



the national orchestral composition discovery network

news release

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EarShot and Detroit Symphony Orchestra Present

Brand New Orchestral Works by Four Emerging Composers

Brian Nabors, Marian L. Harrison Stephens, Anthony Tidd, and Kerwin Young

Wednesday, March 6, 2019 at 1:30pm

Saturday, March 9, 2019 at 11am

**Max M. and Marjorie S. Fisher Music Center
3711 Woodward Avenue | Detroit, MI**

**Free Admission with Advance Registration:
bit.ly/DSOearshot**

www.dso.org | bit.ly/earshotnetwork

Detroit, MI – On **Wednesday, March 6, 2019 at 1:30pm** and **Saturday, March 9, 2019 at 11am**, EarShot (the National Orchestral Composition Discovery Network) and the **Detroit Symphony Orchestra (DSO)**, present the readings of new works by four emerging composers at **Max M. and Marjorie S. Fisher Music Center** (3711 Woodward Avenue). The New Music Readings will be the culmination of a series of private readings, feedback sessions, and work with mentor composers **Gabriela Lena Frank**, **Derek Bermel**, DSO’s Classical Roots composer-in-residence **Jonathan Bailey Holland**, as well as conductor **André Raphel**.

The selected composers and their works, chosen from a national call for scores that yielded 54 applicants, are **Brian Nabors** (*Rise*), **Marian L. Harrison Stephens** (*Out of Kilter*), **Anthony Tidd** (*Sa & Alatangana*), and **Kerwin Young** (*American Caravan*).

In addition to the orchestral readings, the DSO EarShot residency includes a professional development component on building skills in education and community engagement. From March 1-4, participant composers will receive hands-on training, through collaboration with **DSO Teaching Artists**, guest composer **Jessie Montgomery**, and **ACO Education Director Kevin James**, to explore the basics of student engagement and will present composition basics to students in local public schools.

All DSO EarShot activities occur during the DSO's annual Classical Roots presentation, which has celebrated the contributions of African-Americans to classical music for 41 years. More information is available here: www.dso.org/classicalroots.

EarShot, an initiative of **American Composers Orchestra (ACO)** in partnership with **American Composers Forum, League of American Orchestras**, and **New Music USA**, is the nation's first ongoing program for identifying and promoting the most promising orchestral composers on the national stage. ACO's artistic and administrative staff collaborates with participating orchestras, assisting with planning, program design, and execution. EarShot residencies include mentorship from the most accomplished orchestral composers in the country, orchestra readings, and musician and conductor feedback sessions. The program is customized to each host orchestra's aesthetic, demographic, community, and educational interests.

Additional EarShot readings this season occurred with Grand Rapids Symphony (September 26-30, 2018) and are upcoming with Sarasota Orchestra (March 12-16, 2019) and American Composers Orchestra (Underwood New Music Readings, May 23-24, 2019).

About the Selected Composers and Their Music

Brian Nabors (*Rise*)

Brian Raphael Nabors (b. 1991) is a composer of emotionally enriching music that tells exciting narratives with its vibrant themes and colorful harmonic language. Nabors has been commissioned by institutions such as the Cincinnati Symphony Orchestra as well as performed at many events across the US, including the Texas Music Educators Association Conference (TMEA), the Midwest Composers Symposium, and the International Double Reed Society Conference (IDRS). He has received awards from the Music Teachers National Association (MTNA), Alabama Music Teachers Association (AMTA), the Birmingham Music Club, and has been performed by artists such as the Detroit Chamber Winds and Strings, Zodiac Trio, Unheard-of//Ensemble, and the Contemporary Directions Ensemble at the University of Michigan. He has also received instruction in masterclasses with composers such as Lowell Liebermann, William Bolcom, and pianist Jon Nakamatsu. Most recently, he was selected to compete as a finalist in the *Rapido!* National Composition Contest *Take Five* with judges Robert Spano, Jennifer Higdon, and Michael Gandolfi in January 2019.

With an eclectic musical palate and crafty compositional technique to match, Nabors' music draws from combinations of Jazz/R&B with the modern flair of contemporary music. This interesting blend of sound worlds is one that continues to craft his unique musical voice.

Nabors is currently completing doctoral studies at the College-Conservatory of Music, University of Cincinnati where he studies with Norman Dinerstein Professor of Composition Scholar, Douglas Knehans. He obtained the Master of Music degree in Composition also from CCM, studying with Miguel A. Roig-Francolí. Prior to graduate studies, he obtained a Bachelor of Music Theory & Composition degree from the School of the Arts at Samford University in Birmingham, AL, where he studied composition with Sarana Chou and piano with Kathryn Fouse.

Of his work, Nabors says, "*Rise* for orchestra is an adaptation of the first movement of my Concerto for Hammond Organ and Orchestra. The musical elements of the piece in its original form symbolize the eclectic beauty of American lifestyle through music and culture. The work embodies the sense of freedom that the nation continually strives to further embody. This idea is represented through the restless nature of the music. While composing the work, I became quite fond of the synergy between the solo Hammond Organ and orchestra and found that it would double nicely as a small concerto for orchestra. My goal is for the listener to be taken on a journey of restless sounds and lavish tunes, while depicting our innate longing for the freedom to just simply be."

