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**League of American Orchestras to Honor Renowned Composer
Joan Tower
with Its Highest Honor, the Gold Baton,
at 74th National Conference in Nashville**

New York, NY (February 26, 2019) – Composer Joan Tower, one of America’s most significant living composers, will receive the League of American Orchestras’ highest honor, the Gold Baton, at the League’s 74th National Conference in Nashville, June 3-5, 2019.

Tower has a strong connection to the city of Nashville: This year’s Conference host, the Nashville Symphony, recorded her work *Made in America* with conductor Leonard Slatkin at Schermerhorn Symphony Center, just prior to the venue’s grand opening in 2006. The recording would go on to win three Grammy Awards in 2008. Tower’s widely performed work was commissioned by a consortium of 65 orchestras through the League’s *Ford Made in America*, the largest orchestral commissioning consortium in the country’s history. Tower is also in the midst of celebrating her 80th birthday year, with numerous concerts and events taking place throughout this season.

Tower will receive the Gold Baton during the Conference’s Closing Plenary, June 5, 1:30-3:00 p.m. CST, at the Omni Hotel Nashville.

“We are so happy to celebrate Joan Tower’s immense contribution to orchestras,” said League of American Orchestras President and CEO Jesse Rosen. “She has been a beloved presence in our community: an exemplary musical citizen, an inspiring mentor, an energetic champion of new music and, in particular, women composers and performers, and a delightful colleague whose music has been broadly embraced by musicians and audiences alike.”

Given annually since 1948 for distinguished service to America’s orchestras, the Gold Baton recognizes individuals and institutions whose far-reaching

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contributions to the field serve to champion and advance the cause of orchestras and symphonic music throughout the country.

Previous Gold Baton recipients include, among many others, Leonard Bernstein (1959); Pierre Boulez (2000); Beverly Sills (1980); The Ford Foundation (1966); Aaron Copland (1978); Betty Freeman (1987); Yo-Yo Ma (2018); Ann Hobson Pilot (2017); William Schuman (1985) and John Williams (2006). [Click here for a full list of Gold Baton recipients.](#)

About Joan Tower:

Joan Tower is widely regarded as one of the most important American composers living today. During a career spanning more than fifty years, she has made lasting contributions to musical life in the United States as composer, performer, conductor, and educator. Her works have been commissioned by major ensembles, soloists, and orchestras, including the Emerson, Tokyo, and Muir quartets; soloists Evelyn Glennie, Carol Wincenc, David Shifrin, Paul Neubauer, and John Browning; and the orchestras of Chicago, New York, St. Louis, Pittsburgh, Baltimore, Nashville, Albany NY, and Washington DC among others. Tower was the first composer chosen for a Ford Made in America consortium commission of sixty-five orchestras. Leonard Slatkin and the Nashville Symphony recorded *Made in America* in 2008 (along with *Tambor* and *Concerto for Orchestra*).

The album collected three Grammy awards: Best Contemporary Classical Composition, Best Classical Album, and Best Orchestral Performance. Nashville's latest all-Tower recording includes *Stroke*, which received a 2016 Grammy nomination for Best Contemporary Classical Composition. In 1990 she became the first woman to win the prestigious Grawemeyer Award for *Silver Ladders*, a piece she wrote for the St. Louis Symphony where she was Composer-in-Residence from 1985-88. Other residencies with orchestras include a 10-year residency with the Orchestra of St. Luke's (1997-2007) and the Pittsburgh Symphony (2010-11). She was the Albany Symphony's Mentor Composer partner in the 2013-14 season. Tower was cofounder and pianist for the Naumburg Award-winning Da Capo Chamber Players from 1970-85. She has received honorary doctorates from Smith College, the New England Conservatory, and Illinois State University.

[Read Joan Tower's full biography here.](#)

[Listen to Joan Tower's music here.](#)

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 2,000 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 only 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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