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BERKELEY SYMPHONY IS ONE OF THIRTY ORCHESTRAS SELECTED TO JOIN LEAGUE OF AMERICAN ORCHESTRAS' NEW CONSORTIUM

Berkeley Symphony to Present New Work by Gity Razaz

BERKELEY, CA (October 6, 2022) – **Berkeley Symphony** is one of thirty orchestras taking part in the League of American Orchestras' Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation Orchestral Commissions Program. The unprecedented national consortium ensures that new works by women composers, each commissioned by the League, will be infused in orchestra seasons to come, with multiple performances throughout the country.

The consortium's initial six lead orchestra-composer pairings [were previously announced](#), with more than eighty orchestras applying for the additional twenty-four spots.

Berkeley Symphony will partner with composer **Gity Razaz** for a performance of her new work in the 2023-24 or 2024-25 season.

"Berkeley Symphony looks forward to collaborating with Gity Razaz as a composer who brings a multi-faceted voice to contemporary music, representing the unique and diverse community that makes up the city of Berkeley," said **Joseph Young**, Music Director at Berkeley Symphony. "Gity's commitment to collaborating across multiple artistic disciplines, and her leadership in music education—especially in her teaching and mentoring of composers with the [Luna Composition Lab](#)—makes her the ideal partner for the Berkeley Symphony."

Berkeley Symphony has a longstanding commitment to presenting unique and accessible musical experiences that reflect its community's legacy of innovation and inclusion. In its 2022/23 season, Berkeley Symphony will also present a world premiere, "Lotus Prayer" by Xi Wang, at its Symphonic III concert, *Enduring Stories* on June 4, 2023. This is made possible through the League of American Orchestras' Women Composers Commissions generously supported by the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation.

The new consortium, comprised of orchestras from nineteen U.S. states and Canada, includes the following orchestra-composer pairs (lead orchestras in bold):

- Akron Symphony Orchestra (OH) and Gity Razaz
- Aspen Music Festival and School (CO) and Wang Lu
- Berkeley Symphony (CA) and Gity Razaz
- Canada's National Arts Centre Orchestra (Ottawa, ON) and Gity Razaz
- Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra (OH) and Wang Lu
- Columbus Symphony (OH) and Anna Clyne
- Dallas Symphony Orchestra (TX) and Arlene Sierra
- Des Moines Symphony (IA) and Wang Lu
- Detroit Symphony Orchestra (MI) (lead orchestra) and Arlene Sierra
- Idaho State-Civic Symphony and Sarah Gibson
- Illinois Philharmonic Orchestra and Arlene Sierra
- Jacksonville Symphony (FL) and Angel Lam
- Kansas City Symphony (MO) (lead orchestra) and Angel Lam
- Knoxville Symphony Orchestra (TN) and Sarah Gibson
- Lansing Symphony Orchestra (MI) and Sarah Gibson
- Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra and Arlene Sierra
- National Symphony Orchestra (DC) and Anna Clyne
- New York Philharmonic (lead orchestra) and Wang Lu
- Orchestra Lumos (CT) and Angel Lam
- Orlando Philharmonic Orchestra (FL) and Anna Clyne
- Pensacola Symphony Orchestra (FL) and Wang Lu
- The Philadelphia Orchestra (PA) (lead orchestra) and Anna Clyne
- Pittsburgh Symphony Orchestra (PA) and Sarah Gibson
- Portland Columbia Symphony (OR) and Anna Clyne
- Quad City Symphony Orchestra (IA) and Angel Lam
- Rochester Philharmonic Orchestra (NY) and Gity Razaz
- San Diego Symphony (CA) (lead orchestra) and Gity Razaz
- Sarasota Orchestra (FL) (lead orchestra) and Sarah Gibson
- Utah Symphony & Opera and Angel Lam
- Wheeling Symphony Orchestra (WV) and Arlene Sierra

Three of the initial premieres have been scheduled, with more performances to be announced.

Wang Lu's *Surge* will be premiered by the New York Philharmonic, Dalia Stasevska conducting, on January 20, 21, and 22, 2023.

Sarah Gibson's *to make this mountain taller* will be premiered by **Sarasota Orchestra, Carlos Miguel Prieto** conducting, on March 31, April 1, and April 2, 2023.

Gity Razaz's work (title tbd) will be premiered by **San Diego Symphony, Rafael Payare** conducting, on May 20 and 21, 2023.

The Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation Orchestral Commissions Program is an initiative of the League of American Orchestras, in partnership with American Composers Orchestra (ACO) and supported by the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation. The program seeks to increase the programming of works by women and nonbinary composers on orchestra stages.