Marian L. Harrison Stephens (*Out of Kilter*)

Marian L. H. Stephens (b. 1974) is a native of Atlanta, Georgia. In August 2007, she became the first African American to receive the Doctorate of Music degree in Music Composition from Indiana University (Bloomington) Jacobs School of Music. She also holds the Certificate of Visiting Student from the Royal Academy of Music in Stockholm, Sweden, for studies completed in music composition during the 2004 - 2005 academic year.

Dr. Stephens is the Founding Artistic Director of MLH Music Studio, which she established in 2010. She is the lead instructor to students ages 4 to adult. She resides in Atlanta with her husband, Don, daughters, Nia Sanaa (age 4) and Ava Naima (age 2), mother, M. Loretta Fowlkes Harrison, and Skip, the dog.

Of *Out of Kilter*, Stephens notes, “There are approximately thirteen miles between the Bankhead Courts housing project development, (a fenced-in, self-sustaining dwelling that includes its own elementary school, public library and convenience store) and the High Museum of Art (a multi-million-dollar complex located in the center of Atlanta's extremely affluent arts district). Three miles from Bankhead Courts, and eleven miles from the High Museum of Art, is the Historic Collier Heights Community where I spent a privileged childhood that included many trips to the High.

Despite the short distance between my neighborhood and Bankhead Courts, I never considered life so out of kilter in such close proximity between the two communities until the year 2000. That year I received a CLiCC grant from the Atlanta Chapter of the American Composers Forum to implement my program, Project MAP (music, art, poetry), into Bankhead Courts Elementary. I soon realized that lack of opportunity, coupled with a constant bombardment of real-life negative images was the main catalyst for many of the problems facing the Bankhead Courts community. Chase Campbell’s images from his children's book, *Riding the Sphinx and Other Adventures at the Museum*, was the inspiration for *OUT OF KILTER: sounding scenes from Black America*. Each image is paired with a major section of music, delineated by subtitles, which I created. These subtitles allude to each picture, as I see them, and also to the mood of the music.”

Anthony Tidd (*Sa & Alatangana*)

A Philly transplant, and the child of Trinidadian parents, **Anthony Tidd** (b. 1972) was born and raised in London, England. Over the next eighteen years, he attended the Newham Academy of Music (London), Guild Hall (London), Thurrock College of Music (Grays), and Goldsmiths University (London), and studied with jazz alto saxophonist and McArthur genius, Steve Coleman.

As an international touring bassist, Tidd has had the pleasure of working with a number of celebrated names, including Greg Osby, Ravi Coltrane, Vijay Iyer, Kindred, Wayne Krantz, Talib Kweli, Rudresh Mahanthappa, Meshell N’degicelo, Common, Jill Scott, De La Soul, David Byrne, Gangstaar, Frank Ocean and many others.

As an accomplished composer/band leader Anthony released his critically acclaimed album, *Quite Sane – The Child of Troubled Times* in 2002, and has written and recorded works for small ensembles, big bands, and full orchestra. As a Grammy Award winner, Tidd has also recorded and produced a number of records for multiplatinum artists such as, The Roots, Macy Gray, Zap Mama, Lady Gaga, The Black Eyed Peas, Fergie, Pink, Jill Scott, and Ursula Rucker, as well as composing scores for major film and television projects, most recently including Jay Z’s Paramount/BET docuseries, *Rest in Power – The Trayvon Martin Story*.

As an educator, and long-standing member of the M-BASE collective, Anthony has taught and presented masterclasses at a number of prestigious institutions including NYU, Temple, The New School, U-Chicago, UC-San Diego, UCLA, BANFF, Berklee, New England Conservatory, Engelsholm, The Pavarotti Music Centre, The Lincoln Center, Durban University, Paris Conservatory, The London South Bank, The Royal College of Music, and many others. He is also a master lecturer at the University of the Arts in Philly.

Tidd is the creator/director of the Creative Music Program, Jazz Camp of Philadelphia, as well as curator of Meet the Masters, and popular Philly concert series Sittin’ In, all at the prestigious Kimmel Center, where he currently serves as the Jazz Artistic Advisor. Tidd now divides his time between all of the above, as well saving some time to compose, and educate the next generation of musical talent.

Of *Sa & Alatangana*, Tidd notes, “This piece is dedicated to my Aunt, Ruth Harper, who passed away in 2018 after a long fight with cancer. It celebrates the life cycle, from birth, coming of age, maturity, and of course death, as an inevitable part of this. I tried to use a limited number of themes, which grow slowly throughout, emulating biological growth. The piece also features material which was derived from my jazz improvisational approach, based on my own extensive experience in this area.”

