



NEWS RELEASE

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

August 16, 2018

The Philadelphia Orchestra and American Composers Orchestra to Hold Showcase for Works by Women Composers

*Six Composers' Works to be Performed by the Orchestra
in Working Session*

(Philadelphia, August 16, 2018)—The Philadelphia Orchestra and American Composers Orchestra (ACO) will partner for a one-day showcase on September 6, 2018, during which the Orchestra will rehearse works by six women composers as part of a collaborative working session. The selected composers, all of whom have been commissioned previously through ACO's programs, will have their works read and recorded by The Philadelphia Orchestra in a rehearsal led by Assistant Conductor Kensho Watanabe at the Kimmel Center for the Performing Arts. In addition, the composers will participate in meetings with Orchestra leadership and roundtable conversations with the Orchestra's Artistic Committee and mentor composers, and will receive feedback from co-facilitators, ACO Artistic Director Derek Bermel and Pulitzer Prize-winning composer and native Philadelphian Melinda Wagner.

"Identifying and collaborating with living composers from all backgrounds is of paramount importance to our organization and for the future evolution of this art form," said Jeremy Rothman, vice president of artistic planning for The Philadelphia Orchestra. "Our goal is for these readings to foster dialogue between composers and musicians, provide valuable tools for composers to have their works heard and promoted, and spark deeper relationships with a broader selection of composers."

The six invited composers—selected from the alumnae of ACO's Underwood, EarShot, and Jazz Composer Orchestra Institute programs—will travel to Philadelphia to work collaboratively with the Orchestra. The composers are **Melody Eötvös** (2014 Underwood New Music Readings), **Hilary Purrington** (2017 Underwood New Music Readings), **Chen-Hui Jen** (2012 EarShot Readings San Diego Symphony), **Robin Holcomb** (2016 Jazz Composers Orchestra Institute Readings Naples Philharmonic), **Xi Wang** (2010 Underwood New Music Readings); and **Nina C. Young** (2013 Underwood New Music Readings).

ACO president Ed Yim added, “Many of the six invited composers were originally identified through the Women Composers Readings and Commissions program, made possible by the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation. Embedded in our Underwood New Music Readings and in EarShot, the program is a systematic approach for identifying emerging female orchestral composers. We are delighted to be collaborating with the great Philadelphia Orchestra and support its desire to strengthen and diversify its programming with these six vibrant artists.”

American Composers Orchestra is both a performing orchestra and a catalyst for the creation and programming of new orchestral music by American composers through several platforms. For nearly 30 years, ACO’s own Underwood New Music Readings have presented new works and given emerging composers feedback from mentor composers, musicians, and conductors. Based on the model of the Underwood readings, ACO also enables orchestras around the country to identify and collaborate with emerging composers through EarShot, a joint program with the League of American Orchestras, New Music USA, and the American Composers Forum. The Women Composers Reading and Commission Program (a partnership with the League of American Orchestras) and the Jazz Composers Orchestra Institute offer additional opportunities. Cumulatively, these programs offer composers an array of opportunities to be heard on a national stage.

About the Composers

Melody Eötvös

Beginning her musical career at age five, Melody Eötvös studied piano and music theory under her parent’s tutelage and at age eight began learning the cello, which coincided with her first experimentations in composition. She attended the Queensland Conservatorium of Music, Griffith University, to study composition. During this time, she won the Collusion Composition Prize and had various successes with competitions such as the National Keys Competition and the Gold Coast Composition Competition. In 2010 she was selected for the National Composers Forum in Adelaide, Australia, which included the premiere of her first string quartet, *Olber’s Dance in the Dark*, by the Australian String Quartet. She has also been awarded the APRA Professional Development Classical Award, the 3MBS National Composer Award, and the Soundstream National Composer Award. She holds a Doctor of Music from Indiana University Jacobs School of Music and a Master of Music from the Royal Academy of Music. In December 2018 she will become lecturer in composition and aural skills at the Melbourne Conservatorium of Music.

