



Press Contact:
Brigid Pierce, New Music USA
bpierce@newmusicusa.org

More Information:
newmusicusa.org

30+ Orchestras are uniting to Co-Commission and Share Repertoire by Black and Latinx Composers for New Music USA's Amplifying Voices program

ASCAP, the Sorel Organization, and Wise Music Trust Increase Support
for this Collective Response to Inequities in Orchestral Music

New York, NY (November 10, 2020) – New Music USA's Amplifying Voices program, launched in January 2020 to promote marginalized voices in orchestral music, is growing to include at least 35 orchestras, which are working together to shift the canon for future generations. This increasing momentum, made possible by new funding from the **Sorel Organization** and industry partners **ASCAP** and **Wise Music Trust**, demonstrates recognition amongst orchestras that new and inclusive approaches to programming are critical for the sector's future relevance. They join The Sphinx Organization which kick-started this initiative with a generous contribution from the Sphinx Venture Fund.

Support from the Sorel Organization has contributed to two new consortia led by Dallas Symphony and Youth Orchestra Los Angeles, which will each commission a woman of color. ASCAP and Wise Music Trust will support the Amplifying Voices Learning Lab, facilitating conversations with composers, orchestras, and industry guests. Anticipated focal points include best approaches to co-commissioning, centering existent repertoire by BIPOC composers, and enabling more audiences around the country to discover the most exciting music of our time.

Amplifying Voices' promotion of collective action will be explored at the Dallas Symphony Orchestra's [Women in Classical Music Symposium](#) at a panel on November 11, 2020 at 12:15pm CST. Panelists include representatives from four of the Amplifying Voices consortia:

- Jennifer Barlament, Executive Director, Atlanta Symphony Orchestra;
- JoAnn Falletta, Music Director, Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra;
- Shelley Washington, commissioned composer for the Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra; and
- Joseph Young, Music Director, Berkeley Symphony

ABOUT AMPLIFYING VOICES

Amplifying Voices fosters collaboration and collective action toward equitable representation of composers in classical music. The program was initiated by New Music USA last fall, with support from the Sphinx Venture Fund being confirmed in December 2019. Through a national call launched in January 2020, New Music USA asked orchestras to come forward with proposals for co-commissions and a commitment to promote existing repertoire that deserves further performances. *Learn more about Amplifying Voices [here](#).*

The consortium leads are:

- **Arkansas Symphony** commissioning **Tania León**,
- **Atlanta Symphony Orchestra** commissioning **Tyshawn Sorey**,
- **Berkeley Symphony** commissioning **Brian Raphael Nabors**,
- **Dallas Symphony Orchestra** commissioning **Jessie Montgomery**,
- **Las Vegas Philharmonic** commissioning **Juan Pablo Contreras**,
- **Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra** commissioning **Shelley Washington**,
- **The Philadelphia Orchestra** commissioning **Valerie Coleman**,
- and the most recent addition, **Youth Orchestra of Los Angeles**, commissioned composer TBD.

Partner orchestras include: Aspen Music Festival and School, Auburn Symphony, Baltimore Symphony, Boston Landmarks Orchestra, Boston Modern Orchestra Project, Buffalo Philharmonic Orchestra, California Symphony, Detroit Symphony Orchestra, Kansas City Symphony, Louisiana Philharmonic, New Jersey Symphony, New World Symphony, Richmond Symphony, ROCO, and Seattle Symphony.

These consortia are continuing to grow. Orchestras interested in becoming involved are invited to contact Scott Winship (swinship@newmusicusa.org).

Vanessa Reed, President and CEO of New Music USA, says,

“We’re thrilled to welcome more orchestras, composers, and partners to the Amplifying Voices movement – which has grown to involve over 30 orchestras following our launch in January 2020. Music by women and composers of color has for so long been omitted from orchestral programming. **Sustained, collective action is the only path to achieving tangible, sector-wide change.**”

ASCAP Chief Executive Officer Elizabeth Matthews says,

“**The music world is richer when we hear from a diverse spectrum of voices.** ASCAP is committed to creating inclusive opportunities for composers to have their work heard and Amplifying Voices’ plan to organize eight consortia spanning the country will open doors for both composers and music lovers. We are excited to support this program, which will provide a valuable platform for these incredibly talented music creators.”

