado, San Diego Symphonies, the New York Philharmonic, New York Youth Symphony, and the Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra. The program is administered by **American Composers Orchestra** with partner organizations the **American Composers Forum**, **League of American Orchestras**, and **New Music USA**.

The **League of American Orchestras** leads, supports, and champions America's orchestras and the vitality of the music they perform. Its diverse membership of approximately 800 orchestras across North America runs the gamut from world-renowned symphonies to community orchestras, from summer festivals to student and youth ensembles. The only national organization dedicated solely to the orchestral experience, the League is a nexus of knowledge and innovation, advocacy, and leadership advancement for managers, musicians, volunteers, and boards. Its conferences and events, award-winning *Symphony* magazine, website, and other publications inform music lovers around the world about orchestral activity and developments.

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Founded in 1942 and chartered by Congress in 1962, the League links a national network of thousands of instrumentalists, conductors, managers and administrators, board members, volunteers, and business partners. Visit americanorchestras.org to learn more.

Now in its 38th season, **American Composers Orchestra** is the only orchestra in the world dedicated to the creation, performance, preservation, and promulgation of music by American composers. ACO makes the creation of new opportunities for American composers and new American orchestral music its central purpose. Through concerts at Carnegie Hall and other venues, recordings, internet and radio broadcasts, educational programs, New Music Readings, and commissions, ACO identifies today's brightest emerging composers, champions prominent established composers as well as those lesser-known, and increases regional, national, and international awareness of the infinite variety of American orchestral music, reflecting geographic, stylistic, and temporal diversity. ACO also serves as an incubator of ideas, research, and talent, as a catalyst for growth and change among orchestras, and as an advocate for American composers and their music. To date, ACO has performed music by more than 700 American composers, including nearly 300 world premieres and newly commissioned works. ASCAP has awarded its annual prize for adventurous programming to ACO 37 times, singling out ACO as "the orchestra that has done the most for American music in the United States." ACO recordings are available on ARGO, CRI, ECM, Point, Phoenix USA, MusicMasters, Nonesuch, Tzadik, and New World Records. In the last three years, ACO has released five digital albums of live recordings, including *Orchestra Underground: A-V*, a groundbreaking album of multimedia works available for free streaming at www.vimeo.com/channels/orchestraunderground. Visit www.americancomposers.org to learn more.

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