Kerwin Young (*American Caravan*)

Kerwin Young (b. 1970) is a prolific American composer of symphonies, opera, ballet suites, orchestral fantasies, concerti, and works for Chinese and other non-western instruments, introducing fresh repertoire, new rhythms, and unconventional instrumentation to the classical music canon.

A member of Public Enemy and their infamous production team, the Bomb Squad (1987-2018), Young and the group were inducted into the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame in 2013. Young is an iconic recording producer who has produced Ice Cube, Mobb Deep, Busta Rhymes, Bobby Brown, Public Enemy, Eric B. & Rakim, Eddie Moore and the Outer Circle, and others. He

has arranged and collaborated with artists as Bootsy Collins, Kenny Gamble & Leon Huff, Roy Haynes, Reginald R. Robinson, George Clinton, and the James Brown Band. In 2017, Young served as a U.S. Cultural Ambassador for Hip-Hop in Egypt, teaching music composition, production, media scoring, and business.

As a media composer, Young composed for the 1994 debut season of *New York Undercover*. His first assignment as a film composer was *Tar*, the 1997 directorial debut of Goetz Grossman. Since 2014, Kerwin is the composer for the KCPT weekly news series *Ruckus*. Since the late 1989, Young has also composed and produced original songs for feature motion pictures as *Do The Right Thing* (1989), *Green Card* (1990), *Sister Act 2* (1992), *Streetfighter* (1994), *Dirty Grandpa* (2016), and *American Crime Story: The People Vs O.J. Simpson* (2016).

Kerwin Young studied music composition at the University of Missouri-Kansas City Conservatory of Music and Dance with Chen Yi, Zhou Long, and Jazz Messenger legend, Bobby Watson. He holds both a BM (2012) and an MM (2015) from UMKC. His works have been performed by Music From China, Kansas City Symphony, Chicago Modern Orchestra Project, University City Symphony, Jeffrey Kail (Principal Contrabass – KC Symphony), Jeff Nelsen (French Horn – Canadian Brass), Tami Lee Hughes, and others.

Of his piece, Young notes, “Inspired by current events taking place in the Americas, *American Caravan* highlights the trek of a people wanting something better; against all odds and harsh conditions, optimism looms above. This work continues in the manner of my previous work, *Season of Autocracy*, which also highlights the current times in which I am living.

American Caravan is written in B minor, using an octatonic scale from my personalized Palette of Intervallic Relations; a unique component to my system of Geometric Khemistry. There are modulations to neighboring keys (C# minor, E major, F# minor, and G# minor). My greatest wish is that *American Caravan* will be enjoyed by concert goers and music lovers everywhere, and that it will join other great works among orchestral concert programming.”

About Detroit Symphony Orchestra

The most accessible orchestra on the planet, the acclaimed Detroit Symphony Orchestra is known for trailblazing performances, collaborations with the world’s foremost musical artists, and a deep connection to its city. As a community-supported orchestra, generous giving by individuals and institutions at all levels drives the continued success and growth of the institution. Making its home at historic Orchestra Hall within the Max M. and Marjorie S. Fisher Music Center, the DSO offers a performance schedule that features Classical, PNC Pops, Paradise Jazz, and Young People’s Family Concert series. One of America’s most acoustically perfect concert halls, Orchestra Hall will celebrate its centennial in 2019-2020. In addition, the DSO presents the William Davidson Neighborhood Concert Series in seven metro area venues, as well as a robust schedule of eclectic multi-genre performances in its mid-size venue The Cube, constructed and curated with support from Peter D. & Julie F. Cummings. With growing attendance and unwavering philanthropic support from the people of Detroit, the DSO actively pursues a mission to embrace and inspire individuals, families, and communities through unsurpassed musical experiences.

About American Composers Orchestra

Founded in 1977, American Composers Orchestra is dedicated to the creation, performance, preservation, and promotion 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. ACO programs seek to innovate and experiment, educate students and the public, and open the orchestra to diverse new influences and audiences. For more information, visit www.americancomposers.org.

About American Composers Forum

The American Composers Forum is committed to supporting composers and developing new markets for their music. Through granting, commissioning, and performance programs, ACF provides composers at all stages of their careers with valuable resources for professional and artistic development. By linking communities with composers and performers, ACF fosters a

demand for new music, enriches communities, and helps develop the next generation of composers, performers, and music patrons. For more information, visit www.composersforum.org.

About 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 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. For more information, visit www.americanorchestras.org.

About New Music USA

New Music USA supports and promotes new music created in the United States using the power of virtual networks and people to foster connection, deepen knowledge, encourage appreciation, and provide financial support for a diverse constituency of practitioners and appreciators. New Music USA engages with a broad constituency of artists and audiences with our programs and editorial work, providing in-depth coverage of the field through NewMusicBox.org and Counterstream Radio and supporting the field with around one million dollars in grants annually. Through membership in networks such as the International Society for Contemporary Music and the International Association of Music Information Centers, New Music USA represents the United States new music scene around the world. For more information, visit www.newmusicusa.org.

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This press release is available online at www.americancomposers.org/press-media

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american composers orchestra

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