Wende Persons, Interim Executive Director of The Sorel Organization, says,

“For 25 years the Sorel Organization has focused its charitable work pushing the boundaries for women in classical music, especially composers. Through Amplifying Voices, **we are thrilled to be able to help increase the representation of music by women and composers of color** that is programmed and performed across the country, amplifying the variety and richness of America’s musical and cultural story.”

Afa S. Dworkin, President and Artistic Director of The Sphinx Organization, says,

“At a critical time in our nation's history, Sphinx looks forward to helping to amplify the most important voices in classical music. There is a rich tradition of excellence in repertoire by Black and Latinx composers, ranging from Florence Price, William Grant Still, Margaret Bonds, Manuel Ponce, Silvestre Revueltas, and countless other voices who have shaped the fabric of classical music. **This is a hopeful avenue to live by our commitment to diversity and profoundly shift our canon.** By giving the spotlight to diverse voices, this New Music USA initiative can help to evolve our entire field.”

Media: Digital assets are available [here](#).

ABOUT THE COMPOSERS

Valerie Coleman is among the world’s most played composers living today. Described as one of the “Top 35 Female Composers in Classical Music” by the *Washington Post*, Coleman serves as Assistant Professor and Director of Chamber Music at the Frost School of Music, and was named one of *American Public Radio's* "2020 Classical Woman of the Year." With works ranging from flute sonatas recounting stories of trafficked humans, orchestral works based on nomadic Roma tribes, to scherzos about moonshine in the Mississippi Delta, her works are regarded as deeply relevant contributions to modern music. Coleman has received awards and honors from the National Flute Association, The Herb Alpert Awards, MAPFUND, ASCAP Concert Music Awards, NARAS, Chamber Music Society of Lincoln Center, Edward and Sally Van Lier Fund, Artists International, Wombwell Kentucky Award, and more. vcolemanmusic.com

Juan Pablo Contreras, originally from Guadalajara, Mexico, is a Latin Grammy®-nominated composer and Universal Music recording artist who combines Western classical and Mexican folk music in a single soundscape. His works have been commissioned and performed by orchestras throughout the Americas

including National Symphony Orchestra of Mexico, Simón Bolívar Symphony Orchestra of Venezuela, Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, and Victoria Bach Festival Orchestra. Winner of the BMI William Schuman Prize, Presser Music Award, and the Young Artist Fellowship of Mexico's National Fund for Culture and the Arts, Contreras holds composition degrees from California Institute of the Art, Manhattan School of Music, and is pursuing his DMA at University of Southern California. juanpablocontreras.com

Tania León, a Cuba-born composer and conductor, settled in New York in 1967. She has played important roles at Dance Theater of Harlem, Brooklyn Philharmonic, American Composers Orchestra, and the New York Philharmonic. León is the founder and artistic director of Composers Now. Notable commissions include works for the New York Philharmonic, Los Angeles Philharmonic, and the International Contemporary Ensemble. León's honors include induction into the American Academy of Arts and Letters; recognition from the Fromm, Koussevitzky, and Guggenheim Foundations; ASCAP's Victor Herbert Award; and a 2018 United States Artists Fellowship. Her works have received Grammy and Latin Grammy nominations for Best Contemporary Classical Composition. tanialeon.com

Jessie Montgomery is an acclaimed composer, violinist, and educator. She is the recipient of the Leonard Bernstein Award from the ASCAP Foundation, and her works are performed frequently around the world by leading musicians and ensembles. Her music interweaves classical music with elements of vernacular music, improvisation, language, and social justice, placing her squarely as one of the most relevant interpreters of 21st-century American sound and experience. Her profoundly-felt works are described as "turbulent, wildly colorful and exploding with life" (*Washington Post*). jessiemontgomery.com

Brian Raphael Nabors, originally of Birmingham, AL, is a composer of emotionally enriching music that tells exciting narratives with its vibrant themes and colorful harmonic language. Nabors draws from combinations of jazz, funk, R&B, and gospel. His music has been performed by the Cincinnati, Atlanta, Nashville, and Detroit Symphony Orchestras, as well as ROCO. Nabors is also a 2020 Fulbright scholarship recipient to Sydney, Australia, studying with composer Carl Vine at the Sydney Conservatorium of Music. He earned both a Doctor of Musical Arts and Master of Music degree in Composition from the University of Cincinnati College-Conservatory of Music. briannabors.com