Robin Holcomb

Pianist, composer, librettist, singer, and songwriter Robin Holcomb has performed internationally in venues including Carnegie Hall, the United Nations, the Teatro Manzoni, Queen Elizabeth Hall, the Seattle Opera House, and at the Meltdown Festival, the Moers Music Festival, and the Festival of Perth, among others. She is a founder and co-director of the New York Composers Orchestra and the Washington Composers Orchestra, ensembles for which she is also conductor, pianist, and a principal composer. In 2016 she composed *All the While* as part of the American Composers Orchestra Jazz Composers Orchestra Institute. She has created several works for large youth ensembles based on historic themes, including *Come! Behold! Enjoy!* and *Up on Hitt’s Hill*. Her work has been supported with grants and fellowships including the MAP Fund, the National Endowment for the Arts, 4Cultura, Artist Trust, and more. She holds a Bachelor of Arts in Music Composition Utilizing Non-Western

Resources from the University of California Santa Cruz, which includes a focus on Sundanese gamelan performance.

Chen-Hui Jen

Chen-Hui Jen is a composer, poet, and pianist. Her works have been performed at multiple prestigious music festivals and concerts, including the ISCM World Music Days, the Society of Electro-Acoustic Music in the United States, the International Computer Music Conference, the Acanthes Music Festival, the Austin City Limits Music Festival, and EarShot San Diego. She has also received commissions by the League of American Orchestras' Women Composers Readings and Commissions Project, the Ensemble 20° dans le Noir, the Aurora Borealis Duo, and Accordant Commons, among others. Distinguished venues, conferences, and festivals that she has performed at include the Spectrum in New York City, the Center for New Music in San Francisco, the Taipei National Recital Hall, and the FETA Festival. She earned a Ph.D. in Music at the University of California, San Diego. Currently, she serves as a pianist in the NODUS Ensemble at Florida International University and the Ensemble Ibis at the University of Miami.

Hilary Purrington

Hilary Purrington is a New York City-based composer of chamber, vocal, and other orchestral music. Her work has received recognition from the American Academy of Arts and Letters; the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP); the International Alliance for Women in Music; and the National Federation of Music Clubs (NFMC), among others. Her music has been performed by many distinguished ensembles, including the Minnesota Orchestra, the American Modern Ensemble, the Peabody Modern Orchestra, and the Yale Philharmonia. Recent commissions include new works for the Albany Symphony, the Melodia Women's Choir of NYC, and the New York Youth Symphony. Upcoming projects include commissions from the American Composers Orchestra and the Yale Glee Club. Ms. Purrington holds degrees from the Yale School of Music, the Juilliard School, and the Shepherd School of Music at Rice University.

Nina C. Young

New York-based composer Nina C. Young's music has been performed by the American Composers Orchestra, Inscape, the Milwaukee Symphony, the Minnesota Orchestra, the orkest de ereprijs, the Phoenix Symphony, the Nouvel Ensemble Moderne, and other leading cultural institutions. Winner of the 2015-16 Rome Prize in Musical Composition, she received a Charles Ives Scholarship from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, a Civitella Ranieri Fellowship, the Salvatore Martirano Memorial Composition Award, the Jacob Druckman Prize, and honors from BMI, IAWM, and ASCAP/SEAMUS. She is a graduate of McGill University and MIT, and she completed her Doctor of Musical Arts at Columbia University where she was a member of the Columbia Computer Music Center. In 2016 she joined Rensselaer Polytechnic Institute as assistant professor in the Department of Arts. She currently serves as co-artistic director of New York-based Ensemble Échappé and as a visiting composer at the Peabody Institute of the Johns Hopkins University.

Xi Wang

Xi Wang's original concert music has been performed worldwide by the Minnesota Orchestra, the Atlanta Symphony, the American Composers Orchestra, the Shanghai Philharmonic, the Spokane Symphony, Voices of Change, the Soli Chamber Ensemble, and the Tippet String Quartet, among others. In addition to being a Charles Ives Fellow from the American Academy of Arts and Letters, she received the National Endowment for the Arts Award and has been honored by Meet the Composer, New Music USA, the American Music Center, the MacDowell Colony, and the American Society of Composers, Authors, and Publishers (ASCAP). She has conducted a number of premieres of her own compositions and also performs as a solo pianist and chamber music player. She received her B.M. from the Shanghai Conservatory of Music, her M.M. from the University of Missouri-Kansas City, and her D.M.A. from Cornell University. Currently, she is an associate professor at the Meadow School of Arts of Southern Methodist University.

About [The Philadelphia Orchestra](#)

About [American Composers Orchestra](#)

###

CONTACTS:

Ashley Berke, The Philadelphia Orchestra
215.893.1939
aberke@philorch.org

Maggie Stapleton, Jensen Artists for American Composers Orchestra
646.536.7864 ext. 2
maggie@jensenartists.com