League of American Orchestras Initiative
Supporting Women Composers
Renewed For 2015,
Made Possible by the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation

American Composers Orchestra and New York Philharmonic
To Premiere Works by 2014 Commission Recipients,
Composers Julia Adolphe and Melody Eötvös

New York, NY (February 25, 2015) – The League of American Orchestras’ program supporting women composers will be renewed for a second year, the League and EarShot, the National Orchestral Composition Discovery Network, announced today. Administered by New York’s American Composers Orchestra and made possible by the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation, the initiative aims to increase opportunities for women composers through a series of orchestral readings and commissions.

The program is integrated into this year’s EarShot composer readings with Buffalo Philharmonic (February 10-12, 2015); Chicago Modern Orchestra Project (April 28-30, 2015); and Berkeley Symphony (May 2-5, 2015); as well as American Composers Orchestra’s Underwood New Music Reading Sessions (May 6-8, 2015). During the readings composers are mentored by established composers and participate in career development workshops. Two of the participating composers will be selected to receive orchestral commissions of $15,000 each, with premiere details to be announced at a future date. New this year, all female composers who have participated in previous EarShot readings – even those from years past – are eligible for commission consideration, significantly expanding the applicant pool.

The League and EarShot also announced today that, in a future season, American Composers Orchestra will premiere a new work by Melody Eötvös and the New York Philharmonic will premiere a new viola concerto for Philharmonic Principal Viola Cynthia Phelps by Julia Adolphe. The two composers are 2014 commission recipients.
Jesse Rosen, the League’s President and CEO, said, “We are grateful to the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation for their support, and thrilled to continue this important work, now with an expanded focus. Additionally, the participation of both American Composers Orchestra and the New York Philharmonic is very exciting, and another sign of the field’s acknowledgement of the importance of new work and innovation.”

Michael Geller, President & CEO, American Composers Orchestra, says, “Creating opportunities for American composers is the ‘heart and soul’ of what ACO does. We are especially honored that our EarShot program plays such an integral part in this important initiative to encourage and support women composers. It builds on a record that dates back to our earliest years, when ACO commissioned Joan Tower to write her very first orchestral music, and Ellen Taaffe Zwilich became the first woman to win the Pulitzer Prize for her ACO-commissioned work.”

Twenty-six year old composer Julia Adolphe’s music has been described as “colorful, mercurial, deftly orchestrated” (The New York Times) and a “mastery of dynamic as well as harmonic complexity” (Financial Times). Born in New York and currently residing in Los Angeles, her works have received performances across the U.S. and abroad by renowned groups such as the New York Philharmonic, Inscape Chamber Orchestra, the USC Thornton Symphony, JACK Quartet violinist Christopher Otto and cellist Kevin McFarland, Nouveau Classical Project, and Great Noise Ensemble, among others. Current projects include a solo work for Grammy-nominated pianist Aron Kallay and an opera set in present-day Iran with librettist Nahal Navidar.

In a review of Julia Adolphe’s Dark Sand, Sifting Light, her piece performed by the New York Philharmonic in the EarShot reading during the orchestra’s NY PHIL BIENNIAL in spring 2014, 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, vibraphone, 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.

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 substantial extra-musical references to a broad range of philosophical topics and late 19th century literature. She has studied with composers including Gerardo Diríe, 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. 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. 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.

The New York Philharmonic plays a leading cultural role in New York City, the United States, and the world. This season’s projects will connect the Philharmonic with up to 50 million music lovers through live concerts in New York City and on its worldwide tours; digital downloads; international broadcasts on television, radio, and online; and as a resource through its wide range of education programs. Having commissioned and/or premiered works by leading composers from every era, the Orchestra now champions contemporary music through CONTACT! and the NY PHIL BIENNIAL. A resource for its community and the world, the Philharmonic complements its annual free citywide Concerts in the Parks with wide-ranging education programs, including the famed Young People’s Concerts and the New York Philharmonic Global Academy, partnerships at home and abroad that combine performance with intensive training by Philharmonic musicians to cultivate tomorrow’s leading orchestral musicians. Renowned around the world, having appeared in 432 cities in 63 countries, America’s oldest symphony orchestra has long been a media pioneer, releasing almost 2,000 recordings since 1917 and today sharing
live performances through downloads and online. Alan Gilbert became Music Director in 2009, succeeding 20th-century musical giants including Bernstein, Toscanini, and Mahler.

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