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League of American Orchestras, in Partnership with American Composers Orchestra, Announces Newest Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation Orchestral Commissions Program Consortium

30 Orchestras to Perform New Works by Six Women and Nonbinary Composers, Through 2028-29

New York, NY (October 27, 2026) – The League of American Orchestras, in partnership with American Composers Orchestra (ACO), has established its fourth national consortium through the [Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation Orchestral Commissions Program](#), the organizations announced today. In existence for more than a decade, the program seeks to increase the programming of works by women and nonbinary composers on orchestra stages. Six composers will receive commissions for new works, which will be premiered by a total of 30 orchestras over the next three years.

Composers **Ahmed Al Abaca**, **Marie A. Douglas**, **Roshanne Etezady**, **Grace Ann Lee**, **Alyssa Regent**, and **Shelley Washington** will each receive commissions for a 5- to 8-minute work to be premiered by a lead orchestra, with additional performances by four orchestras in the 2027-28 and 2028-29 seasons.

The participating orchestras, with their commissioned composers, are (orchestras performing the world premiere in **bold**):

Atlanta Symphony Orchestra (GA) - Alyssa Regent
Auburn Symphony Orchestra (WA) - Shelley Washington
Austin Symphony Orchestra (TX) - Ahmed Al Abaca

Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra (NY) - Roshanne Etezady
Champaign-Urbana Symphony Orchestra (IL) - Marie A. Douglas
Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra (OH) - Grace Ann Lee
Columbus Symphony (OH) - Marie A. Douglas
Dallas Symphony Orchestra (TX) - Shelley Washington
Eastern Connecticut Symphony Orchestra (CT) - Roshanne Etezady
Fresno Philharmonic (CA) - Marie A. Douglas
Furman Symphony Orchestra (SC) - Alyssa Regent
Grand Junction Symphony Orchestra (CO) - Ahmed Al Abaca
Hawai'i Symphony Orchestra (HI) - Grace Ann Lee
Jacksonville Symphony (FL) - Ahmed Al Abaca
Knoxville Symphony Orchestra (TN) - Roshanne Etezady
Lexington Philharmonic (KY) - Shelley Washington
Louisiana Philharmonic Orchestra (LA) - Ahmed Al Abaca
Madison Symphony Orchestra (WI) - Grace Ann Lee
Minnesota Orchestra (MN) - Shelley Washington
Nashville Philharmonic Orchestra (TN) - Marie A. Douglas
NEPA Philharmonic (PA) - Shelley Washington
New Jersey Symphony (NJ) - Roshanne Etezady
Ocala Symphony (FL) - Grace Ann Lee
Olympia Symphony Orchestra (WA) - Roshanne Etezady
Quad City Symphony (IA) - Alyssa Regent
Reno Philharmonic (NV) - Marie A. Douglas
Schenectady-Saratoga Symphony Orchestra (NY) - Ahmed Al Abaca
Tucson Symphony Orchestra (AZ) - Alyssa Regent
Vermont Symphony Orchestra (VT) - Grace Ann Lee
Wheeling Symphony Orchestra (WV) - Alyssa Regent

“For over ten years, the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation has supported excellent women and nonbinary composers,” said Simon Woods, League President and CEO. “The enthusiasm of the orchestra field, the impact on the composers, and the overwhelmingly positive response from audiences are a testament to the power and importance of nurturing a living, breathing, and evolving orchestral canon.”

“We are deeply grateful to the thirty orchestras that have partnered with us to provide such an incredible platform for this cohort of visionary composers,” added Melissa Ngan, ACO

President and CEO. “The significance of having five performances of a new work at such an important moment in these artists' careers cannot be overstated, and we know that each of them will form meaningful relationships on and off the stage in cities across the country as a result of this high-impact program.”

“The Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation is proud to continue its partnership with the League of American Orchestras and American Composers Orchestra to increase the performance of orchestral works by women and nonbinary composers,” said Alexander Sanger, Trustee of the Foundation. “American audiences deserve to hear a wide variety of music composed by American composers, and these composers deserve to have the opportunity to bring their music to listeners who have not before heard them. American music and the culture at large are enriched, and the careers of emerging composers launched and enhanced.”

The **Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation Orchestral Commissions Program** is an initiative of the League of American Orchestras, in partnership with American Composers Orchestra and supported by the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation. Since its inception in 2014, the Virginia B. Toulmin Foundation Orchestral Commissions Program has commissioned thirty-seven works from thirty-four women and nonbinary composers, many of whom have since received additional commissions from America's orchestras. The program began with the awarding of two annual commissions, quickly increased to three, and then, in 2022, the first of the three national consortiums was formed. A repeat performance initiative was launched in 2025, with sixteen orchestras performing previously commissioned works from 2014-19.

Networking, mentoring, career development, and community engagement opportunities are built into the program, and the composer cohort meets annually at the League's [National Conference](#), taking place next year in Atlanta, June 2-4, 2027. Orchestras participating in the consortium demonstrate a commitment to engaging the composers in rehearsals, networking opportunities, and education or community engagement activities. Participating orchestras receive funds for marketing efforts and to support composer attendance at performances and local educational and community events.

The Virginia B. Toulmin Orchestral Commissions Program is linked to EarShot, an initiative of American Composers Orchestra in collaboration with American Composers Forum, the League of American Orchestras, and New Music USA. Commission recipients are selected from composers who have participated in EarShot reading sessions.

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

The **League of American Orchestras** unites and advances the orchestra field—building capacity, fostering innovation, amplifying its collective voice, and laying the groundwork for a vibrant future. The only national organization dedicated to orchestras and their communities, the League supports the field through advocacy, leadership development, convenings, research, and artistic programs. Founded in 1942 and chartered by Congress in 1962, the League includes nearly 25,000 musicians, conductors, orchestra staff, board members, volunteers, and industry professionals working within our membership of 2,000 world-renowned orchestras, community groups, summer festivals, student and youth ensembles, conservatories, libraries, businesses serving orchestras, and individuals who love orchestral music. Visit americanorchestras.org.

In 1977, a collective of fearless New York City musicians came together to form the **American Composers Orchestra (ACO)**, an ensemble dedicated to the creation, celebration, performance, and promotion of orchestral music by American composers. Over more than 40 years committed to artistry, creativity, community, and equity, ACO has blossomed into a national institution that not only cultivates and develops the careers of living composers, but also provides composers a direct pipeline to partnerships with many of America's major symphony orchestras. In addition to its annual concert series at Carnegie Hall, ACO produces national educational programs for all ages, and composer advancement programs to foster a community of creators, audience, performers, collaborators, and funders – all dedicated to American composition. Visit americancomposers.org for more information.

Now encompassing all of ACO'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, publishing, and professional development, EarShot ensures a vibrant musical future by investing in creativity today. Serving over 350 composers since inception, ACO Readings in NYC began in 1991, and since 2008, national Readings 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. EarShot 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.