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## ROCO Opens 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Season

*Performance on Saturday, September 27, 5:00 p.m. at The Church of St. John the Divine*

*Performance on Sunday, September 28, 8:00 p.m. at Miller Outdoor Theatre*

**FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE: July 24, 2014**



HOUSTON — [River Oaks Chamber Orchestra](#) (ROCO) opens its celebratory 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary season with a performance entitled *Once Upon a Time* on September 27 at The Church of St. John the Divine and September 28 at Miller Outdoor Theatre. *Once Upon a Time* honors the origins of ROCO, when the orchestra launched its inaugural concert with Rossini's *Italian in Algiers Overture* in 2005 with [Brian Lewis](#) as concertmaster. For this special 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary season opener, Mr. Lewis returns as violin soloist, joining the full 40-piece chamber orchestra with conductor [Victor Yampolsky](#) and concertmaster [Sandy Yamamoto](#).

The concert begins as it did 10 seasons ago with the sounds of [Rossini](#), but this time ROCO continues its commitment to contemporary music with a ROCO commissioned world premiere violin concerto composed by [Maria Newman](#), the daughter of legendary Alfred Newman. Ms. Newman's piece, *Abilene Concerto* inspired by the children's tale [The Miraculous Journey of Edward Tulane](#), features Mr. Lewis as soloist. "ROCO is unique in that we embrace music from all periods, including contemporary, with an equal amount of gusto and our 10<sup>th</sup> season is very special in that every chamber orchestra concert will feature a ROCO commissioned world premiere," said [Alecia Lawyer](#), Founder and Artistic Director of ROCO.

The concert also includes [Britten's Suite on English Folk Tunes](#) and the final symphony composed by [Mozart](#), *Symphony No. 41 (The Jupiter Symphony)*. "There is no better piece to celebrate the 10<sup>th</sup> Anniversary of ROCO then with *Symphony No. 41* by Mozart," said Victor Yampolsky, "The music celebrates the highest, final achievement of a composer's symphonic creativity, proclaiming strength of human spirit in the purest classical style of complete harmony."

Tickets for the Saturday concert at [The Church of St. John the Divine](#) are \$35 for General Admission, \$25 for Seniors and \$15 for Students and the performance begins at 5:00 pm. Sunday's free performance at [Miller Outdoor Theatre](#) begins at 8:00 pm. To purchase tickets or for more information, visit [www.rocohouston.org](http://www.rocohouston.org)

### ROCO Alive in Concert: *Once Upon a Time*

**Saturday, September 27, 2014**

5:00 p.m., The Church of St. John the Divine

2450 River Oaks Blvd.

Houston, Texas 77019

Tickets: \$35 general admission, \$25 Senior, \$15 for students at [www.rocohouston.org](http://www.rocohouston.org) or 713-665-2700

## **Sunday, September 28, 2014**

8:00 p.m., Miller Outdoor Theatre  
6000 Hermann Park Drive  
Houston, Texas 77030

Tickets: Free. For more information, visit [www.milleroutdoortheatre.com](http://www.milleroutdoortheatre.com) or call 281-FREE-FUN (281-373-3386)

### **Program:**

Rossini *Italian in Algiers*

Britten *Suite on English Folk Tunes*

Mozart *Symphony No. 41 (Jupiter Symphony)*

Newman *Abilene Concerto (ROCO Commissioned World Premiere)*

Victor Yampolsky, conductor  
Brian Lewis, violin  
Sandy Yamamoto, concertmaster  
Maria Newman, composer

### **Musician Bios:**

[Victor Yampolsky](#) Carol F. and Arthur L. Rice Jr. University Professorship in Performance, Conducting -- Northwestern University.

Hon. Litt. D., University of Nebraska at Omaha; Hon. DFA, Doane College



In addition to his Northwestern duties, Victor Yampolsky also serves as music director of the Peninsula Music Festival in Door County, Wisconsin; honorary director of the Scotia Festival of Music in Halifax, Nova Scotia; and music director emeritus of the Omaha Symphony Orchestra.

Professor Yampolsky studied violin with David Oistrakh at the Moscow Conservatory, and conducting with Maestro Nicolai Rabinovich at the Leningrad Conservatory. He was a member of the Moscow Philharmonic as both assistant concertmaster and assistant conductor, under the direction of Maestro Kyrill Kondrashin. He emigrated from the Soviet Union to the United States in 1973, where a recommendation from conductor Zubin Mehta led to an audition for Leonard Bernstein, who offered Yampolsky a scholarship at the Berkshire Music Center in Tanglewood, Massachusetts. Professor Yampolsky soon accepted a position in the violin section of the Boston Symphony and was later appointed the orchestra's principal second violinist.

He has served as conductor of the Young Artists Orchestra at Tanglewood and principal conductor of the National Symphony Orchestra in Johannesburg, South Africa. He has conducted over 80 professional and student orchestras throughout the world, including repeat engagements with orchestras in the United States, Canada, Spain, Portugal, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa, South Korea, Taiwan, the Czech Republic, Israel and Chile.