Tyshawn Sorey, a Newark-born multi-instrumentalist and composer, is celebrated for his incomparable virtuosity, effortless mastery and memorization of highly complex scores, and an extraordinary ability to blend composition and improvisation in his work. The Wall Street Journal notes Sorey is, "a composer of radical and seemingly boundless ideas." The New Yorker recently noted that he is "among the most formidable denizens of the in-between zone...An extraordinary talent who can see across the entire musical landscape." Sorey has received support from The Jerome Foundation, The Shifting Foundation, Van Lier Fellowship, and was named a 2017 MacArthur fellow and a 2018 United States Artists Fellow. tyshawnsorey.com

Shelley Washington is a composer, performer, collaborator, and educator who writes music that draws elements from jazz, rock, American folk and other musical spaces. She also performs as a saxophonist and vocalist, and doubles on flute, piccolo, and clarinet. She is a founding member of the composer collective Kinds of Kings. Her music explores emotions and intentions, and it uses intricate rhythms with grooves, melody, and harmony. It sometimes confronts social injustices. Washington has a B.A. in music and an M.A. in education from Truman State University, a Master of Music in composition from NYU, and is currently working on a PhD in composition at Princeton. shelleywashington.com

ABOUT THE LEAD ORCHESTRAS

The Arkansas Symphony Orchestra celebrates its 55th season in 2020-2021. ASO is the resident orchestra of Robinson Center Music Hall. Arkansas Symphony Orchestra performs more than sixty concerts each year for more than 165,000 people through its Stella Boyle Smith Masterworks Series, Acxiom Pops Live! Series, River Rhapsodies Chamber Music Series, and numerous concerts performed around the state of Arkansas, in addition to serving central Arkansas through community outreach programs and bringing live symphonic music education to over 26,000 school children. arkansassymphony.org

The Atlanta Symphony Orchestra (ASO), currently in its 75th season, performs more than 150 concerts each year. Now in his 19th season as Music Director, Robert Spano's continued commitment to nurturing and championing contemporary American music, through the Atlanta School of Composers and other partnerships, has defined a new generation of American composers. During the ASO's history with Telarc, the Orchestra and Chorus have recorded more than 100 albums and its recordings have won 27 Grammy® Awards in categories including Best Classical Album, Best Orchestral Performance, Best Choral Performance and Best Opera Performance. atlantasympphony.org

Berkeley Symphony is unique among Bay Area and American orchestras for its commitment to innovation, community, and excellence. Founded in 1971 in the intellectual and artistic nexus of Berkeley, California, the Symphony's culture and programming is attuned to the culturally diverse people and the heady creative climate of the home city. In 2019, Berkeley Symphony entered a new era under the leadership of Joseph Young. In addition to building on the Orchestra's artistic innovation, creativity and adventurous programming, Maestro Young is committed to amplifying the voices of underrepresented composers and artists, and telling diverse stories that reflect the local Berkeley community. berkeleysymphony.org

Dallas Symphony Orchestra, under the leadership of Music Director Fabio Luisi, presents the finest in orchestral music at the Morton H. Meyerson Symphony Center, regarded as one of the world's premier concert halls. The largest and oldest performing arts organization in the southwest, the Dallas Symphony each year reaches more than 250,000 adults and children through performances, educational programs and community enrichment initiatives. mydso.com

Los Angeles Chamber Orchestra, known to Angelenos as LACO, is a preeminent interpreter of historical masterworks as well as a champion of contemporary composers. Headquartered in the heart of the country's cultural capital, LACO has been proclaimed "America's finest chamber orchestra" (*Public Radio International*), "LA's most unintimidating chamber music experience" (*Los Angeles Magazine*), "resplendent" (*Los Angeles Times*), and "one of the world's great chamber orchestras" (*KUSC Classical FM*). laco.org

The Las Vegas Philharmonic, led by Music Director Donato Cabrera, established its presence in Southern Nevada in 1998. The mission of the LVP is to inspire a lifelong appreciation of music through performances and educational experiences for our community that enhance the lives of our residents and the culture of our city. Each season showcases local talent alongside stellar internationally known guest artists in the magnificent Reynolds Hall. lvphil.org

The Philadelphia Orchestra is one of the world's preeminent orchestras. Under the leadership of Music Director Yannick Nézet-Séguin, it strives to share the transformative power of music with the widest possible audience, and to create joy, connection, and excitement through music in the Philadelphia region, across the country, and around the world. Through innovative programming, robust educational initiatives, and an ongoing commitment to the communities that it serves, the ensemble is on a path to create an expansive future for classical music, and to further the place of the arts in an open and democratic society. philorch.org

