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League of American Orchestras Launches Unprecedented 30-Orchestra Consortium, Commissions New Works by Six Women Composers

New Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation Orchestral Commissions Program will effect change on stages nationwide through multiple premieres and performances taking place from 2022-23 season through 2024-25

Initial lead composer/orchestra pairings include:

- **Anna Clyne and The Philadelphia Orchestra**
- **Sarah Gibson and Sarasota Orchestra**
- **Angel Lam and Kansas City Symphony**
- **Gity Razaz and San Diego Symphony**
- **Arlene Sierra and Detroit Symphony Orchestra**
- **Wang Lu and New York Philharmonic**

24 additional U.S. orchestras to be announced

New York, NY (May 26, 2022) – Generating an infusion of new music by women on orchestra stages over the next several seasons, the League of American Orchestras will commission orchestral works from six women composers and form a

consortium of thirty U.S. orchestras to perform the works across the country (five orchestras will be paired with each composer). In addition to introducing important new works into the orchestral repertoire, the program will deeply embed mentoring, networking, career development, and community engagement opportunities for the composers. The new 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 Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation is pleased to partner with the League of American Orchestras and American Composers Orchestra to expand its program of commissioning new orchestral works by female and nonbinary composers,” said Foundation Trustee Alexander C. Sanger. “Our founder, Virginia B. Toulmin, was a passionate supporter of music and of equality and fairness for women. Ever since our first grant to the League in 2012, the foundation has been in the forefront of supporting female composers and is the only foundation in the performing arts dedicated exclusively to advancing and leveling the playing field for female and nonbinary creative artists.”

"I'm grateful to the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation for this unprecedented opportunity to increase the presence of works by women and nonbinary composers on orchestra stages," said League of American Orchestras' President and CEO Simon Woods. "Recent data confirms a burst of more inclusive programming activity across the field, and our new program greatly adds to the momentum—these six composers will now have their work heard multiple times nationally, in a wide variety of settings, all while actively engaging with community members and receiving strong career support from mentors and the composer cohort."

Melissa Ngan, President and CEO of the American Composers Orchestra, adds, “For over 40 years, ACO has discovered and developed the talents of composers whose work expands the definition of American orchestral music. With this year’s landmark expansion, the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation deepens the impact of its long-term, visionary support of women and nonbinary artists nationwide. It is an honor to be in partnership with the League in this work, which advances the artistry of these extraordinary composers while providing orchestras of every size with the opportunity to join these fully funded consortium commissions. We are thrilled that

the program also creates meaningful opportunities for composers to develop programming with schools and community partners, as a means of nurturing creativity for all.”

Six lead orchestras will premiere the commissioned works in the 2022-23 or 2023-24 seasons:

- * [Anna Clyne](#) and The Philadelphia Orchestra
- * [Sarah Gibson](#) and Sarasota Orchestra
- * [Angel Lam](#) and the Kansas City Symphony
- * [Gity Razaz](#) and the San Diego Symphony
- * [Arlene Sierra](#) and the Detroit Symphony Orchestra
- * [Wang Lu](#) and the New York Philharmonic.

An additional 24 orchestras will be selected for repeat performances in the 2023-24 and 2024-25 seasons (for a total of five orchestras paired to each composer). Orchestras interested in participating in the consortium should [fill out a response form](#) by Thursday, June 30.

Networking, mentoring, career development, and community engagement opportunities are built into the program, and the composer cohort will meet annually at the League's National Conference. Consortium orchestras will need to demonstrate a commitment to engaging the composers in rehearsals, networking opportunities, and education or community engagement activities, and orchestras will receive funds for marketing efforts, and to support composer attendance at performances.

As with the former Virginia B. Toulmin Orchestral Commissions Program (originally known as the 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 non-binary composers who have participated in EarShot residencies.

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

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 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

EarShot is a nationwide network of new music readings and composer development programs that provide professional level working experience with orchestras from every region of the country. For over a generation, EarShot Readings (founded 2008), and their predecessor ACO's New Music Readings (founded 1991), have provided all-important career development and public exposure to the country's most promising emerging composers, with over 350 composers participating.

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Readings alumni have won every major composition award, including the Pulitzer, Grammy, Grawemeyer, American Academy of Arts & Letters, and Rome Prizes. Orchestras around the globe have commissioned EarShot alumni.

Each EarShot installment includes a series of private readings, feedback sessions, and work with mentor composers, plus a series of online Professional Development Sessions covering topics such as creative collaboration, self-publishing for composers, fundraising, and orchestral commissions and contracting.

To date, ACO has partnered with orchestras including the New York Philharmonic, Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, Colorado Symphony Orchestra, Detroit Symphony, Nashville Symphony Orchestra, San Diego Symphony and Aguascalientes Symphony Orchestra (Mexico) through EarShot. ACO EarShot operates in partnership with American Composers Forum, New Music USA, and 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.