A dedicated educator, Yampolsky has given conducting master classes throughout the world. He has served as adjunct professor of violin and director of orchestras at the Boston University School of Music. He has taught at the State Conservatory of St. Petersburg Russia; Stellenbosch Conservatory in South Africa; the Cape Philharmonic Youth Orchestra in Cape Town, South Africa; Emory University; and the Universities of Akron, Victoria, and Nevada. Other activities include serving as a panel member of the American Symphony Orchestra League (now the League of American Orchestras) Conductors' Continuum Committee. He has been a juror for the Prokofiev International Conducting Competition in St. Petersburg, Russia; the Len van Zyl conducting competition in Cape Town, South Africa; and the Conductors Guild and CODA associations.

Professor Yampolsky has recorded for Pyramid and Kiwi-Pacific Records. He led the Omaha Symphony in its debut recording, *Take Flight* (2002) and the world premiere of Philip Glass' second piano concerto, which received an award from the Nebraska Arts Council.

**[Maria Newman](#)** Recognized and Commended by the United States Congress, Maria Newman (b. Los Angeles, CA) is an award-winning composer, violinist, violist and pianist. As an Annenberg Foundation Composition Fellow, a long-standing multiple Mary Pickford Foundation Composition Fellow, and violin soloist/featured composer in such diverse venues as the United States Capitol Building in Washington D.C., Carnegie Hall, Philadelphia's Academy of Music, Pittsburgh's Heinz Hall, and the Kennedy Center in Washington D.C., Newman has become a visible symbol in modern classical music and makes her living from commissions and performance. Newman's scintillating and highly discussed works represent a range of genres, from large-scale orchestral works, works for ballet, chamber works, choral and vocal works, to new scores for restored classic silent film.



Maria Newman has been honored with numerous musical commendations and recognitions from the United States Congress, the Annenberg Foundation, the Mary Pickford Foundation, the California State Senate, the California State Assembly, the County of Los Angeles, the City of Malibu, and the Malibu Times periodical, and has appeared in subject spotlight articles by many of this nation's most noted and esteemed newspapers and magazines. She has received two Malibu Music Awards as "Classical Artist of the Year", the "Variety Composer Legend" Award, the coveted "Debut Award" from the Los Angeles "Young Musicians' Foundation," the California Arts Commission, the Utah Performing Arts Tour, and has been honored by ASCAP and many other organizations. Newman's works are featured regularly on public radio and television, as well as on Turner Broadcasting.

Newman was born into one of the most famous and influential musical families in Hollywood. She is the youngest daughter of nine-time Academy Award-winning film composer, Alfred Newman (1900-1970), who was the celebrated conductor of the original Hollywood Bowl Orchestra. Maria Newman was educated at Yale University, where she graduated with an MM as a George Wellington Miles Fellow. While at Yale her studies in composition were with Martin Breskick, and in violin with Syoko Aki. Newman received her BM Magna cum Laude from the University of Rochester's Eastman School of Music. Newman is a member of the American Academic Honor Society, Pi Kappa Lambda. She has collaborated in concert as soloist with actor Pierce Brosnan, and has had the great honor of performing as soloist at the United States Capitol Building Complex on Capitol Hill in Washington D.C., headlining a Special Event representing the Victim's Rights Bill.

**[Brian Lewis](#)** One of the most versatile and charismatic violinists on the current scene, Brian Lewis is an exceptionally dedicated and gifted performer whose passionate artistry has been heard and embraced around the world. "There are a lot of fine violinists on the concert stage today, but few can match Lewis for an honest virtuosity that supremely serves the music," reports the Topeka Capital-Journal. Acclaimed performances include concerto debuts in both New York's Carnegie Hall and Avery Fisher Hall, as well as performances with the Orchestra of St. Luke's, the Berlin (Germany), Louisiana, Kansas City, Syracuse, Hartford, Odense (Denmark), Greenwich, Wichita, Lima (Peru), Topeka, Boulder, Guadalajara (Mexico), Amarillo, Midland-Odessa, Sinfonia Toronto (Canada), Eugene, Spokane, and American Symphony orchestras, among many others. Activities in Asia include concerto performances with the Taejon City Symphony in Korea, the Taipei Conductor's Orchestra in Taiwan, and the Tokyo Metropolitan Orchestra in Japan.



Mr. Lewis has recorded six CDs, most recently for Delos as soloist with the London Symphony Orchestra in music by Leonard Bernstein and Hollywood composer Michael McLean. His numerous recital appearances include performances across the United States, including the Mostly Mozart Festival and the Great Performer's Series at Lincoln Center in New York. Internationally, Mr. Lewis has been a featured recitalist in Australia, Canada, the French West Indies, Puerto Rico, Japan, Korea, Taiwan, France, England, Denmark, Mexico, El Salvador, Honduras, Costa Rica, Peru, Chile, and Brazil.