Youth Orchestra Los Angeles provides young people, ages five through eighteen, with free instruments, intensive music instruction, and opportunities to perform on stages in their communities and around the world. In addition to YOLA's local programs, which serve under-resourced communities across Los Angeles, YOLA National provides an ever-growing number of opportunities for young musicians, teaching artists, program administrators, and other stakeholders to learn from and create community with one another. laphil.com/yola

ABOUT THE FUNDING PARTNERS

The American Society of Composers, Authors and Publishers (ASCAP) is a professional membership organization of songwriters, composers and music publishers of every kind of music. ASCAP's mission is to license and promote the music of its members and foreign affiliates, obtain fair compensation for the public performance of their works and to distribute the royalties that it collects based upon those performances. ASCAP members write the world's best-loved music and ASCAP has pioneered the efficient licensing of that music to hundreds of thousands of enterprises who use it to add value to their business - from bars, restaurants and retail, to radio, TV and cable, to Internet, mobile services and more. The ASCAP license offers an efficient

solution for businesses to legally perform ASCAP music while respecting the right of songwriters and composers to be paid fairly. With more than 775,000 members representing more than 11.5 million copyrighted works, ASCAP is the worldwide leader in performance royalties, service and advocacy for songwriters and composers, and the only American performing rights organization (PRO) owned and governed by its writer and publisher members. ascap.com

The Elizabeth & Michel Sorel Charitable Organization Inc. is a 501(c)(3) private foundation, established in 1996 by pianist Claudette Sorel and named for her parents. The mission of The Sorel Organization (www.SorelMusic.org) is to expand opportunities and stretch the boundaries for women musicians in the fields of conducting, composition, film scoring, performance, arts leadership, education, and scholarship. Notable activities of The Sorel Organization include The Sorel Classics Label, Sorel Medallions in Choral Composition and Recording, collaborations with the American Composers Forum, American Pianists Association, prominent choral organizations and symphony orchestras, as well as scholarship funds in film scoring at New York University and in solo piano at SUNY Fredonia, where Claudette Sorel taught for many years. sorelmusic.org

The Sphinx Organization is the social justice organization dedicated to transforming lives through the power of diversity in the arts. Sphinx's four program areas – Education & Access, Artist Development, Performing Artists, and Arts Leadership – form a pipeline that develops and supports diversity and inclusion in classical music at every level: music education, artists performing on stage, the repertoire and programming being performed, the communities represented in audiences, and the artistic and administrative leadership within the field. Sphinx was founded to address the underrepresentation of people of color in classical music. Sphinx programs reach more than 100,000 students and artists as well as live and broadcast audiences of more than two million annually. Over five years, Sphinx will invest \$1.5M to transform the future of cultural diversity, equity, and inclusion in the arts with the Sphinx Venture Fund. Through competitive grants, the Fund will catalyze initiatives designed to solve a challenge or an issue related to DEI in the sphere of the performing arts, with an emphasis on classical music. sphinxmusic.org

Wise Music is an international family of wholly-owned companies with interests in four main areas of music publishing. Music Publishing: Wise Music Group is home to the world's leading independent classical music publishing houses, alongside numerous pop music catalogues. Book Publishing: Under the Omnibus Press imprint, Wise Music publishes an eclectic catalogue of books about music and musicians from substantial biographies to books about rising bands and cult acts. Digital Education: Wise Music provides cutting-edge digital education online platforms for schools, innovative teaching and learning resources and cloud-based music software tools. Record Labels: Founded in 1952 in Copenhagen, Storyville Records is a legendary jazz label. wisemusic.com

ABOUT NEW MUSIC USA

New Music USA supports the sounds of tomorrow by nurturing the creation, performance, and appreciation of new music for adventurous listeners around the world. We empower and connect US-based music makers, organizations, and audiences by providing funding through our Project Grants; fostering new connections through our programs; deepening knowledge through our online magazine, NewMusicBox; and working as an advocate for the field. New Music USA works in collaboration with its community in response to pressing needs and to amplify the diverse voices of music creators. New Music USA envisions a thriving and equitable ecosystem for new music throughout the United States. newmusicusa.org

###