



NEWS RELEASE

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Philadelphia Orchestra Strengthens Commitment to Women Artists with New Initiatives and Commissions

*New Commissions from Participants of Today's Women Composer Showcase
and Philadelphia Orchestra Mentor Composer Project*

*Majority of Subscription Programs in 2019-20 Season to Feature Works by Women,
Including Commission from Valerie Coleman to Launch Season*

Gabriela Lena Frank to Serve as Composer-in-Residence through 2020-21 Season

(Philadelphia, September 6, 2018)—The Philadelphia Orchestra and Music Director Yannick Nézet-Séguin today announced new initiatives to strengthen the role of women in classical music. The announcement took place at the Orchestra's showcase for women composers, featuring alumnae of the American Composers Orchestra's Underwood, EarShot, and Jazz Composer Orchestra Institute programs: **Melody Eötvös, Hilary Purrington, Chen-Hui Jen, Robin Holcomb, Xi Wang, and Nina C. Young**. Orchestra President and CEO Matías Tarnopolsky announced from the stage that the Orchestra will commission a work from each composer. The commissions will be part of a greater investment in the compositional process to support diversity and the creation of new works in innovative forums such as workshops, public dialogues, and listening sessions.

"Every Philadelphia Orchestra season should be representative of the diverse, global communities that we serve," said Nézet-Séguin. "I am delighted to be able to commission both emerging and established women artists to give their music the exposure it deserves, to breathe new life into what we do on stage, and to inspire members of our audience to always see a place for themselves in our work. These new initiatives represent the beginning of a long-term collaboration that will not only elevate the work of our Orchestra, but also the future of the art form."

In addition to the commissions, The Philadelphia Orchestra announced the following projects:

- Major commissions from women composers in the 2019-20 and 2020-21 seasons, including a work by **Gabriela Lena Frank**, who will serve as composer-in-residence until the conclusion of the 2020-21 season.

- A commitment to programming works by women composers. More than half of the Orchestra’s subscription programs in the 2019-20 season will feature works by women, beginning with a commission from **Valerie Coleman** to launch the season during the opening weekend. In addition, five women conductors will lead the Orchestra in the 2019-20 season.
- Philadelphia Orchestra mentor composer project. The Orchestra will partner with emerging women composers, who will team up with mentor composers to write new works for the 2019-20 season.

As composer-in-residence culminating in the 2020-21 season, Gabriela Lena Frank will continue the Orchestra’s tradition of collaborating with partners in the Philadelphia region and activating social change through a community commission, with additional performances of her works in The Philadelphia Orchestra’s upcoming seasons. Frank previously worked with The Philadelphia Orchestra in the 2012-13 season, when she was commissioned to write a celebratory work in honor of Yannick Nézet-Séguin’s inaugural season as music director. The piece, *Concertino Cusqueño*, was also performed by the Orchestra that same season at Carnegie Hall, as part of the Martin Luther King, Jr., Tribute Concert, on the Tour of China, and as part of the Orchestra’s residency at the Saratoga Performing Arts Center.

“I’m thrilled to partner with the esteemed Philadelphia Orchestra and Yannick Nézet-Séguin, who have long been supportive of my work including touring it internationally, and who were completely accommodating when I asked to delay the start of our collaboration by more than a season,” said Frank. “As a disabled woman of color who is the daughter of an immigrant and who recently founded a small music academy out of her farm for emerging composers, I know how momentous it is when a storied and monumental institution throws its weight behind nuanced civil progress. Such work is vital for the health of our industry. Thus, as I’m grateful for the Philadelphia Orchestra’s confidence and for the new commission of a large-scale symphony utilizing South American creation myths to explore racial/ethnic origins—a topic of poignant relevance in these politically polarized times—I’m especially grateful to be of service in holding conversations regarding the remarkable wealth of other deserving musical voices in our diverse America. The trust is flowing both ways and I’m indescribably honored.”

“The Philadelphia Orchestra is committed to strengthening the role of women in the arts,” said Tarnopolsky. “We are grateful to the American Composers Orchestra for their important collaboration in today’s composer showcase. With the announcement of commissions offered to all six of today’s participating composers, an exciting collaboration with Gabriela Lena Frank, and a commitment to programming more works by women composers, we support here the development of contemporary music and the ideals of ever greater diversity on our stages.”

About [The Philadelphia Orchestra](#)

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CONTACT:
Ashley Berke
Vice President of Communications
215.893.1939
aberke@philorch.org