Networking, mentoring, career development, and community engagement opportunities are built into the program. Consortium orchestras were required to demonstrate a commitment to engaging the composers in rehearsals, networking opportunities, and education or community engagement activities, and orchestras receive funds for marketing efforts and to support composer attendance at performances.

As with the original Women Composers Readings and Commissions program, the new program is embedded in EarShot, an initiative of American Composers Orchestra in collaboration with American Composers Forum, the League of American Orchestras, and New Music USA. The six commission recipients were selected from women and nonbinary composers who have participated in EarShot residencies.

Read more about the composers on [the League's website](#).

ABOUT BERKELEY SYMPHONY

Berkeley Symphony is unique among Bay Area and American orchestras for its commitment to innovation, community, and excellence. Founded in 1971 in the intellectual and artistic nexus of Berkeley, California, the Orchestra is committed to performing, premiering, and commissioning new music that reflects the culturally diverse people and the heady creative climate of its home city.

In the 2019-2020 season, Berkeley Symphony entered a new era under the leadership of Joseph Young, the Orchestra's fourth Music Director in its 50-year history, following a highly successful February 2019 debut that was acclaimed by critics and audiences alike. In addition to building

on the Orchestra's artistic innovation, creativity and adventurous programming, Maestro Young is committed to amplifying the voices of underrepresented composers and artists as well as continuing to tell diverse stories that reflect the local Berkeley community.

ABOUT AMERICAN COMPOSERS ORCHESTRA

Founded in 1977, American Composers Orchestra (ACO) is dedicated to the creation, celebration, performance, and promotion of orchestral music by American composers. With commitment to diversity, disruption and discovery, ACO produces concerts, middle school through college composer education programs, and composer advancement programs to foster a community of creators, audience, performers, collaborators, and funders. ACO identifies and develops talent, performs established composers, champions those who are lesser-known, and increases regional, national, and international awareness of the infinite variety of American orchestral music, reflecting gender, racial, ethnic, geographic, stylistic, and age diversity. To date, ACO has performed music by 800 American composers, including over 350 world premieres and newly commissioned works.

ACO offers an array of programs for emerging composers including its own annual EarShot Readings in New York City, which have served over 350 composers since their inception in 1991, and have been offered in partnership with orchestras across the country in collaboration with the League of American Orchestras, New Music USA and American Composers Forum since 2008. Readings composers have gone on to win every major composition award, including the Pulitzer, Grammy, Grawemeyer, American Academy of Arts and Letters, and Rome Prizes.

ACO has received numerous awards for its work, including those from the American Academy of Arts and Letters and from BMI recognizing the orchestra's outstanding contribution to American music. ASCAP has awarded ACO its annual prize for adventurous programming 35 times, singling out ACO as "the orchestra that has done the most for new American music in the United States." ACO received the inaugural MetLife Award for Excellence in Audience Engagement, and a proclamation from the New York City Council. Read more: www.americancomposers.org

ABOUT EARSHOT

Now encompassing all of American Composers Orchestra's composer advancement initiatives, EarShot is the first ongoing, systematic program for developing relationships between composers and orchestras on the national level. Through orchestral readings, CoLABoratory fellowships, consortium commissions, and professional development, EarShot ensures a vibrant musical future by investing in creativity today.

EarShot Readings, operated in partnership with the American Composers Forum, New Music USA, and the League of American Orchestras, provide professional working experiences with orchestras from every region of the country. Over the last 25 years, EarShot has advanced the

careers of more than 275 composers. Alumni include some of the most visible artists in the field: Jesse Montgomery, Carlos Simon, Courtney Bryan, Jennifer Higdon, and more. Over half of EarShot composers report that they have received a commission or performance as a direct result of their EarShot Reading, and many have gone on to win every major composition award including the Pulitzer, Grammy, Grawemeyer, American Academy of Arts & Letters, and Rome Prizes. Orchestras around the globe have commissioned and performed hundreds of works by ACO alumni.

ABOUT THE LEAGUE OF AMERICAN ORCHESTRAS

The League of American Orchestras leads, supports, and champions America's orchestras and the vitality of the music they perform. Its diverse membership of more than 1,800 organizations and individuals across North America runs the gamut from world-renowned orchestras to community groups, from summer festivals to student and youth ensembles, from conservatories to libraries, from businesses serving orchestras to individuals who love symphonic music. The national organization dedicated solely to the orchestral experience, the League is a nexus of knowledge and innovation, advocacy, and leadership advancement. Its conferences and events, award-winning *Symphony* magazine, website, and other publications inform people around the world about orchestral activity and developments. 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.

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