Mr. Lewis has won numerous young artists' competitions, including the Grand Prize in the Mid-America Violin Competition. In addition to the Waldo Mayo Talent Award presented to him at Carnegie Hall, he holds both the Peter Mennin Prize and William Schuman Prize awarded by Juilliard for outstanding achievement and leadership in the field of music. Mr. Lewis was one of the first recipients of the Sony ES Award for Musical Excellence, and he has received two Elizabeth B. Koch Fellowships from the Kansas Cultural Trust. A highly respected educator, Mr. Lewis has received both the Texas Exes Teaching Award and The University of Texas School of Music Teaching Excellence Award. Also active as concertmaster and soloist at the St. Barths Music Festival in the French West Indies, Mr. Lewis was presented the Medal of St. Barthélemy by the president of the island for 19 years of artistic service and dedication to the cultural life of St. Barths. He was also honored at a ceremony at half time of a UT football game where he was named an ING Professor of Excellence, a prestigious university-wide award recognizing outstanding teaching and achievement.

Known for his variety in programming and ability to communicate with audiences of all ages, Mr. Lewis has performed frequently as a member of the Kansas Arts Commission Touring Program and the Mid-America Arts Alliance Regional Touring Program. Radio and television appearances include performances on WNYC, WFMT (Chicago), National Public Radio, and CBS "Sunday Morning." An advocate for music education in the schools, Mr. Lewis frequently presents concerts, workshops, and master classes for Young Audiences of Houston. Named National Artist of the Year in by Young Audiences, Inc., he was also presented the Fredell Lack Award by YAH for having performed for more than 165,000 young people in the Houston area.

As a student of Eleanor Allen, Mr. Lewis began his violin studies at the age of four, and participated in the Ottawa Suzuki Strings program under the direction of his mother, Alice Joy Lewis. He later studied with Tiberius Klausner, and twice traveled to Japan where he studied with Dr. Shinichi Suzuki at the Talent Education Institute in Matsumoto. He holds both the Bachelor and Master of Music degrees from The Juilliard School where he was a student of Dorothy DeLay, Masao Kawasaki, and Hyo Kang. Highly committed and dedicated to teaching young artists, Mr. Lewis has quickly emerged as one of the leading violin teachers of his generation. He holds the David and Mary Winton Green Chair in String Performance and Pedagogy at UT where he is Professor of Violin. He is also Artistic Director of the Starling-DeLay Symposium on Violin Studies at The Juilliard School in New York City, founding concertmaster of the River Oaks Chamber Orchestra in Houston, Artistic Director of the Brian Lewis Young Artist Program in Kansas, a founding member of the Texas Piano Quartet, and Artistic Director of the Starling Distinguished Violinist Series at the Butler School of Music. This past year, Mr. Lewis finished his 2nd year in residency at the Yale School of Music as the Class of '57 Visiting Professor in Music.

Mr. Lewis performs on a Gand Frères violin, made in Paris in 1863. Additional information may be found at [www.brianlewisviolin.com](http://www.brianlewisviolin.com)

[Sandy Yamamoto](#) Violinist **Sandy Yamamoto** has dazzled audiences in concert performances around the globe for the past three decades as a soloist and as a member of the Miró Quartet.

Ms. Yamamoto began her violin studies at the age of 4. At 11, she made her solo debut with the North Carolina Symphony and has since appeared with orchestras throughout the US and Europe to critical acclaim.



With the Miró Quartet, she has performed on the major concert stages of the world, regularly concertizing in North America, South America, Europe and Asia. As a member of the Quartet, she was a recipient of the Naumburg Chamber Music and Cleveland Quartet Awards, won First Prize at the Banff International String Quartet Competition and was one of the first chamber musicians to be awarded an Avery Fisher Career Grant. She has shared the stage with many prominent musicians including Leif Ove Andsnes, Joshua Bell, Eliot Fisk, Lynn Harrell, Midori, Jon Kimura Parker and Pinchas Zukerman.

Ms. Yamamoto was also invited to be a guest speaker and role model in New York City for the winners of the 2003 Glamour Magazine's Top Ten College Women. Since leaving the Quartet in May 2011, she has been appointed Senior Lecturer of Violin at the Butler School of Music at the University of Texas at Austin, where she teaches a studio of violin students and performs recitals regularly. In the fall of 2011, she formed the Butler Piano Trio with School of Music faculty members Colette Valentine and Joshua Gindele.

**About ROCO**

ROCO is a professional chamber orchestra of 40 all-star musicians, distinguished guest conductors and dynamic composers who come together from all over the world to present engaging performances of classical and original compositions. Founded in 2005 by oboist, Alecia Lawyer, ROCO has been called the most fun you can have with serious music. [www.rocohouston.org](http://www.rocohouston.org)

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